

Faith in Adversity

Summary – Adversity

1. Adversity in the life of a believer is the result of 4 factors

- § Personal choices – ours/others – sowing and reaping – Gal 6:7
- § Life in the devil’s world – adversarial pressure – Jn 16:33
- § Curses on the man and woman – Gen. 3
- § Permissive will of God – 2Cor 12:7

2. Adversity is God’s tool in our lives – Potter/clay – Isa 64:8; Rom 9:21

- § Humble us – Deut 8:1-5
- § Discipline us – Heb 12:5-11
- § Give us the opportunity to put our faith in His word to the test – Jms 1:2-4
- § Validate the power and reliability of His word – Jms 1:2-4
- § Demonstrate that Satan/world system is not more powerful than God and His promises.

3. The spiritual response to adversity is to look for:

- § Perspective – God’s viewpoint about the situation
- § Proof – power and validity of faith in God’s word
- § Production – God’s work of building virtue in the soul of the believer
- § Process – observe the process of growth in your life.

Faith is the means of growth through adversity – Jms 1:2-4.

- a. Perspective Adopting God’s viewpoint about adversity
- b. Proof Proving God’s word about adversity
- c. Production Seeing God’s work in our souls through adversity
- a) Process Remembering spiritual growth and maturity is a process

a) Perspective: How does God view our adversities?

- § Consider – *hegeomai* AMImp (dep)– to evaluate a situation and reach a conclusion; to decide how to view a situation – perspective.
- § Conclusion and perspective – adversity is a cause for pure joy
- § Fall into – *hotan + peripto* – to be suddenly surrounded (Lk 10:30 – robbers); encompassed about by adverse circumstances – whenever you are suddenly surrounded.

- § Whenever – not all the time but some of the time and it is inevitable.
- § Adverse circumstances often come in bunches at one time – surrounded.
- § Even though surrounded, our perspective is expectant and joyful.

- § Trials – *polikos peirasmos* – different kinds of testing; various kinds of temptation; adverse circumstances of various categories tempting us to doubt the promises of God.
 - § We will experience adversity in all the different areas of life
 - § Our natural tendency when facing adversity is to choose self pity and anger - sight
 - § We feel that adversity will cause us to lose something we value – money, time, love, health, freedom, etc – our agenda.
 - § God’s promises give us a new perspective and understanding about His purpose for adversity in our lives – training, molding, exercise, and growth.

- § Knowing – *ginosko* – PPTC (Instrumental) – because you know; since you understand; because you have learned and believed.
 - § Knowledge is presented here as the basis for forming our perspective.
 - § All perspectives, viewpoint, conclusions are based on some knowledge.
 - § Knowledge of God’s word gives us His perspective about our lives.
 - § Without knowledge of God’s word we are left to our own perspective.

Translation: *Adopt God’s perspective, that it is an occasion for joy whenever you are surrounded by different kinds of adversities that tempt you, because you know*

b) Proof – proving the power and validity of God’s word in life

- § Testing – *dokimos* – proving; testing; a test to determine validity; a test to determine the purity of gold; to put something to the test through fire.
 - § A goldsmith testing the purity of gold
 - § A goldsmith using super heat to boil out impurities from gold
 - § Testing the power and validity of God’s word against the adversities of life.
 - § We can be joyful and hopeful because we know that God’s word will always prove to be more powerful than any adversity of life – we can win.

- § Faith – *pistis* – faith; content of faith; faith + knowledge of God’s word.
 - § Faith can never be divorced from it’s content – always has content.
 - § Adversity in life gives us an opportunity to test the power and validity of putting our faith in the word of God.
 - § Faith can only have content through knowledge of God’s word – more and more advanced understanding and perspectives – rationales.
 - § God’s word is only validated when we use our faith to apply it to the circumstances of life – we validate the faithfulness of God by trusting His word to deal with our lives.

Translation: *the proving and validating of your faith in the word of God*

c) **Production – God uses adversity to produce Christian character in us.**

- § Works – *katergazomai* – PMI (dep) – produces; to hammer out; to produce a product by exerting pressure; to forge and shape metal into implements.
 - § God uses our faith in His word dealing with adversity to produce something **in us**.
 - § God proves the power and validity of His promises to us, and in doing so, produces confidence in us about His faithfulness to honor His word.
 - § We can be hopeful and joyful because we know that God is using adversity to produce something good in us – molding and shaping us.
 - § Adversity is the fire that melts the soul and breaks our pride so that God can hammer us into the image of His Son.

- § Perseverance – *hupomone* – remain under the weight; endurance; steadfast; to maintain your stand under great pressure; to keep trusting under pressure.
 - § Endurance is a result of the confidence that comes from seeing God prove the power and validity of His word over and over through adversity.
 - § Endurance is the capacity to keep looking for the proof of God’s faithfulness beyond what our human logic can envision.
 - § Endurance, having experienced God’s faithfulness to those who trust His word continues to wait on God until the last card is played.
 - § The Christian race is an endurance race – for life – God makes us into long distance runners.

Translation: *Adopt God’s perspective that it is an occasion for joy whenever you are surrounded by different kinds of adversities that tempt you, because you know the proving and validating of your faith in the word of God produces endurance...*

- § Let it have – *echo* - PAIMP – to allow; to possess; to hold; allow endurance
 - § The building of endurance (confidence in God) is the necessary foundation for passing through all the stages of growth unto maturity.
 - § Spiritual stamina to persist in trusting God takes us into the mature stages of CWL.
 - § Complete work – the Christian work discussed in the book of James (2:14-26) is 1st a work of God in the soul of the believer – virtue.

- § You may be – *hina + eimi* – PASUBJ – purpose clause – so that you may be;
 - § The purpose of adversity in the life of the believer is so that we might be something – be something before you do something.
 - § Christian works are the result of growth, never the means.

- § Mature – *teleios* – perfect; complete; mature

- § Spiritual growth from babyhood to mature adulthood is a primary goal of the CWL.
 - § We can be hopeful and joyful in adversity knowing that God is using it to bring us to a state of spiritual maturity – time to grow up.
- § Complete – *olokleros* – complete; intact; whole; without division; all parts working together in unison; united within.
- § God’s hammering out process frees us from slavery to the old man belief system and resolves our inner conflicts of belief.
 - § Our hearts become single minded – fixed and committed to 1 belief system – confident in our faith in the word – cp double minded vs 8.
 - § We can be hopeful and joyful in adversity knowing that God is ironing out the wrinkles in our hearts and making us healthy within.
- § Lacking nothing – *leipo* – to lack; be without; fall short of; be in need of,
- § The mature, complete status of the believer trained through adversity leaves him with all that he needs to win his own spiritual battles.
 - § The contemplated lack is wisdom (vs 5), which is necessary to deal successfully with all the adversities of life.
 - § We can be hopeful and joyful in adversity knowing that God is making us into those who have the spiritual skills to win the spiritual war.

Expanded Translation: *Adopt God’s perspective that it is an occasion for joy and hope whenever you are surrounded by all different kinds of adversities that tempt you, because you know the proving and validating of your faith in the word of God produces endurance. Let endurance complete it’s work in order that you may be mature, complete and lacking nothing.*

d) Process – spiritual growth is a long term process

- § The Christian race is an endurance race – Heb 12:1 – run with endurance.
- § The road to spiritual maturity is a long term process that takes us through stages of growth all the way to the end.
- § 1 victory or 1 defeat does not constitute the whole of the CWL.
- § Failure today in 1 area can be turned into victory tomorrow through growth.
- § Faith in the word of God is the mechanics of growth and the means of experiencing victory in the CWL.
- § Applying the word of God by faith to the adversities of life proves and demonstrates God’s faithfulness to His word and blesses us.
- § Faith in God’s word always produces inner results in the soul.
- § Lack of growth indicates lack of faith in what we know about the CWL.
- § We can know the truth and still not believe the truth for choosing our perspectives about life.