

- a. The point of trials / temptations is spiritual wholeness, completeness, maturity – how does that differ from how you usually consider your struggles?
 - Ask a significant other how you normally deal with trials – you’re likely to be surprised at how unbiblical it is; make your normal escapist-response a regular prayer / accountability item
- b. The starting point for all of this is a right mindset and framework that EVERY Christian can have (Galatians 2:20) – that we recognize and joy in what God intends when He brings the wood on us
 - Read Romans 5:3-5 and 1 Peter 1:5-7
- c. Trials are gifts from a Father to His children (that’s what James says in 1:17)
 - Our responses to trials often indicate the temperature of our love for God; do we love Him only when things go well with us?
- d. We forget that we are actually sinners in need of a Savior and we start to live that way. When we do and we meet various trials, our response is usually excessive emotion: surprise, anger, bitterness, grief or anxiety.

Those emotions, though, are rooted in what we believe about ourselves, our lives and God.

If you are excessively emotional when trials come, and those emotions are ungodly or hurtful to others, then you have been living like little gods – that’s bad: Exodus 20:3. It is also bad *for* you – God wants better and will get it!

Trials are gracious reminders that we need Him and apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5)

- e. **It is possible to fail** – when we short-circuit the trials. What does that look like?

Generally, when you think more about the trial than about God in it, you’re likely to be on the path of short-circuiting it.

[Grumble, complain, whine when our kids act in ways we’ve told them not to]

[Beating yourself up when you make the same mistakes or think the same things]

[Looking for a way out of trouble without ever looking at what caused it]

[Bowing out of the pressure without praying about the pressure]

[Ignoring people when they bring things to your attention]

[Ignoring physical pain when it comes; this quickly brings bitterness]

[Hiding your pain from others who could help you persevere]

[Forgetting that these came from your Father and that they are normal for Christians]

- f. If we fail to recognize these things, we will work ourselves out of allowing the trials to have its effect; It is as if we stumble upon a hot brush fire and try to put it out only to have the landowner tell us the fire burns up the underbrush so there is no major forest fire
- g. James addresses our impulses to get ourselves out of suffering at all costs; he tells us instead to recognize that the presence of a trial is for our faith’s growth and our ultimate spiritual wholeness
- h. Without the results of the trials we’ll not grow; we’ll only go through it again because God is so committed to us (Philippians 1:6; James 4:5)