

James 1 - Trials

by Phil Beach Jr.

God allows trials and tribulations in our lives to develop patience and godly character, and to increase our capacity to bear trials and difficulties.

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Scripture: James 1:2

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Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the significance of trials in the Christian life, urging believers to focus their hearts and ambitions on heaven rather than earthly concerns. He explains that life is fleeting and encourages the congregation to find joy in tribulations, as these challenges develop patience and spiritual maturity. Beach highlights that God allows trials to increase our capacity for faith and character, ultimately shaping us into the likeness of Christ. He reassures that enduring trials is not a sign of failure but a part of God's divine plan for growth and maturity in faith.

Transcript

We thank you and praise you for your presence. We thank you, Lord, that you are calling us to a heart that is heavenward. You're calling us to focus our attention, to focus our affection, to focus our thoughts, to focus our goals, to focus our life's ambitions, not on earth, but in the direction of heaven.

Our life is but a vapor. Today it's here, tomorrow it's gone. If we speak to any 90-year-old, they would say to us, it seems just like yesterday, I was a young man or a young woman, and now they're old.

And Lord, help us to see the nature of this life and how it's so quick to pass. And teach us to number our days, and teach us, Lord, to have our hearts toward heaven. Now we pray, Lord, that by your word, you would accomplish this more in our lives.

We just add on, Lord, to the wonderful contributions that were made earlier, and together, Lord, we pray that you'll take this and use it to just make us more like the heavenly people that you long to see in this earth as a testimony for all men and women to see. We pray, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen and amen.

There's a number of scriptures that I'd like to read this morning with God's help, and I pray that the Holy Spirit will take these and speak to each one of us. Speak to individual prayers that have been prayed. Some of us have been praying prayers.

If you'll listen to the Holy Spirit this morning and the Word of God, I'm quite confident that God is going to answer some prayers this morning. Maybe you alone know the prayers that you've been praying, but God has His ear close to your heart, and He'll answer your prayer this morning through His Word. So we're just going to look to the Lord for direction, and we're going to go to several different places, and we're going to commit this Word to God and trust that the shepherd will use it to minister to us all.

So we're going to begin in James, the New Testament. We're going to begin in James, the New Testament. We're going to read James 1. And after we read James 1, we're going to make several comments.

And I believe that this is going to speak to all of us in a very wonderful way. James 1. James was writing to the twelve tribes which were scattered abroad, and he particularly was writing to believers who were suffering trouble. They were suffering persecution.

They had hard times in their life. And if you're experiencing in any measure hard times, testing times, troubled times, if you're experiencing in any measure this morning perplexity, maybe you're baffled. Has anyone ever experienced being baffled, just not being able to figure out what it is that's going on? Sometimes it appears like there's contradiction in our life as Christians.

We feel the Lord is leading us or showing us to do something, and in faith we move in that direction, and then it seems like the bottom falls out from under us, doesn't it? And in those times, the enemy comes, and he accuses God as being unfaithful and unjust, and he'll sometimes even come and accuse us of maybe saying, ah, you didn't hear the Lord, or you were misguided, or you were wrong. And so why does God allow these things to happen in our life? He loves us, doesn't He? He's a loving shepherd, He cares for us. So why does God allow us to go through these trying times? Well, I think as we read this wonderful chapter, we're going to see some of the reasons why God allows us to be tested and tried.

So, Father, open up the ears of our heart and help us to hear You speak to us right now as we look at Your Word. Beginning in verse number 2, My brethren, I'm just going to read through now and then make comments. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into all kinds of temptations, knowing that the testing of your faith is working patience.

But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that gives to all men liberally and does not find fault, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith nothing wavering.

For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded, or a better translation, is a double-souled, double-desired.

Man is unstable in all his ways. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but let the rich in that he is made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with the burning heat, but it withers the grass, and the flower thereof falls, and the grace of the fashion of it perishes.

So also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. But blessed is the man that endures temptation. For when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him.

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither does he tempt any man with evil, of course. But every man is tempted, that is, with evil, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.

Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin, and sin, when it is finished or brought to completion, brings forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of light, with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.

Of his own will begot he us with the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creation. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. Now remember in the context here, this is talking about people who are going through trials and tribulations.

It's very, very unwise. Listen carefully. It's very unwise to speak too quickly when you're going through a temptation and a test, because most likely you're going to say something that you will regret.

And so James here has some very, very sound practical wisdom. When you're going through a deep test and trial, keep your mouth shut, unless you have someone that's very dear and close to you that you can vent to. Perhaps it's okay if you do that.

But other than that, it's very unwise to say too much. So that's why James says, Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness. Basically what that means is lay apart all abounding and evil, all evil that would be abounding and all the stuff that comes out during a time of testing and trial. Lay it aside.

And receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls. Be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if anyone be a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass.

For he beholds himself and goes his way and straightway forgets what manner of man he was. But whoever looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continues, he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the Word, this man shall be blessed in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious and bridleth not his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

Pure religion and undefiled before the Father. Before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world. We can go on and just read this whole chapter, but we want to make a few comments about this first chapter.

And I do hope the Holy Spirit will bear witness to His Word and that we can come to the Lord and see some deficiencies that may be in our life right now that God's Word will reveal. But not only will we see the deficiencies, but we'll see the invitation to run to the Lord and therefore be able to receive from the Lord that which lacks in our life. The first point we want to bring out is that everything that we're going to discuss in this particular verse, in this particular chapter, really the whole book, has to do with those things that relate to, that are associated with going through trials and tribulations.

Alright? And so, this is the scenario, this is the setting out from which these things are going to be seen. And Jesus said in John 16, in this world you shall have tribulation. John 16.31 But be of good cheer, I have

overcome this world.

We're going to have tribulation. We're going to have tests. The nature of life is such.

There's going to be disappointments. There's going to be setbacks. There's going to be pain.

There's going to be sorrow. We do not live in a perfect world. God's people are not perfect.

Circumstances are not perfect. Though God is perfect, He does not create perfect situations for us. He lets us struggle.

He allows us to go through very difficult and trying times. And He has a reason. So, just begin to accept this right now.

Accept this right now. You will suffer trials and difficulties and tests and temptations. And it does not mean something is wrong.

It doesn't mean that your Christian faith has proven to be ingenuine. It doesn't mean that your Christian faith has failed you. If anyone here would take a couple weeks and do a detailed study of the life of Paul, from the very beginning that he's mentioned to the very end in 2 Timothy where he's about to be offered up and pour out his life as an offering to the Lord, you will do a detailed account of his life.

Every single thing that's mentioned in the Bible about Paul. And you will find that over 90%, 90% of the things that are recorded in the Bible that refer to the Apostle Paul is associated with trouble, suffering, trial, difficulty. Over 90%.

And so, therefore, we can conclude that since Paul himself said that God made him as an example that we might learn from him, and Paul himself also told the Corinthians and he tells us too, to follow him as he follows Christ. And so it's not inconsistent, therefore, if we are to follow Paul as he follows Christ to experience similar difficulties in trials and tribulations. And so, accept that.

When you accept that, a lot of your anxiety and stress will disappear. Because much of it is oftentimes associated with why. Stop asking why and just accept it.

It's just the way life is. Get over it. Get over it and see what God wants to do.

The first point that we want to bring out, the Word of God brings out, is that count it pure joy. Joy in tribulation. God provides joy in the midst of tribulation and in the midst of trying difficult situations.

Now, let me say to anyone here that's lived any length of time, to the older ones, we know very, very, very clearly that joy is not our natural response in tribulation and trial. We can become in ourselves quite irritated because of trial and testing. We can become quite unpleasant.

We can become angry. And then we become very unpleasant to be around. Have you ever been around someone who's very downcast in their spirit because of a difficult trial they're going through? They can be very miserable.

Very miserable people. But God says to count it pure joy. And so, therefore, one of the reasons why God allows us to go through trials is so that we can discover the joy of the Lord in the midst of our circumstances in trials.

Now, we can't discover the joy of the Lord until we realize that our life, listen carefully, our life is not all about us. The absence of joy in our life usually is because we don't like the cards that have been dealt our way because they don't seem to be a good hand for us. That is, what we believe to be good for us.

What we believe to be advantageous to our own goals, our own hopes, our own desires, our own interests. And that's why we seemingly don't have joy when we go through trials. One thing that a trial does very quickly, and this is very consistent with the Word of God, especially if you read through the book of Job, but you can go through all the Word of God and you can see, especially the history of Israel, trials always revealed Israel's heart was prone to be self-centered.

Trials will always reveal that we are prone in our natural selves to be self-centered. And one of the great desires as our Father in Heaven is what? To liberate us from being captive to our self-centered desires so that we can go on to what? Hebrews 6, verse 1, let us go on unto perfection or spiritual adulthood. God's great passion and God's great desire is adulthood.

Life works in a way in our lives to where it forces us to come to grips with our need to become spiritual adults. Spiritual adulthood is God's passion. And it's not easy to grow up because when you grow up, you have to stop acting like a child.

And you know, children, the first thing that children do when they don't like something or a circumstance is what? They become angry, mad, sad, downcast, why? Because it's not about them and they want it to be about them. What child is ever sad when their life is revolving around them and everyone serves their interests? Anybody, any children in here get angry when you wake up in the morning and everyone says, how can I make you happy? What can we do today to make you happy? How can we order our day today to make you happy and to give you whatever you want? Oh my, I don't think any child in here would resist that. Any children in here would not like that? How many children would like that? Norman's raising his hand.

We have an honest older child. So see, by nature we like that. And so when tribulations come, that disappears.

And so we become downcast. But God wants to give us joy. And joy comes when we allow the trial to work in us grace that frees us, that emancipates us from the captivity to, I want it my way.

This isn't making me happy to this. And this is something that makes our father so happy when he begins to see this in the heart. Not just the lip, because we can say this with our lips because it's good theology.

And we all want to make sure we're saying good theology. But God knows when the theology is not quite real life. So when God sees from the heart these words, Oh dear God, what's best for you? What's best for your glory? What's best to bring about a greater revelation of your Son? Not just for me, but others.

Do you remember what the Apostle Paul said in relation to the change that he was experiencing in the Roman Empire when he wrote to the Philippians? What did he say? But these things have happened to me for the furtherance of the Gospel. Joe, wonder if that would come out of our mouth. If everything that we associate with our joy and our freedom and our life and our ability to live and choose was taken from us.

Paul demonstrates a marvelous quality of a spiritual adult by never moaning, never groaning, never complaining, never sitting on a smelly pity pot. How many know pity pots are smelly? Sometimes your

whole house can smell because of a pity pot. Huh? No pity pots.

Paul didn't sit on pity pots. Paul said, for me to live is Christ, to die is gain. Paul said, these things have happened to me for the furtherance of the Gospel.

Paul got over Paul. Oh, what a joy when we get over ourselves. Have you come to the place where you're just about sick and tired of yourself? Joy in tribulation.

Secondly, knowing that the testing of our faith worketh patience. Not only do we have joy in tribulation, but we have the developing of patience and godly character. We must allow the Lord to take everything that we're going through and to produce a greater capacity.

Remember what capacity is? Capacity. The scripture says that in Hebrews chapter 12, those who are subject to God's discipline are exercised thereby. Exercise.

The literal word is exercise. We're exercised with discipline and child training to produce capacity. Now, here's what that means.

It's very simple. The word exercise means exercise. It really means that.

It actually comes from the idea of a gymnasium. Now, let me give you an illustration to help us understand what God is doing in our lives. God is looking to increase our capacity.

And he does this by subjecting us or exercising us with fatherly discipline and child training, which includes entrusting us with trying difficulties. Now, if I ask Timothy to stand up, you don't have to, and I brought 175 pounds of weight, dead weight, and just set it right here. Let's make it 190 pounds.

And I said, Timothy, I want you to bend down, pick that up, and put it up like this and do it five times. I would pretty much guess that Timmy probably couldn't do it. Alright? I'm not sure anyone in here could.

Maybe there's a few of them. Okay, now. But here's what I'm going to tell Timmy after he tries and he puts his head down.

I say, Tim, don't despair because I'm going to become your personal trainer. Alright? Watch this. And in three years, I predict that you're going to come back into this room and you're going to be able to do that and do it five times.

But the way that you're going to be able to do that is this. I'm going to begin to work on increasing your capacity. I'm going to increase your capacity.

Now, let's get that hundred, what did I say, 180 pounds? 190 pounds. Let's get that out of sight. And now, Timmy, I'm going to put 40 pounds down here.

And Timmy picks that up, goes like this, and he does it. And he gets a smile on his face. And so I said, alright now.

Now we understand capacity. Now you probably could do about 50 or 60 before you start struggling. So we've determined your capacity.

Alright? But now in order to enlarge your capacity, you have to be exercised. You have to exercise and your capacity will be enlarged as you exercise and you are entrusted with a little bit more weight. And you

know, I just feel so, God loves us so much and He knows right now.

He can look at every one of us and He knows to the letter our capacity. And God says He's faithful and He will never allow us to be tested beyond our capacity. Never.

That is, He'll never dump 190 pounds on you if your capacity is 35. Won't do it. Because He's the Heavenly Father that knows our frame.

But His goal in all of our lives is to bring us to the place where we are willingly embracing His loving providence knowing that it is increasing capacity. Spiritual capacity. And so three years go by and because I've been Timmy's personal trainer and we've worked at this almost every day, every day, every day.

And Timmy's capacity has been enlarged over a three-year period of time and he's increased his weights. He's increased them, increased them. So now at the end of three years his capacity has been enlarged.

He's developed muscles that he did not have when he started out. Three years later we get the 190 pounds. He picks it up, he goes like this and he does it five times and drops it.

And he says, I did it. And the reason why he did it is because his capacity increased through being subject to exercise. And so God's desire is that the capacity of our spiritual being would be enlarged more and more and more in so much, listen, in so much that we are able to bear much because God knows that the strength of Christ, the measure of Christ, the stature and character of Christ has been etched in us sufficiently so that under the weight of the trial, the weight of the difficulty, Jesus behaves through us.

It's the behavior of Christ that comes out. It's the character of Christ that comes out. Now let me give you an illustration of this.

Hebrews chapter 5. This is all part of the eternal purpose of God. Remember what God is after. And it's so good to see the big picture, but then sometimes when we get down into real life and we have to walk it out, we wonder what happened to that wonderful big picture, that beautiful picture.

Well, this is what it is. This is how God walks us out, walks us through. But this is part of the plan of God.

He wants to have a family of sons and daughters just like His only begotten Son. But that means that He has to take us, bring us into His family, birth us into His family, give us His life, give us His Holy Spirit, forgive us of our sins, release us from the debt of sin, release us from the captivity of Satan's kingdom. But then we start out as little baby children with little capacity, spiritual capacity.

But then immediately after the babyhood stage is over and we're coddled and we're loved and we're burped, it seems like our whole world revolves around us. Our Father in Heaven makes a decision that only He Himself can make when He knows it's time. And He starts dealing with us as sons.

That is, He begins to subject us to circumstances that begin to necessitate exercise so that our capacity can be enlarged. What does He have in view? Sons and daughters. Adulthood.

Hebrews 5. Verse 12. Verse 11. Of whom we have many things to say and are hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull of hearing.

Dull of hearing. Their capacity was very limited. Their capacity prevented them from being able to hear and receive the meat of the Word.

Now watch what He says. For the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again. And so when the Scripture says in verse 10, for when, for the time, that indicates a season.

In other words, this is what the writer is saying. The season has come and already passed when you ought to be something that you're not. And he's talking about capacity, spiritual capacity here.

You ought to be something that you're not. And because you're not what you ought to be, there's a dullness of hearing. And now this is what the writer says.

You have need that one teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat. Listen now. For everyone that is continuously using milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness.

Now this is not talking about essentially being unskilled in doctrine. It's not talking about being unskilled in theology. This doesn't mean that if I go to college for four years and I learn perfect theology that I will now become an adult.

No. The word of righteousness is Christ Himself. Christ is the Word, the Righteous One.

You're unskilled in Him. Now it does have to do with sound doctrine, but it has to do with Him. Strong meat belongs to them that are of full age.

That is full grown. Even to those, listen, by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. So, strong meat.

Meat. What is the meat of the word? Jesus said, I have meat that you know not of. And what was His meat? What did He say? The will of His Father.

The meat of the word is Christ Himself as our life. Because when Christ is our life, then we no longer take account of ourselves. It's no longer viewing life, viewing the world, viewing circumstances, viewing anything that's happening as how it relates to me personally, but it's all about the glory of God and the increase of Christ and the increase of His kingdom and the securing of God's pleasure.

My meat, Jesus said, I live. I don't need milk, Jesus said. I don't need someone to burp me and coddle me.

I don't need someone to flatter me and to tell me how wonderful I am or how good I am or to give me a day when everything can be for me to make me happy again. I don't need that, Jesus said. Paul said, I don't need that.

Paul said, God has dealt with me in such a way where adulthood has come forth and I don't need to be coddled. I don't need a special day for me. All I want, whether I live, whether I die, that Christ, hallelujah, that Christ might be magnified in my life.

That Christ may secure His highest intention. That Christ might be preeminent. And then the transition suddenly disappears.

It's no longer even about my own spiritual maturity. Because real fatherhood, real adulthood, you forget about yourself and you begin to take into your heart others. And you live, you exist that others, through the selfless love of God working through you, might come to walk on the same spiritual understanding and that is that everyone might come to spiritual adulthood so that together the fullness of Christ might be made manifest in our lives.

But strong meat belongs to them who by reason of use have their senses exercised. Now in our physical body, there are five senses in our physical body and this is not the senses that he's talking about. There's a spiritual man that God is building right now.

A spiritual man, that's the hidden man of the heart Peter talks about. The hidden man, the new man. The new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

That's the spiritual being that God has made us in Christ Jesus. That spiritual man is the one that God is chiefly concerned about. Not that He doesn't care about your physical body.

He does. But the physical body is part of the old creation. God is creating and building a new creation man and that's our spirit has been born of God and our spirit is now growing in its capacity to mirror an image and reflect the moral likeness of God.

So as the natural body has senses, the spirit man has spiritual senses. Touch, taste, smell, hearing and seeing. Those are the five senses that correspond to our physical body.

But if we do a search of the scriptures, we'll discover that every one of those senses are used to illustrate an aspect of our spiritual man. Peter says, if that you have tasted the Lord. There's a taste, a spiritual taste.

You can taste the Lord. How many have tasted the Lord and know that it tastes good? You don't taste Him with your physical... You don't put salt and pepper. It's a spiritual thing.

How about Isaiah? In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and lifted up. That is not physical. It is a spiritual sight.

The scent. Let me show you where that is in the Bible. Isaiah.

Isaiah 11, verse 3. Now this is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ and how God places in the Lord Jesus Christ the fullness of His Spirit. And it says, and shall make Him of quick understanding. The Hebrew there literally means scent.

It's the sense of the nostril. It's translated of quick understanding because that's how we can understand that Hebrew phrase. But the Hebrew phrase literally refers to the scent.

The sense of smell. So, therefore, the sense of smell in our spirit corresponds to our capacity to understand. Understand what is right.

Understand what the will of the Lord is. Understand what the mind of God is. Understand what the Spirit is saying.

He that has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. Touch. Scent.

Hearing. Touch. 2 Corinthians.

Oh yes, it's in the Word of God, beloved. This is what the Holy Spirit is doing in our lives. Working on our capacity.

2 Corinthians. Touch. 6, verse 14.

Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion has light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Baal? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said, I will dwell with them and walk in them and will be their God and they shall be my people.

Watch this now. Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord. And what? And touch not.

Touch. Not. The unclean thing.

Now there may be a literal application. Your hands might be able to touch something unclean. But that's not what God has in view here.

It's touch not in spirit. That is learn only to touch what is life. Only learn to touch what is pure.

What is wholesome. What is morally pleasing in God's eyes. Don't touch the unclean thing.

Don't touch that which is defiled. Don't touch that which is coming from flesh. Don't touch the wisdom of man.

Don't touch the government that is coming from man's heart. Don't touch it. Touch the Lord.

Touch Him. Touch what is clean. Touch the wisdom of God.

Touch the heart of God. Touch the spirit of God. Learn to live where you're touching and embracing the life flow that comes from God and His Word.

Character in tribulation. Wisdom in tribulation. All of these things God provides as we continue to look to Him.

We only have a few more minutes. But it seems that the Holy Spirit has borne witness on this whole idea of capacity. Capacity.

And so rather than go on, we're going to stop and we're going to bring this to a close. And just sum this up by demonstrating from the Word of God that God is subjecting us through trials. Through trials and difficulties to that which will provide exercise, spiritual exercise, in order to enlarge our capacity.

And as we read in Hebrews, to bring this to a close, in Hebrews the goal, the goal is by reason of use, they have their senses exercised, and we just went through the five spiritual senses and showed how each one corresponds to that spirit man and the need for it to develop into a full, mature adult. By reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern. The word discern there means to judge.

It means to make distinction. This is all important for us as Christians. We must constantly grow in our capacity to make distinction between what is good or what is of God, what is coming from God and from the Spirit of God, and what is evil.

That is, what is originating from the flesh, the world, or the devil. What is good and what is evil. And so can you imagine the glory, the majesty, the splendor.

We're going to close on this. Ephesians chapter 4. Can you imagine now the significance of this verse? Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11, all the way through to verse number 16, and we're going to close on this. Now can you imagine the glory and the splendor and the revelation and the testimony that God can secure as this is realized.

And He gave some apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge, the full knowledge. That word knowledge doesn't simply mean a knowing. It means a full and complete knowledge.

To the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man. Now this is not talking about individually. This is talking about a corporate perfection.

A corporate adulthood wherein dwells in all the members together, working together, the five senses that have been exercised by God becoming our personal trainer so that in the body of Christ these five senses are exercised and there is a glorious testimony of the fullness of that man in glory being seen and demonstrated in a body. That's God's thought. Know how the devil tries everything he can to prevent this from happening.

To the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Now watch this. That we henceforth be no more what? Infants.

Children. Tossed to and fro. Carried about by every wind of doctrine.

By the slight of men and the cunning craftiness whereby they lay in wait to deceive. But speak the truth in love. May grow up into him in all things which is the head from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies according to the effectual working and the measure of every part maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

There you go, beloved. God's purpose in allowing tribulation to come. We saw a little bit of it there.

So let's bow our hearts now and pray and ask the Holy Spirit. And then after we pray and ask the Holy Spirit, we want to invite everyone to gather around Daniel and we want to pray for him before he goes back to Tennessee. Father, we thank You for Your Word.

We thank You for the faithfulness of Your Word that always brings us to Christ. And particularly, Lord, we're aware this morning that You have exhorted us not to put our hope in earth or the things of this world, but to have our hearts heavenward. And now we realize, Lord, through Your Word, that You are wanting to, through exercise, enlarge our capacity so that truly our lives can be one with You, developed morally, spiritually, so that only those things that are good and right and wholesome in Your eyes do we embrace.

We pray, Lord, that You'll secure these things in our lives for the glory and honor of Your Son.

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