

**Small Group Discussion Guide**  
**Sermon Date: August 29, 2021**  
**Speaker: Reverend Ivan S. Pitts**  
**Sermon Title: Profiting from Trials**

**Text: James 1:2-4 (NKJV)**

*My brethren and sisters, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup> knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup> But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

**Sermon Summary**

The sermon addresses the complex relationship between joy and trials presented in the text. Reflecting on his own experience as a son of a mother with Alzheimer's disease, Reverend Pitts wrestled with the joys and pains that come with caring for his mother who often does not remember/know who he is to her. He revealed he has raised the question, "why would God be so unkind?" His mother; a woman who rose from teacher's aide to a professional teacher at 46 years old only later to be stricken with a mind-altering disease. He sought answers in the scripture and found revelations shared in the sermon's text which shows us "faith that can't be tested can't be trusted." His primary question was how can we have joy in the midst of trials?

**Sermon Points:**

1. **"Count it all joy" ...** We must count trials as assets rather than deficits. Counting trials as we would count on an accounting ledger changes the trial equation to our favor
2. **"Knowing the testing ....** produces patience." – Knowing our trials produce assets gives us understanding of the value of the trials. The trials/testing produce patience
3. **"Lacking nothing"** is the fruitful production of the individual who successfully goes through the trials.

**Questions:**

1. Trials can be viewed as either a burden, an opportunity for something better or both. When was the last time you looked for opportunity for positive change/growth in the midst of a challenge?
2. What do you do to maintain joy in the midst of trials?
3. Patience prepares us for what God has for us in the future. When have you felt like giving up on a goal or quitting the fight for something you have or want? Are you willing to be patient as God works it out for your good?
4. If you want to fly, you have to be challenged to do so. What challenges are you facing that can actually help you to grow and mature?
5. What things have you harbored anger about that seemingly have held you back or kept you from realizing dreams and goals? Is it possible God is leading you elsewhere or trying to focus your attention on something else?
6. Do you trust your faith in God and God's word will see you through any trial?