

Dignifying the Trial

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. **—James 1:2-3**

It is not every day that I can remember where I was when understanding a particular verse in the Bible dawned on me, but I do when it comes to James 1:2. It came to me after losing my temper at a pizzeria in the summer of 1979. I had so looked forward to a pizza from this particular place and regarded such as a reward for returning to Disney World a second year in a row. But when the time came, everything went wrong. I became impatient for having to wait forty-five minutes for it, and then it rained so much, my pizza fell out of a wet paper bag into a puddle of water. Now I had to go back and face the same manager—after telling him off the first time. How could all this happen? I asked myself.

But James 1:2 had already been on my mind for weeks. As I drove back to the pizzeria that evening, I said to myself, Either James 1:2 is true or it isn't, and if I plan to preach on it shortly, I had better begin practicing what I preach.

I have to tell you, this episode was pivotal for me, and I came to my senses for being so upset. Minutes before I returned to the pizzeria to apologize with genuine meekness to the manager, I repented before God for my anger and behavior.

I decided then and there to dignify that situation by accepting the entire matter as something God sent. That is when a new phrase was born to me: "dignifying the trial." It was a divine setup. I not only repented to the Lord, but I also thanked Him for the whole thing. I apologized to the manager, cheerfully waited for another pizza (for some reason, he wouldn't let me pay), and returned to my family at the motel a different person.

Excerpted from *Pure Joy* (Charisma House, 2006).