

# *Horseshoe or Watch Spring?*

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**A bar of iron worth \$2.50 increases in value to \$5.00 when shaped into a horseshoe. That same piece of raw material may be worth more than \$125,000 when fashioned into a mainspring for a windup watch! Question - If you wanted to make a hefty profit, who would you invest in - the blacksmith or the watchmaker? ... Naturally!**

A great deal of heat, pressure and skill go into both processes. As you can imagine, it takes exponentially more to produce a finely tuned spring for a good timepiece. They don't make them like that anymore.

It would also be safe to assume that in the process of developing a human life, the more challenging and sophisticated the process of trials, the more value people bring to the Kingdom of God.

The New Testament writer, James, found this to be increasingly true when he pondered why his people, the Jewish Christians, were being persecuted all over the world of his day. He shares the encouraging wisdom God revealed to him in the book named after him.

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.” (James 1:2-3 NLT)

A trial or test is anything that breaks the pattern of peace and comfort in one’s life. Some may conclude that these adverse times are of no value to them. They feel that they take away life rather than give it. So, the natural response is to attempt to avoid them.

God, however, wants us to realize that just the opposite is true. He encourages us to assess the great value of our trials. When we do, we find that we have cause for great joy, simply because when we trust the Lord in the midst of them, He makes us into better people.

These times, therefore, call for a new mindset that puts all these things into the right perspective. Paul exhorts in Philippians 3:1 that we should “rejoice in the Lord.” This explains that our responses should be unrelated to the circumstances of life, but to the Lord who sees all of our challenges and is poised to do something about them. In fact, God inspired James to share the great news that “... when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.” (James 1:3-4 NLT)

The purpose of testing is to discover our true nature and character. God brings it to increase the strength of our faith and to demonstrate its genuineness to those around us. Every difficult circumstance can either strengthen us if we obey God and remain confident in His care, or become a temptation to evil if we choose to doubt Him and disobey His Word.

The testing of our faith drives us to a deeper relationship and to greater trust in the Lord. These, in turn, produce a stable, godly, and righteous character.

F.B. Meyer asks and answers the following questions, “Christian, are you wondering about the trials through which you are passing? With impatient heart are you saying, ‘How long, O Lord?’ The heat of the flame and the blows of the hammer are necessary if you are to be more than an unpolished, rough bar of iron. God’s all-wise plan, though it calls for the fire, produces the valuable watch spring of maturity. His very best for your life has behind it His perfect timing.”