



ADVERSITY BURDEN OR BRIDGE

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 KJV

[16] For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. [17] For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; [18] While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

ADVERSITY AS A BRIDGE THROUGH PAUL:

Attitude determines which one we choose; learning from the Apostle Paul

1. He could experience contentment in the midst of adversity.
2. He could experience God's super natural strength in his weakness.
3. He learned the true source of all of His needs.
4. He learned he could trust in the faithfulness of God.
5. He learned that God valued his service more than his desires.
6. He learned the sufficiency of God's grace in adversity.
7. He learned even in adversity God was strengthening his message.
8. He learned to see everything as coming from God.
9. He learned the ways of God.
10. It enabled him to become a more effective comforter to those in adversity.
11. He learned that God had a specific purpose for his adversity.
12. He learned he could rejoice in God in the midst of his adversity.



James 1:2-4 KJV

[2] My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; [3] Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. [4] But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

ADVERSITY IS NOT ALL BAD IF WE RESPOND CORRECTLY TO ITS PURPOSE

Adversity is a temporary conditioning of suffering and hardship involving anguish, pressure, heartache, and disappointment. We can either view it as a burden and setback to our plans or a bridge to a new opportunity in our spiritual growth.

James 1:12-15 KJV

[12] Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. [13] Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: [14] But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. [15] Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

WE CAN CHOOSE TO WALK AWAY FROM GOD...

1. Doubt the love of God in our life, question his caring.
2. Blame God for not preventing the adversity.
3. Turn our back on God permanently to get even with Him.
4. Discard the bible as the reliable, truthful, Word of God.
5. Hold a grudge against God and the things of God in our life.
6. Live with a bitter and cynical attitude towards life.
7. Waste our life, no longer considering His will for us.
8. Side with the enemies of God in a petty display of revenge.

... OR WE CAN CHOOSE TO WALK INTO A DEEPER RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD:

1. Form an unshakable **FAITH** in His love for us.
2. Develop an unwearied **PATIENCE** in His ways for us.
3. Exhibit an unwavering **COURAGE** in our recognition of Him.
4. Learn to become **PURER** in heart and mind through His ways.
5. Develop a deeper love for the **WORD OF GOD**.
6. A desire for a more intimate **PRAYER** life.
7. Become a powerful **WITNESS** to the glory of Him in our life.
8. Watching God become more **REAL** and **PERSONAL** to us.

CAN WE EXPRESS THANKSGIVING IN THE MIDST OF ADVERSITY?

We should be thankful to God for all things except those things that are inconsistent with the will of God or those actions which are totally out of his character. If God allows loss in order to make me the person I ought to be, I should be grateful to him for the loss. When we can be thankful to God in spite of our hardships, it's a powerful testimony.

Colossians 3:17 KJV

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Ephesians 5:20 KJV

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Colossians 1:12 KJV

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

WHY WE AS CHRISTIANS SHOULD BE GRATEFUL AND EVEN THANK GOD FOR ADVERSITY:

1. He keeps us continually aware that we are walking in His presence which contributes to a godly life.
2. Motivates us to look for His purpose in everything that happens.
3. Helps us bring our will into submission to His when we have suffered pain and loss.
4. It reminds us of our continued dependence upon Him.
5. Helps me to trust Him when we don't understand why.
6. Is essential to our rejoicing in the midst of suffering.
7. Gives our witness greater impact.
8. Helps displace our anxiety with His peace.
9. Keeps our focus on Him rather than our own circumstances.
10. Energizes us in the midst of our exhausting circumstances.

GROWING IN THE MIDST OF ADVERSITY

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 KJV

[7] And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. [8] For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. [9] And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10] Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

OUR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S PURPOSE FOR OUR ADVERSITY:

1. Getting our attention.
2. Conquering pride.
3. Reminding us of our weakness.
4. Demonstrates His faith.
5. Prepares us to comfort others.
6. Preparing us for future service.
7. God expressing His love.
8. Change the direction of our life.

THE PROPER RESPONSE TO ADVERSITY:

Romans 8:28 KJV

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

John 16:33 KJV

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

1. View it as from God.
2. Pray; "Father, what is your goal for my life in this adversity?"
3. Surrender fully to His unknown will.
4. Rest by faith in His faithfulness to see you through the adversity.

WHAT DO OUR RESPONSES REVEAL ABOUT US:

1. Our true view of God and His importance to us.
2. Our view of ourselves; pride or humility.
3. The hierarchy of things we value in our life.
4. Our weaknesses and our strengths.
5. Our willingness to forgive others or to ask others for forgiveness.
6. Our capacity for tolerance and endurance.
7. The level of our faith in God; fair-weather faith or enduring.
8. Our response is an accurate barometer of our spiritual faith.

BIBLICAL TRUTHS THAT AFFIRM GOD'S GOAL FOR ADVERSITY IS OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

1. Adversity is god's most effective tool for deepening our faith and commitment to him.
2. The area in life in which we are experiencing the most adversity is the area in which God is at work.
3. We realize there is a divine purpose behind all adversity. This should be especially clear to the believer.

