

PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. Do you have a trial or failure that later on produced positive changes in your life? Tell us about it.

2. Are you going through a difficult time at the moment? Pray that God will victoriously bring you out of it.

3. How is God using adversity, pressure, and hardship to help perfect some areas in your character?

PRAYER

Pray for endurance, hope, faith, and perseverance as people go through adversities in life.

MAX ALTITUDE

Finding Strength Through Adversity

WARM-UP

1. Have you ever climbed a mountain? Which one?

2. What is your favorite sport? Why?

3. What hardships, trials, or suffering have you gone through that made you a better person? How?

WORD

Most birds evade storms. But an eagle flies through an approaching storm. The eagle will fly to some high spot and wait for the winds to come. When the storm hits, it sets its wings so that the wind will pick up and lift it above the storm. While the storm rages below, the eagle is soaring above it. The eagle does not escape the storm. It simply uses the storm to lift it higher. It rises on the winds that bring the storm.

When the storms of life come upon us-and all of us will experience them- we can rise above them by setting our minds and our belief toward God. The storms do not have to overcome us. We can allow God's power to lift us above them. God enables us to ride the winds of the storm that bring sickness, tragedy, failure, and disappointments in our lives. We can soar above the storm. Our altitude is determined by our attitude.

Our lives can be maximized altitude when we learn to find strength through adversity. How can we do that? We will gain strength and be a better person when we know the purpose of adversity and how we can respond rightly to it. As what Joel Osteen wrote," We may get knocked down on the outside, but the key to living in victory is to learn how to get up on the inside."

1. God designed adversity to mature us.

James 1: 2-4 says,

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.

Adversity, tests, and challenges have a purpose. Trials and the proving of your faith bring out endurance, perseverance, and patience. When under pressure, our life will be forced into the open and show its true colors. We should let perseverance do its work so we become mature, well-developed, and not deficient in any way. This is the reason we can be glad, even if we experience troubles and adversity in life.

2. God wants us to trust in Him in the midst of adversity.

In the midst of hardship, we need to depend on God and his promises rather than complain, worry, or be frustrated. Our God who is faithful will come to support us as we learn to rely upon Him.

Psalm 115: 11-12 says,

*You who fear Him, trust in the Lord- he is their help and shield.
The Lord remembers us and will bless us*

A total trust and confidence in God's power and ability is necessary as we go through the adversities and difficulties in life.

Let's take notice of the example of king Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18: 5-7. It says there,

Hezekiah trusted in the Lord, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. He held fast to the Lord and did not cease to follow him; he kept the commands the Lord had given Moses. And the Lord was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook

3. God has made us to overcome adversity.

In the midst of adversity, we should see ourselves as God sees us- as more than conquerors.

Consider what the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8: 35-37

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: " For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Pastor Joel Osteen wrote in his book ' Your Best Life Now'- " *Our attitude should be: I may have been knocked down a few times in life, but I am not going to stay down; I am determined to live in victory. Why not be happy while God is in the process of changing things? After all, there's nothing we can do to make it happen any faster; when you're in God's timing, you can be in the midst of the biggest challenge of your life, and you'll still be filled with joy. The adversity you are facing could very well be something that God is using to push you and challenge you to be your best. God is giving you an opportunity for promotion.*"