

A faith that works when life doesn't

Part 5

A faith that stays calm in a crisis

Book of James Chapter 1 and selected Scriptures

INTRODUCTION:

Crisis commonly means “a time of intense difficulty or danger”; a time when a difficult or important decision must be made. The word has been originated from a 15 century Latinised medical term, denoting a turning point of a disease at which change must come and that change would indicate either recovery or death.

Crises cause us to be overwhelmed, stressed and sleepless; yet, they are part of our lives. It's not a question of whether we will face them or not, rather it's a question of when and how to face what kind.

As a believer, how can we develop faith that keeps us calm in time of crisis? We find answers in the book of James.

1. You are a child of one true God

James 1:16-17- ¹⁶ *Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters.* ¹⁷ *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*

There is no shifting shadow with God. He doesn't have shadow of turning. But as human beings, we do. When we became a child of God, God's light came into our heart. “Then through the darkness, your loving-kindness tore through the shadows of my soul.” When a crisis strikes, our own shadow starts crawling back. If we allow it to come back, we will be deceived by it. We won't be able to remain calm in a crisis.

Numbers 13:33 - *“...We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.”*

The truth is that we are God's chosen people.

Daniel 1:8 - *But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.*

Resolve = Decide in advance

He knew us and chose us before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight (**Ephesians 1:4**).

Daniel 2:14-16 - ¹⁴ *When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. ¹⁵ He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. ¹⁶ At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.*

How could he remain so calm even when a life crisis arrived all of sudden?

He knew us and chose us before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight (**Ephesians 1:4**).

2. Practice "quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry"

James 1:19-20- ¹⁹ *My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.*

Listening calms people down, ourselves and others. It relieves fear.

When we are slow in speaking, we can determine right words and tone; right attitude and approach.

Although anger has its place and is not automatically a sin, uncontrolled anger makes our already difficult situation more difficult:

Proverbs 29:22 - *"A hot-tempered man gets into all kinds of trouble."*

Proverbs 14:29 - *"Anger causes mistakes."*

Proverbs 14:17 - *"People with hot tempers do foolish things."*

Outbursts of anger do not produce the kind of righteous behavior God desires to see in our lives.

Daniel 2:10-12 - ¹⁰ *The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever*

asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer.¹¹ What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."¹² This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon.

Intentional soft & slow talk will protect ourselves and others in a crisis.

3. Wrap your life with church life

James 5:14-16⁻¹⁴ *Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

Some people think church is a perfect place for the perfect people, and so they get discouraged to come to church when they are having a crisis. Church is not a perfect place but a safe place for the sick, the faint, the broken, the sinner, the scarred and the prodigals.

When we come to church, God speaks as His Word is read, proclaimed, and sung. By joining in reading and in singing, and in doing the things that brothers & sisters do, our faith increase.

Daniel 2:17-18 - ¹⁷ *Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. ¹⁸ He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.*

What happened to Daniel? God revealed the king's dream and its interpretation to Daniel in a vision at night. Daniel went to the King and told him both the dream and its interpretation.

Daniel 1:46-48 - ⁴⁶ *Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. ⁴⁷ The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."⁴⁸ Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men.*

One who keep their eyes always on the Lord will not be shaken(*Psalm 16:8*).

Because God will be their confidence in times of crisis, they will stay calm in every situation (*Proverbs 3:26*).

Discussion / Question

1. Would you share one crisis you had in your life?
2. If you can return to that crisis moment with the knowledge of God you have learned since then, what would you change in your attitude and actions?
3. Who do you think you are to God in Jesus and why? Speak aloud to yourself and others in a sentence or two.
4. When someone allows anger to go uncontrolled, how might that affect their relationships, career and/or walk with God?
4. Give an example that you have controlled your anger and changed a harsh response into a gentle response. How did it help the situation or relationship?
5. Would you feel comfortable to talk to someone in church about your current crisis? If you don't, why?
6. If you resolve to do or not to do one thing for God, what would that be? Would you be able to commit today?