

Believers are often told: “Be careful what you pray for!” If we pray for patience, we will likely encounter interruptions, delays, and distractions. If we pray for generosity, we will likely meet with people or situations that could benefit from our resources. If we pray for perseverance, we will likely experience trials and tribulations. In other words, character traits are only developed by situations which test those traits in our life.

When James wrote his letter to believers who had been scattered abroad, he told them that the testing of their faith would produce patience (or perseverance, in some translations). That patience has a goal: our spiritual and emotional maturity. Immature people become discouraged easily. Therefore, we need experiences which will teach us *not* to become discouraged and will make us more mature. Another way of saying “maturity” is Christlikeness. God uses everything in our lives, especially the difficult things, to conform us to the image of Christ. (Romans 8:28-29)

So when you experience troubles or trials, look for how you might grow more mature by exercising patience and perseverance. Importantly, be careful how you pray!

James 1:2-3 “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.”