

## Growing Pains

### Scripture Reading — James 1:1-18

*Consider it pure joy ... whenever you face trials of many kinds... James 1:2 —*

My twin daughters awoke one Sunday morning to gunfire. A neighbor's son was the target of a drive-by shooting. Our family was frightened and disturbed. Our neighbor survived the shooting, but he vowed revenge. Many people on the block were afraid. "For sale" signs sprouted in front lawns like weeds in a vacant lot. How could we take back our neighborhood from the thugs?

James teaches some important truths about trials and how they lead us back to the gospel. Trials can help build our spiritual muscles. Trials drive us to our knees, where we ask for God's help and intervention. They pull back the curtains of our feeble attempts to live without God. Trials get us in touch with our need for God and the community of faith. They push us to be people of faith, trusting God to work in his own way. Trials help us grow in perseverance. And the result? Joy-pure joy. It's the by-product of growing in our walk with Jesus.

We believe trials can help our street come together to fight for safety and peace in a way it has never done before. New relationships are forming; there are new opportunities for encouragement and building one another up. We have a wonderful opportunity to be God's light to people who don't know him. We call out to God's people for prayer and support. We gather for worship and "ask God, who gives generously to all."

### Prayer

*<p>Father, as you test us through trials, may we ask for your wisdom, determination, and strength to stand. Build us up, we pray, in your power. </p><p>In Jesus' name, Amen.</p>*

**Devotion topics:** [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#)

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