

# Pressures That Try Our Faith

James 1:2-3

## Introduction:

- A. Everyone experiences the pressures of life from time to time (Ill. Employee sorting potatoes)
  - 1. Obeying the Lord relieves many pressures:
    - a. Replaces guilt with forgiveness.
    - b. Replaces despair with hope.
  - 2. Obeying the Lord brings on more pressures.
    - a. We can react either pessimistically or optimistically.
    - b. Our text shows that we should face them optimistically (“count it all joy”)
- B. We want to discuss some faith-trying pressures that faithful Christians must overcome by faith.

## Discussion:

- I. The Pressure to Conform to the World (cf. Rom. 12:2)**
  - A. To avoid being considered strange (1 Pet. 4:3,4)
  - B. To “go with the flow” rather than consulting the Scriptures.
- II. The Pressure of Suffering.**
  - A. The pressure to blame God for suffering common to humanity.
  - B. The pressure to sin in the face of sufferings for Christ’s sake (cf. 2 Tim. 3:12)
    - 1. By considering persecution a curse rather than blessing (Matt. 5:10-12; Acts 5:41).
    - 2. By abandoning principle to ease the persecution.
- III. The Pressure of Materialism.**
  - A. Affects both the poor and the rich (1 Tim. 6:9-10, 17-19)
  - B. Can cause one put spiritual things on the back burner (cf. 2 Cor. 4:18; Matt. 6:19-21, 33).
- IV. The Pressure of Relationships.**
  - A. The pressure to maintain good relationships at all cost (Luke 14:26)
  - B. The pressure of having to sometime leave loved one for the gospel’s sake (Mark 10:29, 30)
- V. The Pressure of Heresies/Factions.**
  - A. Too many allow “church troubles” to throw them
    - 1. May “take sides” without regard for truth.
    - 2. May just quit of disgust for the strife.
  - B. God can overrule factions to serve a good purpose (1 Cor. 11:19)
- VI. The Pressure of Disappointment.**
  - A. Christians and congregations sometimes disappoint us.
  - B. Disappointment is no excuse for us to quit or make shipwreck of our faith.
    - 1. Jesus did not quit when many turned away (John 6:66)
    - 2. The eleven did not quit when Judas betrayed.
    - 3. Paul did not quit, nor suggest that other quit, because he was disappointed in some.
  - C. Remember that the foundation is sure, not matter what brethren do (2 Tim. 2:17-19)

## Conclusion:

- A. We can allow pressures to weaken our faith and resolve.
- B. Or, we can allow them to inspire endurance (patience) to overcome.
- C. We can allow them to stumbling blocks or stepping stones.