

Growing in Times of Adversity



James 1:2-4

- We started a Series “Anchored Through Adversity.”
 - Purpose – to teach us how to overcome the tests and trials while remaining anchored in Jesus Christ and His promises.
 - Goal – to strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ so that we don’t lose hope in times of adversity.
- The Lessons Learned:
1. What does the word “adversity” mean?
 - A state of hardship, difficulty, affliction, misfortune, or tragedy that one deal with in life.
 - It is true that one of the best tests of a believer’s maturity is trials and tribulations. (James 1:2-4)
 - Tests and trials also help strengthen our faith and develop Christian character in us.
 2. The Joy in Times of Adversity (James 1:2-4, Hebrews 12:1-3)
 - James use the word “count” or another way to put is to consider is a great joy when you experience various trials...
 - Notice James use of words “all joy” not “all happiness”. (vs. 2)
 - The Greek word for “joy” means joyful, cheerful, gladness, or to rejoice.
 3. Trusting God in Times of Adversity (Proverbs 3:5-7)
 - Trust is the single most important factor in any relationship. If you don’t have trust you don’t have much of a relationship.
 - Trusting in God is more than words we say, it’s about believing who God is and what God says in His Word.
 - What does it mean to “trust” God?
 1. The Hebrew meaning for the word “trust” means to lie down on or to put your entire weight on something.
 2. The word “trust” means to believe in the reliability, truth, ability and strength of someone or something.
 - It means to be confident in; to depend on, to hope in, be secure, to rely on or the truth of.
 - It means to believe confidently in the ability, character, integrity and trustworthiness of a person.

- Trusting God and His Word means believing in His Name, His reliability, His Word, His ability to keep His promises and His presence and power working on my behalf.

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- As I stated earlier in this series, that test and trials will come in our lives. And when they do come, they are usually unscheduled, uncomfortable, unbearable, devastating, unfortunate, painful and even frustrating.
- A. One vital element of tests and trials is our response to them. (James 1:2-4)
 1. God will test our heart and teach the heart during a season of growth in our life.
 2. God is behind our tests and trials in this journey called life.
 3. God will use every test and trial to prepare us for our next assignment. If we don't pass God's test, we will have to take it again.
 4. God will use every test and trial in order to refine us and define Himself to us, so that Christ can be reflected in us and through us. (1 Peter 1:6-9)
 - (James 1:3-4) – “knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect (mature) and complete, lacking in nothing.”
 5. The adversity that we all experience in this journey called life God will use to bring us into a state of maturity.
 - No matter how painful the trial, every test and trial has a purpose that God attaches to it.
 - The tests and trials should never be our primary focus. Our primary focus should always be on Jesus. (Hebrews 12:2)

**B. The greatest example of growth and endurance is Jesus Christ.
(Hebrews 12:2-3)**

- Jesus Christ was able to look past the cross because He knew glory awaited Him.
- He knew He would return to His Father and He would bring salvation and deliverance to all who believe on His name.
- Jesus Christ endured the trial by fixing His eyes upon His resurrection and the redemption of mankind. (Matthew 26:39)
- (Matthew 26:39) – “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

C. The Bible is filled with Life lessons that God uses to teach His children about Himself.

- Here are some examples of those who experienced God’s presence and power in times of adversity.
1. Moses and the children of Israel – facing the Red Sea and Pharaoh and his mighty army behind them. (Exodus 14:8-31)
 2. The Three Hebrew Boys – facing the fiery furnace. (Daniel 3:2-12, 15-30)
 3. Joshua and the children of Israel – facing the walls of Jericho. (Joshua 6:1-21)
 4. Daniel – thrown in the lion’s den. (Daniel 6:1-28)
 5. David – facing the champion Goliath. (1 Samuel 17:15-26, 32-51)
 6. The disciples – facing the stormy sea. (Matthew 8:24-27)
- You will never know that God can bring you through it or sustain you in it, unless you trust and believe Him in the midst of the situation.
 - You will never know God and experience His presence and power in our life without adversity.

**D. The greatest discovery that a believer will make in their life is knowing God through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
(Jeremiah 9:23-24)**

1. There is nothing in this world that can match both the intimacy and joy of knowing God.

- The Hebrew word “know” means intimate knowledge, implying a firsthand experience with the one who is known.
- To know God is the most meaningful pursuit of life.
- The believer has the privilege of knowing God and to be known by God.

E. Tests and trials not only reveal character, but it can also help develop character in us.

1. The question for every believer will be our response toward adversity. “It will either make you or break you.”
 - The believer can either respond rightly or wrongly when facing adversity.
 - The believer can either respond negatively or positively when facing adversity.
 - The believer can either respond by choosing to not just go through, but grow through life’s adversity.
2. The question should never be “if” we will face adversity, it’s “when”.
 - We will face adversity in this life, whether permitted or created by God, they are designed to develop us spiritually.
 - The Holy Spirit can use every adverse situation that we face in this life to develop Christ’s character in our lives.

F. There are Three Things Believers need know about God and Adversity. (Romans 8:28, Genesis 50:20)

1. God is in control.
2. God has a plan and purpose for every adverse situation.
3. God desires to use us, but it will require that He develops us spiritually.
 - (Genesis 50:20) – God’s divine providence is clearly revealed through Joseph’s trials and tribulations
 - In spite of the evil intentions of his brothers, God’s purposes prevailed. The favor of God that was upon Joseph’s life, regardless of all the adversity he endured.
 - (Romans 8:28) – And we know that all things work together for the good...”

- This verse of scripture should give us comfort and assurance that God can take and turn any situation and cause it to work for the good for those who love Him.
 - This verse should remind every believer of God's ability to intervene on our behalf.
 - This verse should remind every believer of God's desire to get the glory out of the situation and out of us.
 - This verse should remind every believer of the Sovereignty of God. God is always in control and no situation is ever out of His reach.
 - (James 1:2-4) – "Count or consider it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing."
 - We can all testify of having our lives interrupted by various tests and trials whether spiritually, financially, relationally, physically, and emotionally.
 - We should allow God to use our adversity as a tool to bring spiritual transformation and growth in our lives.
 - We can achieve spiritual growth and development, when our faith rest solely in the power and wisdom of God and not in ourselves. (James 1:5-7)
 - (Job 14:1) – Job declares, "Man who is born of woman is of few days and full
1. Adversity is both inevitable and inescapable.
 - However, God expects us to grow through life's challenges. We can choose to either give up or choose to grow up.
 - Growing up spiritually will require us to go through difficulty and face adverse situations in this life, but the good news is God is with us and God will deliver us. (Psalm 34:19)
 2. It impossible to grow through adversity in life without being grounded and connected to the Vine source which is Jesus Christ. (John 15:4-5)
 3. Four Ways God uses Adversity in the believer's life:
 - The Holy Spirit uses those situations to mold us into Christ-likeness.

- **The Holy Spirit uses those situations to develop Christ's character in us.**
- **The Holy Spirit uses those situations to cause others to see the blessing and favor of God upon our lives.**
- **The Holy Spirit uses those situations to encourage others.**