

“What Paul Discovered About Adversity”

How to Handle Adversity, Part 7

April 2nd, 2020

Paul made some fantastic discoveries about adversity that enabled him not to merely **SURVIVE** his circumstances but emerge **VICTORIOUS**

1. There is a divine **PURPOSE behind all adversity**

2 Corinthians 12:7 (NAS) “Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh.”

2. God may choose to **REVEAL the purpose for our adversity**

3. God never **SCOLDS US for asking “why” or for requesting that the adversity be removed**

Matthew 26:39 (GN) “He [Jesus] went a little farther on, threw Himself face downward on the ground, and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering from Me! Yet not what I want, but what You want.’”

James 1:5 (NIV) “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”

4. Adversity may be a **GIFT from God**

5. **SATAN can be the agent of adversity**

2 Corinthians 12:7 (NAS) “Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!”

6. God will **COMFORT us in our adversities**

7. God’s grace is **SUFFICIENT during times of adversity**

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NLT) “Each time He said, ‘My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.’ So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.”

8. God may not see fit to **REMOVE the adversity**

John 16:33 (NLT) “[Jesus said] I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

9. Contentment does not hinge on the nature of our **CIRCUMSTANCES**

Philippians 4:11-12 (NLT) “¹¹ Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. ¹² I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little.”

10. The key to advancing through adversity is to view it as for Christ’s **SAKE**

2 Corinthians 12:10 (GN) “I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Responding to Adversity: The Choice is Yours

- You can play the **BLAME GAME**

- You can throw a **PITY PARTY**

The Right Response: When adversity is the result of my SIN

1. Assume the **RESPONSIBILITY**
2. **CONFESS** and **TURN** from your sin
1 John 1:9 (NIV) "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."
3. Do not **COMPLAIN**
4. Ask God to help you discover the **WEAKNESS** through which sin crept into your life
5. Recognize that God wants to **USE** this adversity in your life
6. Thank God for not allowing you to **GET BY** with your sin

The Right Response: When adversity is from GOD or SATAN

1. Reaffirm your **POSITION** in Christ
2. Ask God to **REMOVE** the adversity from your life
3. Reaffirm the promise of God's **SUSTAINING** grace
4. Thank God for this unique opportunity to **GROW** spiritually
5. Receive adversity as if it were from **GOD**
6. Read and meditate on **SCRIPTURES** describing the adversities of God's servants

My Next Step Today Is:

- Of the 10 lessons Paul learned about adversity, which you need to apply to your life right now? #____; How will you do this?
- I am currently facing adversity, regardless of the source, I will work my way through the correct steps to take
- I will spend some time this week reading 2 or 3 of the Bible passages on the handout about "Adversities of God's Servants"

Join us next week for Easter as we discover **How the Resurrection of Christ Gives Us HOPE for Today!**

Next Step for the Message
“What Paul Discovered About Adversity”
**Read and Meditate (think about) on Scriptures
Describing the Adversities of God’s Servants**

The Bible contains illustration after illustration of God’s faithfulness in adverse circumstances. Fill your mind with these truths. Ask God to open your eyes to the human side of these characters that you might be able to identify with their pain and sorrow.

Read 2 or 3 of these stories

- The Story of Joseph – Genesis 37-50
- Moses not allowed to enter the Promised Land – Deuteronomy 31:14-34:8
- How God provided for Abraham when he was left with the least desirable land – Genesis 13
- How foolish Noah felt while building the ark – Genesis 6 – 9:17
- Christ’s promise to care for those who love Him – Matthew 6:25-34
- God’s promises to take care of you – Isaiah 46:4-13