

Frequently Asked Questions on Adversity

Suggestions for those in crisis:

- 1) Take one day at a time and ask God for grace for that day only
- 2) Don't project outcomes to the future. In other words, don't think about all the ramifications of what "may" happen resulting from your circumstances
- 3) Meditate on the Word of God and be obedient to the small things He shows you.
- 4) Spend times alone with God in praising Him. We overcome the spirit of heaviness through praise.
- 5) To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. Isa 61:3
- 6) Reach out to others in the midst of your pain.

Questions:

1. **How did you get out of debt?** God allowed me to keep one piece of real estate that sold for 6 ½ times its purchase price in the 7th year. Paid all my debts and for a home outright.
2. **From your current business or new business?** Existing asset.
3. **How did you handle creditors? Affirm every debt?** I paid small amounts each month and kept them informed of my progress.
4. **Was bankruptcy involved?** No.
5. **You mentioned that you had real estate that survived your trial. How?** I lost one property, had to split one with my wife, and I was able to keep another. I was able to use my life savings to handle what obligations I had. However, over the seven years, I got down to the last pennies.
6. **What was the turning point?** There was a rapid succession of things that occurred during the turning point. It began with the sale of property during the seventh year, and continued with my marrying Angie, seeing God open doors of ministry, and God's blessing the writing and speaking I had begun. Also, I had begun to receive income from new sources.
7. **How did your family react when everything went wrong for years?** My family did not understand what was going on. They also did not know how to relate to me - especially my spouse. My spouse tried to prove I was fabricating the losses and spent \$30K trying to prove her claim.
- 8) **Did you get a job before starting a secular business or before starting your ministry?** My ad agency dwindled down to only one employee - myself. I did some consulting and then began to transition to ministry related activities. God sent a man to underwrite my salary for a year out of his own pocket which helped complete transition.
- 9) **Did you close the secular business before you got out of the pit?** No. it simply dried up. We still use the corporate name for our for profit business.
- 10) **Your book mentions having the hand and favor of God on you as indicative of being a Joseph. Was that while in the pit or afterwards?** Both in and out. God gave favor in the ministry aspect of the pit and now on the other side.

Question:

Have you found that the adversity is often targeted at our call?

Answer:

Yes, we are often attacked in the very area of our calling. Wherever our inheritance is, we will be attacked in that area. Israel is attacked for their land, their inheritance. I was attacked in relationships, because I bring people together for His purposes. I cover this in the book.

Question:

How did you deal with the bitterness over betrayal?

Answer:

You forgive out of obedience. Once you are intentional you begin to have the feelings of betrayal leave and you no longer feel victimized but can truly bless the other person. Jesus meant it when he said BLESS your enemies.

Question:

Discuss the difference between forgiveness and trust.

Answer:

Forgiveness is letting go of wrongs done to you. This also requires trust from your heavenly father that he will take the pain and also work through the pain and rejection you might feel from those who are the source of pain.

Question:

Dear Os:

Why do people go through adversity?

Answer:

From my Christian journey and my study of the Scriptures, I have identified six reasons for the adversity in our lives.

1. Our Sonship

Our Heavenly Father sometimes uses adversity to produce growth and maturity in His children. The book of Proverbs tells us, "My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in" (3:11-12). In Hebrews we read, "Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?" (12:7).

2. Our Identification with Others

God sometimes uses adversity in our lives to enable us to better understand and minister to other suffering people. Paul tells us that God "comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble" (2 Cor. 1:4). God has placed all of us into a community—the Church—in which we are a part of one another. As Paul writes, "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it" (1 Cor. 12:26).

3. Our Testing

As we have already seen, God takes us through the Judas Test, the Integrity Test, the Perseverance Test and the Success Test in order to determine whether or not we are ready for a leadership role in His kingdom. "These [trials] have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine" (1 Pet. 1:7).

4. Our Calling and Preparation

Adversity teaches us how to endure pressure, problems and stress. "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops

perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (Jas. 1:2-4).

5. Our Ability to Trust God's Faithfulness

Adversity is a school of faith where we learn to trust God and depend on Him completely to provide for our needs. As Paul tells us, "God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear" (1 Cor. 10:13).

6. Our Sin

Sometimes, we experience adversity because God is dealing with sin in either our individual lives or in our corporate lives. This is the kind of adversity experienced by the couple who went to see Rick Heeren for counseling. God was lovingly dealing with this couple because of the sin they had tried to cover up. Although the Scriptures clearly teach us that trials are a part of every believer's walk, we must be equally clear on this biblical principle: Sometimes the adversity that comes into our lives is the direct result of sin. When we suffer because of sin, we need to listen to what God is telling us through our adversity—and we need to change the direction of our lives.

Question:

Dear Os:

I just am reading your book and I must say I feel like you are writing about me. The pain, the anguish, the confusion, and the heart retching hurt is so vast that I feel if I could only die I'd find peace. My whole life - God has answered all my prayers. I traveled all over the world lived the best, and traveled the best places. Nothing was out side of my reach. Then slowly, the processes began. I tried everything, I could to hold on and felt I was slipping into the abyss of despair. I am \$600,000 in debt and my creditors laugh when I talk about God. In fact, many members of the church laugh at me because I use to brag on how God prospers his people and now I am so destitute and cannot find work. Just to keep the house afloat and out of the jaws of foreclosure three times, I had to give away 6 acres of land for a slice of bread and yet I am still-in debt. Now believers have a chain around my neck. I feel-like the junk yard dog.

And yet when I read the word of the Father, I am not to live this way, yet I know he has allowed this. I lost all cares for anything, enjoy sleep - so much so at times I pray that I do-not wake up in this world anymore. I will not hate God nor will I deny him. I force myself to pray and seek daily his word. I always have a word for someone else but when it comes to me nothing but an empty hollow feeling, almost a smell of a tomb. How long will I be in this black hole I have no Idea. I feel when the Father gives me dreams and they are wonderful dreams they are there to torment me, I feel like I see this wonderful life and I am on the other side of a think glass only able to look but never touch - not even a smell but an empty taste of glass.

I say all this to ask - when does it come to an end and how do you keep a dream alive or do you just forget about it, because you may never see it come to life but on the other side? I will always Love the Father, but I have told him I can not witness to anyone of your blessings since my life is such a mess.

You are in marketing, as am I. Every business I tried has lead to failure. I feel my hands are filled with death and yet I am the head not the tail. I am to live a victory not defeat.

Do you just take on step at a time push and push and hopefully you will make it thru or have an attitude of really do not care anymore for anything but the sweet smell-of death and then say where is your sting and all my tears are gone.????

Answer:

Thank you for writing to me.

From your letter I can tell you are in the height of your adversity experience. I wish I could say something that could change that immediately, but that is not possible. However, I can tell you that life is not over, the season you are in will pass, and God will make something good of your experience. The keys are:

- 1) Take one day at a time and ask God for grace for that day only
- 2) Don't project outcomes to the future. In other words, don't think about all the ramifications of what "may" happen resulting from your circumstances
- 3) Meditate on the Word of God and be obedient to the small things He shows you.

It appears you may not be finished with *The Upside of Adversity*. There so much more practical action steps in the book that can give you direction.

Please know that the greater the adversity, the greater the call. God must have significant plans for your life. Again, the key is to press into Jesus with all you have. I would encourage you to get a copy of our CD, The Joseph Calling which is available on our website at www.faithandworkresources.com . I think it may encourage you.

Our staff will pray for you. Know that His love is true by the fact He died for each of us. This season is truly your preparation for something He has for you in the future.

"Lord, I pray for this man - that you will give him the grace he needs for this hour. That you will give him peace in the midst of his storm and turn the Valley of Achor (trouble), into a door of hope in his life (Hosea 2:15). Use him for your Kingdom purposes and demonstrate your faithfulness in meeting the needs he has at this time. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Question:

I am 53 years old. I have lost my job and have been unemployed for a year now. I am also in debt. I am not able to provide for my family. The whole family has to depend on my wife's income. What is the will of God in this?

Answer:

There are times when we face seasons where we are out of work or simply cannot work due to illness or extenuating circumstances. The people of Israel were faced with this dilemma when they left Egypt to travel to the Promised Land. They had no ability to work and they lived in a desert environment. They had no skills for this new place.

God created manna. It was designed for daily provision to get them through this difficult place. The Bible says even their shoes did not wear out. The correlation to modern-day life is that we must seek to provide for ourselves and our families the best we can during these times. Sometimes it means jobs we would not normally take. Sometimes it means we experience supernatural provision from God to cover our needs. The Bible says God will provide all our needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus. I believe this includes material needs as well. What it does not say it "wants". Many times people have an unrealistic view of what needs are. Needs are food and clothing.

I would encourage you to seek employment if the Lord is directing you to. Don't presume upon God. Spend time getting his direction for your circumstance. He has promised to lead us and guide us on all decisions. (See Proverbs 3:5,6).

In my book *Upside of Adversity* I discuss the Desert Place in chapter 4. I detail the different phases of walking through the desert place in our adversity and how God provides for us.

Question

17 years ago the Lord withdrew His conscious presence from my husband. This was not due to a moral failing or disobedience. Prior to this time my husband enjoyed a close relationship with the Lord and God would speak to him so clearly and distinctly. 17 years ago in my husbands words "it was like God clicked

down a light switch and that was it - silence! Since that time we have gone through incredibly difficult waters. At times the pressures of life have almost been unbearable which has caused fatal blows to our faith especially to my husband's. The worst part for my husband (like it was for Job) is the deafening silence of God. Daily he walks and cries out to God asking God to speak to him, praying for others, praying for our city and I have to say in 17 years hardly any prayers have been answered and to quote your phrase very, very few "faith experiences" so that "we would know first hand the faithfulness of God, the love of God and the personal nature of God." Over the years my husband has dealt to the best of his ability with any past issues, forgiveness issues etc. He's been prayed for, gone through "the Steps to Freedom", gone through "Set Free" etc, etc, etc. At this point he basically feels he must have done something so terrible that God doesn't want to have anything to do with him. What is so sad is that my husband was such a man of faith but because of this journey, our kids have grown up without seeing a man of incredible faith that their dad once was. What does one do after 17 years of crying out for God's presence and intervention and infusing of the Holy Spirit and there is silence and a sadly very, very few "faith boosters"?

Answer

Chapter 3 entitled "The Black Hole" from the book *The Upside of Adversity*, sounds a great deal about what your husband may be experiencing. However, I am not aware of anyone going through that long of a period. Without know more details, it would be difficult to comment further on his situation.

Question

If God says seek first my kingdom and all these things will be added to you, why then do I suffer lack financially and my debts climb? I know God has led me to the ministry I am in. It meant not seeking work in my former career which paid very substantially. I was not afraid of the step because God led. its been 3 years now. the last year however everything has gone bad. I got very ill and lost work for 3 months, and other contracts I had, then my dad passed away and that involved unexpected financial costs. When I tried to get more contracts -in the area that I am ministering in, God closed all the doors. My friends tell me that God is trying to tell me to go back to my previous career (the financially rewarding one). I am not impressed that way however. But what puzzles me, is why God isn't providing in the area that he has called me to? I am trusting him though but each day its a financial struggle. But the Lord is good. Thanks for your ministry. I know everyone says you speak to them, but I think the Lord caused you to write JUST FOR ME!! (smile)

Answer:

It is not possible to answer such a detailed question that would need more background info to do justice to your question. However, there are several principles we can find in God's word about some issues you are facing. One issue is that we are often attacked in the place of our inheritance. Consider how Jesus was tempted by Satan not to go to the cross, Abraham was tempted by Lot to take the wrong land and today Israel is attacked in the place of their inheritance (land).

I am attaching an article on the 7 reasons we can go through adversity which is also contained in more detail in *The Upside of Adversity*.

Question:

Why is it that what I want is always different from what God wants?

Answer:

Sometimes aligning our wills with His will is not always the same. Jesus never did anything He did not see the Father doing. He was always in alignment with His will for His life. As we grow in our Christian life we should become aligned with His will for our lives. Living an obedient life is sometimes a long process before we realize we are not really abiding in his will for us. Sometimes he motivates us through adverse circumstances in order for us to come in unity with His will and purpose for our lives. His desire is for good things for us but sometimes it takes adjusting to His will in our lives. There are seven reasons we can experience adversity in our lives that I cover in the *Upside of Adversity*.

Question:

Was the loss of your marriage a combination of circumstances or one specific issue ?

Answer:

It was a combination of issues from both of our lives that was rooted in our desire to meet needs outside God's perfect design. We both brought issues into our marriage that were rooted in generational strongholds that neither of us understood during the marriage, despite years of counseling. I now teach about how spiritual strongholds impact relationships. My marriage today is successful because we understand these factor and dealt with them before we were married. [You can find more on strongholds at this link:](#)

Question:

When will our children return to the fold of God?

Answer:

No one can tell you the answer to such a question. What I can tell you is that God does answer prayer and that you must continue to pray for loved ones who are not in relationship with God. I can tell you my daughter came to the Lord after much prayer and it has been a great testimony of His faithfulness.

Question:

How do I discern if God wants me to close my business down or persevere through a very difficult time trusting him to guide me thru it?

Answer:

This is not always easy to discern. God reveals His answer in several ways. I discuss this in detail in my book: *Making Godly Decisions: Knowing and Doing the Will of God. Here is one way to discern God's will as described by George Mueller.*

George Mueller was a pastor in England during the nineteenth century who knew what it meant to live a life that was focused on knowing and doing the will of God. God led him in a walk of faith that has become an incredible testimony to all who hear his story.

Whenever he had a need of any kind, he prayed for the resources and told no one else of his needs. He wanted everyone to know that God answered prayer and could provide for all his needs. During his ministry in Bristol, England, George started the Scriptural Knowledge Institute and built four orphan houses that cared for 2,000 children at the time. When he died at the age of 93, over 10,000 children had been provided for through his orphanages, and he had distributed over eight million dollars that had been given to him in answer to prayer.

How did he know and do the will of God? Henry Blackaby, in his Bible study *Experiencing God*, quotes Mueller on how he kept a vertical dimension with God as he made his decisions.

"...I never remember...a period...that I ever sincerely and patiently sought to know the will of God by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, through the instrumentality of the Word of God, but I have been always directed rightly. But if honesty of heart and uprightness before God were lacking, or if I did not patiently wait upon God for instruction, or if I preferred the counsel of my fellow men to the declarations of the Word of the living God, I made great mistakes." Here is how he summed up the way he entered into a "heart" relationship with God and learned to discern God's voice:

"I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people generally is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the knowledge of what His will is.

"Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If so, I make myself liable to great delusions.

"I seek the will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, He will do it according to the scriptures and never contrary to them.

"Next, I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's will in connection with His Word and Spirit.

"I ask God in prayer to reveal His will to me aright.

"Thus, (1) through prayer to God, (2) the study of the Word, (3) reflection, I come to a deliberate judgment according to the best of my ability and knowledge, and if my mind is thus at peace, and continues so after two or three more petitions, I proceed accordingly."1

Question:

After seven years of incredibly difficult circumstances, at church, our business, and home, I am close to giving up that God will "come through" for us. I have been a Christian for 37 years, but am almost at the end of my faith. Any advice, words of encouragement or hope?

Answer:

Sometimes the Christian life requires an extra measure of perseverance. In my book *Upside of Adversity* I talk about the need for perseverance. Here is what I wrote that might be of some help to you.

Question:

I know that as a Christian, God uses adversity in my life to shape me and He even sometimes orchestrates events in my life that lead to or are adverse in nature to make me more like Christ, but what about non-Christians and adversity? Does it work the same way for them with Adversity? Thanks!

Answer:

God knows us from the foundation of the earth whether we choose him or not. The Bible says He chose us, we did not choose Him. However, each of us has a free will to accept His invitation to our lives to know Him. Prayer from others can have an impact on this greatly. However, it is clearly the predestined will of God as to how He chooses to work in one person's life. He used adversity to draw Paul into the calling He had for his life. I am confident He has done this in the life of many people. More people come to Christ through adversity than through His goodness.

Question:

How can I have influence in the pulpit when I failed as a parent?

Answer:

I appreciate this honest question. Living a genuine faith is crucial for us to have our kids or anyone else respond to the fruit from our lives. The Bible is clear about not living a hypocritical life and we can bring judgment upon ourselves when we are not living clean before God. However, if we are living obedient before God then we can only pray for, spend time with and try to encourage our kids to have a genuine walk with God. If we don't model it though, they won't be able to see it. Love your kids and encourage them. Become their friends as well as their parent. The teen years can be challenging but I believe living a genuine Christian life goes far in impacting our kids.

Question:

How did you navigate through the transition of your coming out of the adversity you were in to the place you are at now? Usually the last transition is the hardest and that's where I'm at now. Thanks.

Answer:

I believe we can only respond to what life brings us the best way we can. We are to continue to seek God's direction in every aspect of our lives, especially adversity. As we do this He has promised to direct our lives (Proverbs 3:5,6). Over time God begins to bring us into the straight places that we desire. However, I find that He does not do that until we have become dead to our own interests and we are fully given over our lives to His will for us. We must die before the new birth can take place. Our Promised Land is received out of abiding and living in obedience to His working in our lives. God said "how quickly would I subdue your enemies if you had but listened to me." So, we see there is a level of cooperation that is needed to enter our Promised Land.

Question:

How do you get rid of the emotional pain of divorce after a 30 year marriage/infidelity?

Answer:

I am enclosing a section from my book, *The Upside of Adversity* that may help you with this difficult question. The key things you must deal with is not becoming a victim to the situation and turning fully to the Lord with the pain and rejection of the past situation. There is new life on the other side if we fully turn to him.

Question:

Why would God promise something then take years to grant it even though it is reachable?

Answer:

Usually this is done to bring greater glory in the fulfillment of the promise and that his timing is not ready beforehand. Look at the story of Moses and see that he was called to deliver the people but God did not do it until after all of the plagues which brought great adversity upon Moses before the people were delivered.

Question:

How do we know ALL the particular Adversity is of God and not of satan, or self created? I am currently in a 6 year battle.

Answer:

The Book of Job is probably the oldest book of the Bible, written even before Genesis. It's the story of a wealthy and successful community leader named Job. He was the Bill Gates or Donald Trump of his day—a fabulously successful businessman with huge holdings of livestock and real estate. He was also a deeply righteous and devoted follower of God.

Job 1 tells us that one day Satan came before God and God asked him, "Where have you come from?" Satan replied, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." In other words, Satan had been wandering the earth, trying to stir up trouble, misery and sin among human beings.

God said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." Notice that *God pointed Job out* to Satan! God practically painted a bull's-eye on Job's chest!

Satan said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

And the Lord replied, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

So Satan went out and proceeded to put poor Job through a trial of adversity. Job's herds were stolen, his servants were murdered, and all of Job's children were killed by a sudden tornado. On hearing the news, Job tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on his face before God, saying:

Naked I came from my mother's womb,

and naked I will depart.

The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;

may the name of the LORD be praised (Job 1:21).

God didn't directly cause Job's losses. God didn't personally destroy Job's herds or kill Job's children. But God did point Job out to Satan, and He did give Satan permission to bring these losses into Job's life. In the process, Job undergoes a kind of Joseph Calling experience. Through his trial of adversity, he grows in strength, wisdom and faith. His entire perspective on God is transformed by his suffering.

We must get beyond the immature notion that God is only interested in making us healthy, wealthy and happy. God wants so much more for us than that. He wants us to be wise, mature, obedient,

bold and committed. He wants us to be like Christ. And the road to becoming like Christ often leads through the wilderness of adversity.

Question:

OS, I have a friend, new to faith going through child custody issues and depression. I try to encourage her and gently guide her to Christ, but she continues not to head my advice and slip back into darkness and unload her burdens on me. I used to feel it was a blessing to help her, now it's becoming a burden. How do I stay encouraged and continue to encourage her. She's draining me.

Answer:

This is a difficult situation. Sometimes God uses adversity to draw someone through His grace. However, sometime people refuse this grace and become victims to their circumstances. They refuse the grace being extended to them. If someone refuses this grace, then they will become a burden to others and we will not be able to help them. Unfortunately some people must go through greater hardship before they are willing to seek God in their circumstances. Until that happens, you run the risk of being used up by them. Paul had to wash his hands from some people because he recognized that some people had not gotten to the end of themselves yet. In these cases, we need to back off and let God work on them until they are ready for His grace.

For more on adversity, read The Upside of Adversity by Os Hillman.
www.FaithAndWorkResources.com