

## **Growing through Times of Adversity** **1 Corinthians 10:11-13**

### **Introduction:**

1. In chapter 10, Paul reminded us how Israel went into the wilderness and encountered a time of adversity.
2. While in the wilderness, they encountered adverse circumstances, but it was not for the purpose of destroying them. These adversities should have caused them to see that in God they had everything they needed.
  - God was enough. He was sufficient for their every need. No matter the trial, they could trust God.
3. The adversities of the wilderness should have been a time whereby their faith grew and matured. But instead of **growing** in the wilderness, Israel was **destroyed** in the wilderness. vs. 5-10
4. In verses 12-14, Paul makes application to the body of Christ today. He gives us some incredible insight on how we can grow through times of adversity.

### **First, nobody goes through life without times of adversity. vs. 11, 13a**

1. In verse 11, Paul says that the adversities of Israel were written and documented in God's Word as examples for us today. They are written for our admonition.
2. So what does this teach us? Just as Israel experienced times of testing and adversity, we will too. Trouble is a part of this life we live in. **Job 14:1**
3. Why do we experience trouble and adversity in this life?
  - Because we live in a fallen creation - **Romans 8:22-23**
  - Because of bad choices we make - **Galatians 6:8**
  - Because of persecution due to our godly life - **2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 2:19-20, 4:12-16**
4. Notice the beginning of verse 13. The word "temptation" doesn't just mean a temptation to sin, but it simply means "adversity." This could include problems with sin.
5. Notice, that there is no testing or trial that you can go through that is unique only to you. Our adversities are "*common to man.*" This phrase simply means "human."
  - You are human. You live in a fallen world in which Satan is the god. Therefore, you and I go through testings, adversities, and trials. Just as Israel did, we do.

### **Second, nobody is above falling in times of adversity. vs. 12**

1. Verse 12 is very self-explanatory. Paul is teaching that there is no place in the Christian life for pride and arrogance.
2. When you get saved, there is typically an incredible honeymoon period where you have this spiritual euphoria. You feel invincible. You assume that your life will be a bed of roses from now on - a tiptoe through the tulips.
3. When trials, temptations, and afflictions come, it can be devastating to a new Christian. This is why it is so crucial that new Christians immediately begin getting rooted and grounded in the truth of God's Word.

- This is also why new Christians should not be placed in leadership positions. Paul said they can get lifted up with pride and fall into the condemnation of the devil.
4. Satan uses pride to bring about our destruction. This is why Paul teaches here in verse 12 the importance of maintaining a spirit of humility.
  5. Sometimes we are very hard on other people who have struggles. We say, "I would never do that." This is a very dangerous and arrogant attitude. **Galatians 6:1**
  6. There is not a one of us who are incapable of ending up like Demas.  
**Colossians 4:14; cf. 2 Timothy 4:10**

**Nobody has to fall in times of adversity. vs. 13-14**

1. This verse has been very misunderstood by so many. They use this verse to teach that God puts the believer through adverse circumstances intentionally to strengthen you and temper you like steel put through the fire.
  - They teach that God does this to prepare you or enable you to do something great later. They say, "When you are right at the breaking point, God will step in and deliver you."
  - This all sounds very intriguing but it is not what Paul is teaching in this verse.
2. Notice, the adversity or temptation in this verse is "**common to man.**" He isn't discussing things that are unique only to believers, but these adversities are common to saved and unsaved alike. They aren't some special, unique testings from the hand of God.
3. But we see what **is** unique to the believer - God is faithful, and God makes the believer able to handle these things without breaking apart under the load.
4. As believers, we aren't left helplessly to face these things alone. We have a relationship with God. We are in Christ. We are complete in Christ - we have all that **Christ is** living inside of us. **Ephesians 3:20; 2 Corinthians 2:14** (triumph - to conquer, to give victory)
5. God provides a way of escape. But what is this way of escape? Here's what you commonly hear: "When you are right at the breaking point, God will swoop in and deliver you if you just trust Him (pray through, name and claim it, etc)."
6. There is an obvious problem with this kind of thinking. At the end of the verse Paul says, "*...that ye may be able to **bear it.***"
  - The adversity doesn't go away. God enables you to bear it. He does this through His Word and all the marvelous resources He's given you in Christ.  
**2 Corinthians 9:8**
7. If adversity or sin swallows us up and destroys us, we cannot point an accusing finger at God and say, "God, you put too much on me." God has provided the way of escape that we might be able to bear it (endure it).
8. The way of escape is not God **removing** the circumstance so that you don't have to face it anymore, but the deliverance is God **empowering** you so you can go **through** the thing victoriously. **2 Timothy 3:11**
  - By applying His Word and His grace to the situation, you are able to bear up under it and it doesn't destroy you.

9. There is no adversity you will ever face that God hasn't given you a solution in His Word. Your sufficiency in Christ gives you the capacity to stand by faith in the solution He gives you in His Word. You don't **have** to fall.

**In Conclusion:**

1. God is not intentionally sending you through the fiery furnace of afflictions to equip you for service. You are already equipped through your complete position in Christ, the sufficiency of His Word (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**), and God's indwelling Holy Spirit.
2. But here is the promise: as you do go through adversity (and you will, because we live in a sinful and fallen creation), God is able to take those adversities and transform that which looks like something negative, and turn it into something that will bring glory to Him.
3. God has promised you that no matter what life throws at you, He will provide grace to bear it. A beautiful illustration of this is found in **2 Corinthians 12:7-10**.
  - Satan induced the problem, but God used it for His glory and gave Paul the grace to bear it and live victoriously through it.