



'GROWING THROUGH ADVERSITY'

James 1:2-4

Adversity is a part of God's divine process to develop you spiritually. As we continue, during the Lenten Season, to grow to become more like Christ, we need to expect adversity to become a constant companion. Both Paul and James speak of rejoicing in their suffering (Romans 5:3-4; James 1:2-4). Most of us, if we are honest with ourselves, have difficulty with that idea. Endure pain and suffering, perhaps, but rejoice? That often seems like an unreasonable expectation. We are not masochistic, we don't enjoy pain.

Paul and James both say that we should rejoice in our trials because of their beneficial results. It is not the adversity considered in itself that is to be the ground of our joy. Rather, it is the expectation of the results, the development of our character, that should cause us to rejoice in adversity. God does not ask us to rejoice because we have lost our job, a loved one has been stricken with illness, or a child has been born with an incurable birth defect. But, He does tell us to rejoice because He is in control of those circumstances and is at work through them for our ultimate good.

Hebrews 12:2 says that Jesus, "for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame." Jesus could look beyond the suffering to the joy set before Him. We are to fix our eyes on Him and follow His example if we are to GROW THROUGH ADVERSITY. God works through adversity. Fortunately, God does not ask how or when we want to grow. Through the word of God we are nourished (Psalm 1:22-3), but through adversity we are pruned. God intends that we grow through the disciplines of adversity, as well as through instruction from His Word. Psalm 94:12 says, "Blessed is the person you discipline, O Lord, the person you teach from your law." One of the most encouraging passages in the Bible is Philippians 1:6.

God knows what He is doing. Remember that every adversity that comes across our path, whether large or small, is intended to help us grow in some way. If it were not beneficial, God would not allow it or send it. God does not delight in our suffering. He brings only that which is necessary, but He does not shrink from that which will HELP US GROW

Meditate during this Lenten Season on your growth.

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