

# ADVERSITY

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Adversity is a state of unhappiness. Adversity is difficulties, misfortune, trouble and problems. Adversity is a common feature or occurrence in human life. You cannot wish it away. No matter how prayerful you may be, your prayers will not stop it from coming once in a while. Even the righteous experiences it. Abraham had his share of it. Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Apostles Peter, Paul and John all had their share of Adversity. Paul even told us that through it he developed and learnt how to adjust to all circumstances of life.

*“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation. Whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” (Phil.4: 12,13)*

*“To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2cor.12:7-10)*

Before a man will come to the point where he can say that he celebrates adversity, he must have come across a certain knowledge that others don’t have. I believe by the grace of God that we will discover what Paul discovered.

## WHAT YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT ADVERSITY

- (1) Adversity is a sign that you are alive
- (2) Adversity is a proof that you are doing something worthwhile that provokes the envy of the enemy.
- (3) Adversity is part of the process of maturity. Problems make men.
- (4) Adversity is to bring out the best of God in you.
- (5) Adversity is to awake, stir, release and maximize your God-given potentials in you. If certain problems don’t confront you, you won’t know you have certain abilities in you. All the inventions in our world today are solutions to problems that existed at one time or the other.
  - Something must happen to wake up the sleeping giant in you.
  - Something must happen to unlock your creative mind.
  - Problems make man think. And when man thinks, solution comes and our world improved upon.
- (6) Adversity is a stepping stone to a greater height. Problems are likened to a stumbling block (stone). If you have the wrong attitude and approach, you will stumble and fall. But if you have the right attitude it will become a stepping-stone or launching pad to greater heights.
- (7) Every adversity must pass away.
  - After every night season, comes daylight.
  - No condition is permanent.
  - Every problem has a terminal date. It will not remain forever.

- They will come in one way but flee in seven different ways. (Deut. 28:7)
  - *“And it came to pass.” (Isa. 7:1).* Every problem that comes your way will always pass.
- (8) For every adversity, God will always make a way of escape.

*“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.” (1Cor.10: 13)*

He will always (never fails) to make a way of escape.

- (9) Adversity perfects the character and personality of man.
- (10) Adversity will either leave you a better person or worse than it met you depending on how you attend to it.
- (11) Adversity makes you stronger and tougher each time you encounter it.
- (12) Your attitude to a problem is more important than the problem itself.
- (13) Your attitude determines whether you will overcome or not, and how soon you will overcome.
- (14) No test, no testimonies. Adversity reveals the power and love of God.
- (15) The power of God is made perfect in adversity.

### **TURNING YOUR ADVERSITY INTO ADVANCEMENT**

The key to turning your adversity into advancement is looking at it from God’s view point. No matter what may appear to be the cause, purpose to learn from it, and grow strong through it.

*“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.”(Rom.8: 28)*

God uses adversity as a tool for imparting our lives and bringing about his purpose. His plans and purpose for each man will not delay, fail or be aborted. Whatever mistakes we make, the attacks of the enemy on us, or misfortunes that we experience cannot in any way thwart the plan and purpose of God for our lives.

*“The LORD Almighty has sworn ‘surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand’... For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?” (Isaiah14: 24, 27)*

*“...I am God, and there is no other; I am God and there is none like me, I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please: from the east I summon a bird of pray; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose what I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.” (Isaiah 46: 9 -11).*

The bad experiences of life do not thwart the plan and purpose of God in the life of the believer who loves God. So, whatever you go through or encounter will ultimately enrich your life. The devil or enemy may want to ruin your life or kill you, but God will use it to better you and bring you to the place of destiny and glory.

Joseph had a dream of being the leader in his family and his entire family being subject to him. He shared the two dreams he had with the family. He didn't know how it will come to pass, when and where. He only had a dream. His brothers hated him and tried to kill him and ultimately his dream. They changed their minds as they heeded the advice of Reuben and Judah. They sold him to a caravan of Ishmaelites who sold him to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guards. The brothers thought they have ended the dream, but did not know they were indirectly working to fulfill the dream.

*"All things work together for good to them that love God and are called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28)*

Joseph lived uprightly in the fear of God. He served his master well and became administrator of Potiphar's house. He did not allow his misfortune to affect his person and productivity. He made most of his life not caring whether he was a slave or prisoner or free born man. (This is a lesson for all of us). Potiphar's wife became interested in this extraordinary slave. She begged Joseph to sleep with her, he refused. When it became obvious that Joseph was not ready to sin against God and Potiphar his master; she framed him of attempted rape. He was sent to prison as a result. In prison, he lived righteously without grumbling against God. He showed his love for God and remained an excited person as ever. He continued to be interested in other people's affairs and play his usual role of an encourager and motivator, helping people who are dejected to find joy and happiness no matter their condition. As a result, he was given charge of the prisoners by the Chief Warder. He became the unofficial Chief Warder. His gift of interpretation of dream was used to put smiles on the faces of prisoners. A few years later, an ex-convict whom he had blessed with his gift a few years earlier remembered him. He was called up to interpret Pharaoh's dream since no one could interpret it.

- God will always make a way for His own when the fullness of time comes.

Because of his lifestyle of always finding solutions to people's problem, he not only interpreted the dreams, but also gave counsel on how the blessings could be preserved to survive the seven-year draught that is coming. This made Pharaoh to make Joseph the Prime Minister of all Egypt immediately to take charge of gathering in and storing all the grains and distribute when needed.

The wisdom he displayed came from the experience and encounters from all that he suffered in Potiphar's house and in prison. God gave him the understanding and wisdom he displayed in Pharaoh's presence. If he had been a grumbler like most of us, he will not have gotten this far. If he had not continued to faithfully serve God, he will not have been promoted the way he was promoted. It pays to have a positive mentality about adversity and challenges and wait on God.

If he had stayed with his father's sheep, he could not have acquired such wisdom, administrative skills and gifts. If his brothers did not envy him, he would not have been sold to slavery. If he was not sold to slavery, he would not have met Potiphar and his wife. If he had not met Potiphar, he would not have learnt firsthand how to manage men and resources as he did in Potiphar's house managing his businesses, house and servants. If he had not performed well, Potiphar's wife would not have become interested in him, he would not have gone to jail. If he had not gone to jail, the gift of interpreting dreams would not have manifested clearly as it did in Joseph's life

and he will not have met Pharaoh's Cup Bearer. If not for the gift, he would not have made an impact on the Cup Bearer's life to make him remember him when there was a need. So you see that all that happens to us, good or bad all lead to the fulfillment of God's purpose in our lives. Do not fear therefore, for God is always in charge.

## **GOD AND ADVERSITY**

**(1) Adversity is God's way of getting our attention when we are not giving him enough attention.**

*"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and every other thing shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33)*

When we allow the pursuit of money or other things to take our time for God, he allows adversity to come in, in order to bring us back to him. God wants our attention. He doesn't want us to neglect him. He wants to be number one in our lives. If any other thing is allowed to take that position in any one's life, then that thing has become a god to that person. Adversity will be permitted in that person's life to correct that error.

The unfortunate thing is that we forget too soon of the mercies of God. Some, who after many years and months of struggling and suffering was delivered, does not waste time to relegate God to the background. The pursuit of their careers, money, position and fame take their time to the detriment of their relationship with God. God will always wait a while to see if the person involved will change. If he does not, adversity will be permitted to correct the person.

This proves that some problems we encounter could have been avoided if we put God first in all things.

**(2) Adversity is God's way of reminding us that he loves us.**

*"And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that address you as sons: 'My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.' Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons." (Heb.12: 5-8)*

Difficult situations do not prove the absence of love. Misfortune does not mean that God's love for you has diminished.

*"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, His love endures forever." (Ps. 136:1)*

*"Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, for he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron." (Ps.107:15 -16)*

No matter how tough, rough and difficult the adversity may be, God's love for you does not diminish, fail or die. In fact, the crisis is part of his proof of love. He trains and disciplines those he loves just as you do too.

**(3) Adversity is God's way of conquering pride.**

*"Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility towards one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'". (1 pet. 5:5)*

*"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall."(Prov.16:18)*

Pride is an invitation to crisis. God himself opposes the proud to humble them. So each time pride and arrogance begin to manifest in your speech and lifestyle, adversity will be sent to you to humble you. God wants us to always be humble. In our humility, he wants us to depend and rely on him, and give him glory for all the achievements and blessings we experience. His glory, he will not share with another.

Never let pride into your life. Never give the impression that it was your wisdom, skill, power or connection that got the job done. Acknowledge him always. Never talk to others as if they will never rise someday. No man's destiny is in your hands. The day you start talking anyhow to people, that is the day you start going down. This is a spiritual law that none of us can change. Pride and arrogance are dangerous and pulls down. Always remember these passages as you journey on the road to success:

*"...The race is not to the swift or the battle for the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favors to the learned, but time and chance happen to them all."(Eccl. 9: 11)*

*"...Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD Almighty."(Zech.4: 6)*

*"It does not therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy."(Rom.9: 16)*

Some of you may be going through a humbling process right now. All you need to do is acknowledge your pride and repent, and God will turn things around for you.

**(4) Adversity is God's way of reminding us of our weakness.**

*"That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships in persecutions, in difficulties for when I am weak, then I am strong."(2Cor. 12:10)*

Sometimes we become over-confident. At such times, God allows things to happen to humble us and show us our weaknesses and shortcomings. So, through adversity we are reminded that we are human and we need to look up to the Almighty God for strength and support.

We suffer when our weaknesses manifest and bring evil repercussions. God allows this to happen, so, we can give attention to that weakness, and eliminate it. Weaknesses not dealt with, will deal with you. God does not remind us of our weaknesses to oppress us with guilt, but to make us seek help from him for deliverance. Go to work on yourself now.

**(5) Adversity is God's way of demonstrating his faithfulness.**

*"The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. "*  
(Ps. 34:17)

God demonstrates his words and to his covenant child. Every word of God always proves true. If it does not come true, God's integrity as God is affected. He shows commitment to his word by making it come to pass, and in the process compels the populace to take his word serious. So, when a man breaks the law, he will have to pay though God loves him as a person and sacrificed his Son for him. If you break the word, you pay for it. God's love for you will not make him break his own law. He is faithful and committed to his word.

God's faithfulness is revealed when we call on him for help in crisis time, He always show up to prove that he can be trusted, and he will not disappoint those who put their trust in him. Without crisis, there can be no triumphs. No test no testimony. God always shows up for his people to give them a testimony for his own glory.

**(6) Adversity is God's way of preparing us to comfort others.**

*"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God."* (2cor.1: 3-4)

There are some things you can never fully comprehend until you experience it. Compassion is unlocked more in the heart of those who have suffered in a particular area for those going through similar experience than those who have not passed through it. That is why those who have gone through heart problem set up a heart foundation to help others who are going through what they have gone through. Former cancer victims reach out to those suffering cancer.

God may allow you go through a tough time not because you have sinned greatly, but to equip you to be a solution to someone's problem, a comforter to the suffering, and a guide to the confused.

Your adverse experience is a teacher to you and others whom God will connect to you.

**(7) Adversity is God's way of pruning us that we may bear more fruit.**

*"I am the true Vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the Vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."* (Jn. 15:1-4)

Our Father through adversity chops off from our lives those things that are not pleasing to him. He perfects our character. He builds us up to make us what He wants us to be. Yield to the Holy Spirit during adversity so that the spiritual purpose of God by allowing it to come to you will be achieved.

**(8) Adversity is God's way of increasing our hatred for evil.**

*“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the spirit will reap eternal life”.* (Gal. 6:7-8).

Some adversities are harvests of what we have sown. God put this law in place, so that man will be careful what he thinks, says and does. God is committed to it. And it has never failed. As people reap what they have sown, it increases the fear of the Lord in their hearts and hatred for evil. As we see the repercussion for doing evil, hatred for evil increases in our hearts.

**(9) Adversity is God’s way of bringing us to a place of upliftment and promotion.**

Read Genesis 37-50.

*“When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, ‘what if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?’ So they sent word to Joseph, saying: ‘your father left these instructions before he died: This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly’. Now forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father. When they came to him, Joseph wept. His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. ‘We are your slaves’, they said. But Joseph said to them: ‘Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? **You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children’.** And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them”.* (Gen. 50:15-21)

The enemy may mean to harm, frustrate and bury your dream, but God will use it to take you to the top. Remember our text:

*“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”.* (Rom. 8:28)

Joseph’s brothers sold him off to slavery to kill his dream, not knowing that it is through that means he will come to the throne and his dream fulfilled. Desperate for safety, they offered themselves as slaves to Joseph.

Your enemies may make your life bitter and look as if it is far away from destiny revealed to you, but I want you to know that God is using all that you are passing through to bring you to destiny. Your upliftment and promotions comes through what you suffer. After Jesus suffered shame, disgrace and death, He was given a name that is above every name in heaven, on earth, and beneath the earth. Hold your peace. Do not grumble and give up on God.

**(10) Adversity is God’s way of perfecting us to His standard.**

*“Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.”* (Dan. 12:10)

Daniel saw in his vision of the end times that through the hardship and persecution the saints will suffer, that many will be purified and made spotless. This shows that God uses hardship to refine and perfect His saints.

*“But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.” (Job. 23:10)*

### **CONCLUSION**

Approach every difficult situation with the understanding received from this teaching, and you will be free from tension, anxiety, worry, frustration, bitterness that comes from adversity.

No matter what, God’s love for you is intact. Even when you suffer for your sins, mistakes and weaknesses, God is still with you. Correct what needs to be corrected, change what needs to be changed, do all that God wants you to do and move on with your life.

Rejoice when there is adversity. Do not let adversity take away your joy and excitement to live and achieve your life goals. Never give up, but trust God to help you.

### **SUCCESS TIT-BITS**

- 1. If you faint or give up in a crisis time, then your strength is small.**
- 2. All the breaks you need in your life wait within your imagination.**
- 3. Targeted work moves you to the place you dreamed to be.**
- 4. Your strong belief creates enthusiasm and zeal, which provokes commitment that brings about the actualization of your dream.**
- 5. Wishes do not bring success, but commitment and hard work does.**
- 6. There are dimensions to problems. Make sure that all the dimensions are covered to successfully overcome the problem.**
- 7. Purpose is the reason for existence. You must know why you exist.**
- 8. Don’t waste your time with time wasters. Avoid them.**
- 9. To play with one’s education is to submit oneself to oppression, affliction and unnecessary hardship.**
- 10. It takes skill to shine in life; but it takes training to be skillful.**
- 11. “Food gained by fraud tastes sweet to a man, but he ends up with a mouth full of gravel” (Prov. 20:17)**
- 12. “A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapour and a deadly snare” (Prov. 21:6).**
- 13. “Ill-gotten treasures are of no value, but righteousness delivers from death.” (Prov. 10:2)**
- 14. “Such is the way of those who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the lives of those who get it.” (Prov. 1:19)**
- 15. Your experience in life is a direct product of the choices and decisions you make every day.**
- 16. Your level of obedience to the instructions and principles of God concerning your life and work determine your experience.**

17. **Understanding comes by knowledge. The more you know, the more you understand. The more you understand, the wiser you become. The wiser you become, the more successful you are.**

## **WISDOM FOR ASSOCIATION**

1. **Everyone who speaks into your life is directing your thoughts, inspiring your words and conversation, and stirring you to act in a certain way.**
2. **Counseling prepares you to have a certain experience. So if it is a wrong counsel, it will create the wrong experience.**
3. **Your friends contribute to the direction of your life.**
4. **Identifying a worthwhile relationship and an unproductive and unnecessary relationship takes skill and the help of the Holy Spirit of God.**
5. **Getting rid of a friend that is having a negative influence on one is a task many people are nothing willing to undertake, but necessary if one must be who he or she is supposed to be.**
6. **Time wasters kill your dream and your life.**
7. **Those who are always asking from you but not giving to you have no contribution to make in your life.**
8. **It takes a humble heart to relate well and maintain relationships.**
9. **Never see yourself more highly than you ought to.**
10. **Storing bitter feelings in the heart is building a stronghold against your offender.**
11. **Every acquaintance always leaves a part of him or her in your life.**
12. **How much of you are from you, and how much of you are from those around you?**

## **RENEWING THE MIND**

1. **Sadness is a depression of the mind.**
2. **Emotions dictate world events, and thoughts create emotions.**
3. **Every feeling is a product of your thoughts.**
4. **The mind will always resent what it cannot master.**
5. **As long as you see with the eyes of God, you will be what he wants you to be.**
6. **I cannot change your experience, except I change the way you think.**
7. **You can if you think you can.**
8. **Superiority and Inferiority complex are products of misinformation and wrong interpretations of events and the facts of life.**
9. **How you think is how you see. And how you see determine how you live.**
10. **“Our life is what our thoughts make of it” (Marcus Aurelius).**
11. **When one is worrying, he is literally strangling or choking his own creative powers.**
12. **It requires 64 facial muscles to frown and only 14 to smile. Be joyful always and you will always look young and fresh, and your creative powers will function better.**