

## Challenges are Your Opportunity for Growth By: Patrice Martin

Many people are considered to be creatures of habit. We like the comfortability of routine because it is familiar, consistent, and doesn't require much thought or complexity. Every morning you may have your favorite cup of tea or coffee from the same shop. You like to sit in the same area at the movie theater and you have your most favorite parking spot at the mall. Most often, when something comes along to break us out of our routine we become flustered and uneasy, not knowing what to do. If your favorite meal is no longer available at your favorite restaurant, there is first an expression of disappointment, then it takes a moment to decide on another option. If these small life matters can throw us into moments of confusion, imagine the effect that life's challenges can have on us.

In James 1:2-4, God's word encourages us to count it all joy when we fall into different kinds of trials or temptations. It may seem somewhat odd to expect joy to come from facing trials and challenges. After all, hardships are most associated with the direct opposite: pain, sadness, depression, and hopelessness. However, it is not in the process of trials that we are expected to celebrate; it is the anticipation of what that season will bring. Verse three of this passage tells us that the trying of your faith (during this trial) will produce some patience; and in allowing patience to work in your life, you will become complete.

What you must understand is that although you are a child of God, there will still be challenges in your life. You are holy living in an unholy and fallen world. Tests and challenges will be a part of your earthly living, but because you have the Holy Spirit within, you are never left to face hardships alone. Why not change the way you look at your situation and see how stronger and wiser you will be when you overcome your challenge? It is in the challenge that you will learn what you did not know before. It will take a break in the security and complacency of your daily routine in order for you to reach new levels spiritually as well as practically. The next time you are faced with a challenge in your life, first trust that your Heavenly Father saw it first and is able to walk with you through it. Then envision yourself beyond the end of that challenge, imagining the growth that will come from such an experience. Lastly, begin to rejoice that your opportunity to grow has come!