



THE LORD'S FLOCK GROWTH DIGEST

PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES

To Grow Through Adversity

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Reading: Jas. 1:1-12

God's purpose for us is to grow and become like Jesus. Sometimes, we become complacent in our Christian growth, for we feel that we have reached a place where we no longer need to grow. When this happens, the Lord will allow adversity to come into our lives to move us forward in our walk with Him and cause us to grow. How we respond will either make us or break us.

Reflection: Why is it that when we encounter problems, the first thing we think about is to quit?

Many people quit serving God and reading the Bible because of adversity. Some people become bitter for they thought that God has done them an injustice. If we will submit to God during times of adversity, we will discover something about God and ourselves.

God has a purpose for every trial. He can make all things work for our good. He sees the purpose and outcome of our problem while all we see is the pain brought about by it. God sees the future while all we see is the present and our problem, that is why we sometimes quit. Remember, God promised His presence during trials (Heb. 13:5).

When we face adversity, we will discover:

- What our view of God really is
- Our Weaknesses and Strengths
- How mature we are
- What our priorities really are

The Lord wants people who have been tried and proven; who have learned to grow through adversity; who have been made stronger and become more determined than ever to serve Him; and, who are willing to change in order to become more like Jesus in their lives.

Facts of Life that We Must Face and Accept

1. Reality of Trials

- Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds (Jas. 1:2).

- A. Problems are inevitable. Jesus said that in this world we will have troubles, but we must take heart for He has overcome the world.
- B. Problems are unpredictable, not planned. Problems happen when we least expect them.
- C. Problems have various kinds. These come in many shapes and sizes.

2. 3 Purposes of Problems:

- Sufferings can accomplish something of value in our lives. God is doing something in our lives.
- A. Problems purify our faith.
 - Our faith develops when things do not go as planned and when we feel like not doing what is right.
- B. Problems produce perseverance.
 - Perseverance is the ability to stay under pressure.
- C. Problems make us mature.
 - God's ultimate goal for us is to grow and mature to be Christ-like.
 - 2 Ways that God Makes Us Like Jesus:
 - Word of God
 - Circumstances of Life

3. Our response determines the outcome of our trials.

- A. Respond with joy. When under trials, God is doing something wonderful in our lives that will bring honor and glory to Him and make us more like Jesus.
- B. Respond with prayer. Ask for wisdom (Jas. 1:5) to understand and handle our trials.
- C. Ask in faith. We must believe that when we ask God for help and wisdom, He will respond.

4. The Reward of Trials

- Blessed is the one who perseveres under trials because that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him (Jas. 1:12).

Will your adversity drive you closer to or away from God? We will grow through trials if we face the facts of life. Adversity is a part of life with a purpose. Trials will provoke a response and bring forth the reward.

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