

#blessed! | Blessed with A Battle | Discussion | - James 1:2

We often believe that a "blessed" life is trouble-free, peaceful and successful. What if a "blessed" life is really about obedience to Jesus and struggles against evil? If we are striving to become more like Christ and bring Christ to our families, co-workers, and community we are a target for our adversary. He will try to bring trouble, struggles, and temptations into our life so we are distracted and focus on those troubles. Our battle then becomes a matter of reliance. Do we rely on Christ's power to pull us through? Do we succumb to the temptation to blame God for those troubles? We must let Christ work in us and through us to overcome in the battle laid out before us.

God has Blessed You with a Battle!

James 1:2 (NIV) Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

The battles that we fight are unique to our situation. Each one of us has had experiences that have shaped how we think, feel and believe. When we come to Christ, He awakens our spirit, but He doesn't just want you to stay there. He wants you to strive to become more like Him. He wants you to run your race well and with the purpose to become more like Him.

1 Corinthians 9: 24 (NIV) Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. **25** Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. **26** Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. **27** No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

What breaks your heart? Jesus wept over Jerusalem.

Luke 19:41 (NIV) As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴² and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.

What makes you angry? Jesus became angry at the buying and selling in the Temple.

Mark 11:15 (NIV) On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves,¹⁶ and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. ¹⁷ And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"

What do you care about that others don't? Jesus confronted the Samaritan Woman about her lifestyle to inspire her to accept His living water.

John 4:13 (NIV) Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

What is your battle?

God will walk with you through your unique struggle, but many have similar struggles that you can relate to and your encouragement may be what gets them through.

2 Corinthians 1:3 (NIV) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 5 For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

What will you do?

What NOT to do:

- Don't Complain about it!
- Don't Ignore it!

How to embrace your Battle:

- Let your battle Ruin you!
- Let your battle Move you to Fight!
- Step into the FRAY! God is with you!

Talk About It...

- *What are your first thoughts regarding today's topic? Please share with the group.*
- *How do you feel about your battles? Do you view them as a blessing?*
- *If not a blessing, how can you change how you view the battle differently?*
- *How can you use your battle to help others through their battles?*
- *God doesn't leave you to battle on your own, how has He helped you through your struggles?*
- *Review James 1:2-4. How does perseverance make you mature and complete?*
- *Discuss Deuteronomy 28:6-10. How can the Lord fight your battles?*
- *What breaks your heart?*
- *What makes you angry?*
- *What do you care about that others don't?*
- *What is your battle?*