

# ADVERSITY

## GROWING IN CHRIST

### ADVERSITY

In many respects, the Christian life is a life of testing. We can expect trials because God, through adverse situations, takes out of our lives things that are not pleasing to Him. But trials should never be viewed as punishment.

*Mark 4:15-19 Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. <sup>16</sup> Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. <sup>17</sup> But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. <sup>18</sup> Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; <sup>19</sup> but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. NIV*

### Why do we have trials?

#### **Christians should rarely if ever view trials as if God were angrily striking out.**

- 1 Corinthians 11:30 – Warning against unworthily partaking in communion
- John 5:14 – Jesus saying, “Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you,” to the man healed at the Pool of Bethesda.
- James 5:14-15 – Implication that some sickness may be the result of sin

#### **Christians should view some trials as God’s loving discipline.**

- Hebrews 12:10b-11 God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. <sup>11</sup> No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. NIV
- Revelation 3:19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. NIV

#### **Some trials may not be discipline or punishment at all.**

- Old age
- Man born blind (John 9)
- Job – spiritual warfare
- Jesus

### Expect trials.

It is easy to believe that following God more closely results in an easier or “blessed” life, but that is not the case (at least not in the way we sometimes hope). This is not just a misunderstanding related to the prosperity gospel, this is a common misconception most of us hold.

John 16:33 [Jesus said,] “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” NIV

1 Peter 4:12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. NIV

## Grow through adversity.

- There is a process of strengthening.
- There is a process of maturing.
- The process implies an unfinished product.

Romans 5:3-4 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup>perseverance, character; and character, hope. NIV

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. <sup>4</sup>Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. NIV

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. NIV

Job 23:10 But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. NIV

### Fight to have...

- Good heart.

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup>persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. NIV

I am hard pressed.	I am not crushed.
I am perplexed.	I am not in despair.
I am persecuted.	I am not abandoned.
I am struck down.	I am not destroyed.

- Good habits.
- Good actions.

## Hold onto hope.

### God is still good.

Job 1:20-21 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship <sup>2</sup>and said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised." NIV

### God still loves you.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. NIV

### It will be over.

2 Corinthians 4:16-17 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup>For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. NIV