

## Gaining Strength Through Adversity

### *Why Does God Allow Adversity?*

Weight lifters go to the gym regularly because they know that resistance training will build muscle and, as a result, will make them stronger with each workout. Because they are physically stronger they can handle physical adversity that will come their way.

Adversity comes in many forms beyond just physical. Some people mistakenly think that being a Christian shields them from their share of adversity. “The typical view of the Christian life is that it means being delivered from all adversity. But it actually means being delivered in adversity, which is something very different,” said Oswald Chambers. God helps us during our time of adversity. We would prefer to avoid any problems, yet life doesn’t happen that way. Adversity is going to rear its ugly head. Jesus warns us to not be surprised by adversity. He said, *In the world you will have tribulations; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world (John 16:33)*. What Jesus is telling us is that we have nothing to fear, because God will be with us. Like the weight-lifter, we are stronger by overcoming the resistance we face. If we don’t exercise we won’t have built up the strength needed to meet and overcome the challenge. Chambers wrote, “The strain of life is what builds our strength. If there is no strain, there will be no strength. Overcome your own timidity and take the first step. Then God will give you nourishment.”

Adversity is universal and impartial. It is painful – perhaps physically, emotionally or relationally. It can come suddenly and without warning. Often adversity is beyond our control. It also may be a consequence of our sin and become a learning situation so we don’t repeat the act again. God is forgiving for those who repent, so it can be a new beginning for what God has in store next.



Many biblical characters overcame adversity to do great things for the Lord. Joseph was betrayed and imprisoned before becoming second in command to the Pharaoh. Moses was a fugitive in the wilderness before God called him to lead people out of Egypt to the Promised Land. David spent many years running from King Saul before he became Israel’s most notable Old Testament King. Jesus’ disciples were persecuted but God used them to spread Christianity throughout their world.

Adversity is difficult to deal with and certainly nothing humans welcome. Even Jesus asked from the cross “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” *Matthew 27:46*). But His loving Heavenly Father saw into the future and what the resurrection would do for all mankind. And, as painful as it was, Jesus trusted His Heavenly Father.

It is difficult to willingly accept the thought that tough times are for our good. Adversity is one of God’s most effective tools for strengthening our faith. God allows the adversity because He knows something good will come out of it. We know that God loves us deeply so we can trust that He will work good from our pain. And we know that God is with us through it all. He Himself has said, *I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you (Hebrews 13:5)*.

We cannot choose to avoid adversity, but we can choose how we will respond. God gives us strength at the time when we need it, because overcoming challenges accomplishes His purposes. Through adversity, God is able to accomplish so much in our lives, if we will only trust Him and seek His purposes. God promises to be with us in the midst of adversity. Will you engage or run away? If we’re confident of the Lord’s love for us and understand how He uses adversity in our lives, we will be able to trust Him and respond in a way that benefits us.

**Question:** Think of a time when you faced adversity but, in hindsight, you could see something good come out of the situation.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father. Be with us at times when we face difficulties. Help us to learn from our mistakes and trust that You will bring us through whatever adversity we face.