

SJBCOA Bible Study – Reverend Myron Contee

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Adversities in the Christian Life

Adversity refers to a state or instance of serious or continued difficulty or misfortune. It encompasses challenging circumstances, hardships, and unfavorable conditions that individuals or communities face.

- James 1:2-4 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.
- Romans 5:3-6 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; ⁴ And patience, experience; and experience, hope: ⁵ And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. ⁶ For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Adversity gets our attention

- James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

When adversity comes, **we are forced to face problems and pressures that are too great for us to resolve ourselves.**

- Hebrews 4:5-6 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Troubles point out our weaknesses and prompt us to rely on God in ways that we wouldn't unless we had significant needs.

- Matthew 11:28-30 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Adversity is a classroom in which we can learn more of Christ and become more like Him.

- Psalm 25:1-2 Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. ²**O my God, I trust in thee:** let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.
- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 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. ⁸For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. ⁹And 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. ¹⁰Therefore 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.

Adversity remind us of our weaknesses and our need for God.

- Psalm 103:13-14 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. ¹⁴For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

Adversity motivates us to cry out to God and God has a response.

- Psalm 37:14 The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation.
- Psalm 3:4 I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.
- Psalms 86:3 Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.
- Psalm 9:12 When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.
- Psalm 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

Adversity is an assurance of God's fatherly love and care.

- Hebrews 12:6-11 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. ⁷If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ⁸But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. ⁹Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. ¹¹Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Adversity motivates us to fear the Lord.

Adversity reminds us that **a holy and just God is ever-present, and we are accountable to Him** for our every thought, word, and action. This awareness is called the *fear of the Lord*, and God's Word reveals that the fear of the Lord is the key to wisdom, life, and lasting achievement.

- Proverbs 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.
- Proverbs 14:27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.
- Proverbs 22:4 By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life.

If we lose our awareness of God and begin to think and act as if He does not exist, God often allows painful reminders of our need for Him, just as He did with the nation of Israel.

- Judges 2:18-23 And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. ¹⁹ And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. ²⁰ And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice; ²¹ I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died: ²² That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not. ²³ Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.

Adversities in the Christian Life

Adversity - difficulties; misfortune: **Adversity** refers to a **state or instance of serious or continued difficulty or misfortune**. It encompasses challenging circumstances, hardships, and unfavorable conditions that individuals or communities face.

Adversity. Though challenging, can bring about **remarkable growth** and positive changes to our lives. Here are some benefits of facing adversity.

1. **Resilience:** Adversity builds resilience by testing our ability to bounce back from setbacks. When we overcome difficulties, we become stronger and better equipped to handle future challenges.
2. **Character Development:** Adversity shapes our character. It reveals our true values, priorities, and inner strength. Facing adversity with integrity and courage helps us grow morally and spiritually.
3. **Empathy and Compassion:** Going through tough times allows us to empathize with others who are struggling. It fosters compassion and a deeper understanding of human suffering.
4. **Creativity and Innovation:** Adversity forces us to think outside the box. When faced with limitations or obstacles, we often come up with creative solutions and innovative approaches.
5. **Appreciation:** Adversity teaches us to appreciate the good times. We learn not to take blessings for granted and to savor moments of joy and peace.
6. **Perspective Shift:** Challenges provide a fresh perspective. They help us reevaluate our priorities, recognize what truly matters, and let go of trivial concerns.
7. **Achievement and Growth:** Overcoming adversity leads to a sense of accomplishment. It propels personal and professional growth, pushing us beyond our comfort zone.
8. **Test of Faith and Beliefs:** Adversity tests our faith, beliefs, and convictions. It encourages introspection and deepens our spiritual connection.
9. **Building Relationships:** Shared adversity can strengthen relationships. Going through tough times together fosters bonds and trust among family, friends, and communities.
10. **Life Lessons:** Adversity provides valuable life lessons. It teaches us humility, patience, and the impermanence of both pain and pleasure.

Remember, it's not the adversity itself but how we respond to it that determines its impact on our lives.