

BENEFITS OF ADVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION

Many of us have not had to deal much with calamity.
 health problems.
 financial difficulties.
 persecution.

We may have to deal significantly with these matters in the future, however, so we need to prepare for them ahead of time.

I. BASIC FACTS ABOUT SUFFERING

A. In general, suffering correlates with sin: Genesis **3**; Romans **5:12**.

1. Sin is the reason death and suffering are part of the human experience.
2. Sinners cause suffering for themselves and other people.
3. From the beginning there would presumably have been a certain amount of pain aside from sin anyway: breaking an arm by falling from a tree in Eden.

B. A suffering does not necessarily correlate with a sin.

The “moralizing view of history” and “poetic justice” do not necessarily correlate according to scripture.

John **9:1-3**; Acts **28:1-6**; the Book of Job pictures a different understanding.

It is bad enough to have misfortune without someone saying that we must have some unconfessed sin or harbored malice since an unfortunate experience has befallen us.

C. A suffering may correlate with a sin: Jonah, Herod (Acts **12:20-23**).

D. Those who suffer are not necessarily more sinful than those who do not: Luke **13:1-5**.

Two practical results of this observation are that (1) those who do not suffer have no room to feel superior to those who do, (2) and financial success is no indication of divine favor.

II. BENEFITS OF ADVERSITY

A. Impresses us with our dependence: 2 Corinthians **1:9-10**

The very purpose of negative experiences is to cause us to recognize our secondary position in the world.

We cannot stop a tornado, flood, certain incurable diseases, and the like.

B. Develops Christian virtues

1. Humility: 2 Corinthians **12:7**

2. Patience: James **5:10-11**

Why would we need patience if everything always went our way?

3. Respect: Hebrews **12:9**

4. Gratitude: Philippians **4:12-13**

We learn to appreciate what we have instead of looking for more.

C. Brings inner security: 2 Corinthians **12:8-10**

We learn that we cannot always depend on outer circumstances.

D. Toughens us up: 1 Thessalonians **2:2**

E. Teaches us God's principles for living: Psalm **119:71**

We can see what happens when people do not follow those principles.

F. Encourages us to get our priorities straight: Romans **8:18**

G. Helps us rise above our present circumstance: Peter **5:10**

H. Enables us to empathize with sufferers: 2 Corinthians **1:3-4**; Hebrews **2:18**

I. Glorifies God: 1 Peter **1:6-7**

It says to God that we are not just fair-weather friends.

It tells others the same thing about our relationship to God.

CONCLUSION

"All discipline seems for the present not to be joyous but grievous, yet afterward it yields peaceable fruit to them that are exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness" (Hebrews **12:11**).

Looking to the benefits of adversity helps us deal with the present experience of it.

Dealing with adversity ahead of time prepares us for when it comes.