

## “SHALL WE NOT ACCEPT ADVERSITY?”

### INTRODUCTION

- A. In the wake of catastrophe, mankind demands an answer: Why, if God is so good, does such great evil abound on earth?
  - 1. We heard the question when passenger jets were hijacked and used as missiles to crash through the Pentagon and obliterate the twin towers of New York City’s World Trade Center.
  - 2. We heard it repeated when literally hundreds of thousands perished in the tsunami that struck scores of nations on the shores of the Indian Ocean.
  - 3. But it doesn’t take the deaths of thousands or hundreds of thousands to usher that question in again. So many face personal tragedy from day to day, and thus seek an answer.
    - a. One will ask, “If God loves me, why did my spouse divorce me?”
    - b. Another will inquire, “If God is so good, why am I suffering from cancer?”
    - c. Others will say, “If God exists, why did he let my brother die in a car wreck?”
- B. It is the intent of this lesson to address that question.

### I. BLESSINGS ARE UNDESERVED

#### A. Sin’s Recompense

- 1. Sin is universally practiced.
  - a. **Ecclesiastes 7:20**  
None are without sin.
  - b. **1<sup>st</sup> John 1:8, 10**  
To claim otherwise is a lie.

c. **Romans 3:23**

When we commit sin, we fall short of God's glory.

2. Sin deserves to be punished.

a. **Genesis 2:15-17; 3:19**

From the beginning, God guaranteed death as the consequence of sin.

b. **Romans 5:12**

All mankind has subsequently made the same choice and earned the same outcome.

c. **Ezekiel 18:4, 20**

Sin is repaid on an individual basis.

d. **James 1:15**

The clear progression of sin ultimately ends in death.

e. **Revelation 21:8**

The death of which we speak is a second death in the lake of fire.

f. **Romans 6:23**

Sin's wages, what it earns, is death.

**B. GOD'S Kindness**

1. Despite the punishment we've earned, God is willing to bless us with the gift of salvation anyway (**Romans 6:23**)!

a. **2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:9**

The only reason He has yet to destroy the earth is His great longsuffering, in which He wills that none should perish.

b. **Ezekiel 33:11**

It does not please Him to punish.

2. He provides all that we need in this life.

a. **James 1:17**

God gives good gifts!

**b. Acts 14:17**

All the good we enjoy in this life is proof of God's existence and goodness.

**c. Matthew 5:45**

Indiscriminate of good or evil, God sends the sun and rain.

**d. Considering what He has provided, we must learn to be satisfied.**

**i. 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:6-8**

If God has bestowed upon us far greater blessings than we could possibly deserve, is it not greedy to complain about adversity?

**ii. Philippians 4:11-13**

Paul set a fine example, knowing contentment both in prosperity and in adversity.

**iii. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:5-11**

Examples from the Old Testament teach that we ought not complain.

**iv. Job 2:9-10**

## **II. THE CAUSE OF ADVERSITY**

### **A. Not Necessarily Punitive**

Although God's blessings are never earned, adversity is not necessarily the result of sin.

**1. John 9:1-3**

Jesus corrected those who blamed physical disability on sin.

**2. Luke 13:1-5**

He said that tragedy and iniquity often have nothing to do with one another.

3. **Job 1:1-21**

Job is introduced as an upright man, before his woes befell him. In fact, it was his blamelessness that prompted his adversity.

**B. Consequence Of Sin**

1. **Galatians 6:7-8**

We reap what we sow!

a. Sexual promiscuity leads to venereal diseases, abortion, and fatherless children.

b. Drunkenness causes car wrecks and other violence.

2. **1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:15, 2:20**

Those who are punished for sin have no basis for complaining about the penalty.

3. **Exodus 34:7**

Some suffer the effects of others' sin.

**C. Satan's Work**

1. **Job 1:6-12; 2:1-8**

Satan's mission is to overthrow faith and he will try to accomplish that goal by any means.

2. **Luke 13:10-17**

He afflicts health sometimes.

**D. Persecution For Righteousness' Sake**

1. **Matthew 5:10-12**

Throughout the ages, men have suffered for serving God.

2. **2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:12**

The godly should expect persecution.

3. **1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:12-19**

Tribulation of this sort is a kind of fellowship with Christ.

**III. THE VALUE OF ADVERSITY**

**A. Test Of Faith**

**1. Job 1:8-12**

Job suffered for this very explicit purpose.

**2. 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:6-9**

For those who remain faithful through it, the outcome of grievous trials is the verification that their faith is genuine.

**B. Character Development**

**1. Romans 5:3-4; James 1:2-3**

Virtue is developed and evidenced by tribulation.

**2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 1:3-6**

By suffering, we become qualified to comfort those who also suffer.

**3. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:7-10**

Our infirmities keep us humble.

**C. Preparation For Eternity**

**1. James 1:12**

The promise of life awaits those who endure.

**2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:16-5:1**

With an eye on eternity, our afflictions seem light.

**3. Romans 8:18**

We must suffer if we expect to receive glory.

**CONCLUSION**

**A. Psalm 73**

Asaph observed how unfair it seems that the wicked prosper, but after he learned from God he came to understand that the wicked end in destruction, but the righteous are preserved.

**B. Revelation 21:1-5**

All sorrow will ultimately be removed for those who make it to heaven.