

Tri-Une Healing Ministries Center

How to Handle Adversity

The following concepts and quotes are taken from the book, “How to Handle Adversity” by Dr. Charles Stanley.

There are three wrong assumptions that people and even Christians make:

1. If you are sick, it is because you have sinned. This could be true but not necessarily. Jesus told His disciples that it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him.
2. God never causes adversity. This is not true, as we read in Exodus 4:11 “And the Lord said to him (Moses), “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes him dumb or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?”
3. If you are a Christian, you should not suffer or have troubles. NOT TRUE!

God never intended for us to experience adversity. That was not His will for us, but sin entered the world and changed that. Sin does result in death of many kinds: physical death, loss of a business, loss of a marriage or friendship, loss of self esteem or ambition, loss of hope or peace. But God uses adversity regardless of its source to accomplish His purposes.

Adversity (a condition marked by misfortune, calamity or distress) creates circumstances often beyond our control. Bad things do happen to good people. Although suffering is usually the last thing to be considered useful, it is God’s most useful tool. Suffering highlights our dependence, weakness and insecurity. Adversity in this life when handled properly provides for the believer’s glory and honor in the life to come. Our suffering is temporary but the heavenly rewards that we accumulate are eternal. God specializes in taking tragedy and turning it into triumph. The greater the tragedy. The greater the potential for triumph. As long as things are going great, we have no doubt that God is with us, but as soon as adversity comes along, we are asking, “God, where are you? Why don’t you do something?” Our circumstances do not reflect the level of God’s involvement in our lives.

Romans 8: 28 – All things work together for good to those who love God and to those who are called according to His purposes. That is a conditional promise.

Our ability to handle adversity affects the level of spiritual growth that we have achieved. By resisting adversity, we rob ourselves of the work that God desires to do in our lives. Ask God for wisdom and the ability to see things from His perspective. There is a connection between adversity and spiritual growth. God allows adversity into our lives to get our attention. When there is nothing wrong in our lives, we falsely assume that everything is right. Adversity removes the cloak of what we are suppose to be to reveal the truth of what we are. God allows adversity to enter our experience for the purpose of not making us weak but to enable us by His strength to do what otherwise would be impossible for us. Through adversity, God can demonstrate His faithfulness to us and increase our faith. God does not always change our circumstances when we ask Him to but gives us the mercy and grace to get through them.

Suffering in our lives should make us more sensitive to the sufferings of others and enable us to comfort them but it does not automatically do so. First, we often need to be comforted ourselves by others and the Holy Spirit and then we can be able to comfort others who are going through similar experiences.

God's ultimate goal is for us is to become more Christ-like, to die to ourselves. We are not to merely imitate the life of Christ but for the life of Christ be lived through us.

God may choose to reveal the purpose of our adversity or not. He will not scold us for asking why or asking for our adversity to be removed. He will comfort us during our adversity and grant us the grace that we need to get through it. He may not remove the adversity but sustain us during it.

How we handle our adversity determines to what level it will be used to bless us and fulfill God's purposes in our lives. If we allow bitterness, anger, frustration or resentment to take over our behavior, we will probably remain in the situation until we choose to change our attitude so that God can change the outcome. Adversity is meant to create spiritual growth, fulfill God's plan in our lives and comfort others. What are you going to do when you go through adversity?

There will be God's justice for those who cause adversity and do not repent for doing so if not in this life, in the next. We are, however, called to forgive those who the enemy uses against us. We need to choose not to be bitter, angry, or resentful about our suffering but ask God to use it to bless us and others. Trust God through your adversity. He will not fail you.