

**Advancing In Adversity:**  
**“Bearing Up Under Adversity” - (Paul)**

INTRODUCTION

- A. Songs: Does Jesus Care, #163 and What A Friend We Have In Jesus, #937.
- B. Job says, Job 14:1.
- C. Pain, suffering, struggles, death, sickness, tears, etc., make newscasts and newspapers.
- D. FACT: We all have faced adversity and experienced failures and successes.
- E. Our best success comes by being a new creature in Christ which offers hope, peace and joy to:  
*“Bear up”* under adversity (JA 1:2-4)

DISCUSSION

- I. KEY FACTS ABOUT ADVERSITY.
  - A. Two Important Principles (JA 1:2-4):
    - 1. Trials will come to YOU. (HE 11:32-38; I Pt. 4:12; RE. 2:10)
    - 2. Trials will come in assorted shapes and sizes.
  - B. Synonyms used to describe adversity include: suffering, persecution, hard times, problems, pain, struggles, burdens, stress or trails. *They all hurt!*
  - C. Adversity comes *quickly* and *unannounced*.
  - D. Adversity takes away the future from the present.
  - E. Bottom Line: Adversity doesn’t stop because we are Christians, but Jesus provides the guidance for us to *“bear up”* under adversity.
- II. PAUL KNOWS ADVERSITY.
  - A. Paul faced and overcame adversity (2 CO 7:4-5).
  - B. What adversity did Paul face? (2 CO 11:23-28).
    - 1. Common sufferings to all people (i.e. long journey’s, boat accidents, hunger, cold, bandits, beasts)
    - 2. Disappointments (i.e. vain preaching, rejection, loneliness, broken relationships/promises, lack of appreciation, conflicts in the church)
    - 3. Christian suffering (i.e. persecution, unjust imprisonment, narrow escapes, his authority)
    - 4. Unique personal suffering – “thorn in the flesh.” (2 CO 12:7)
  - C. Bottom Line: Few of us will ever taste the same amount of adversity as Paul. If he overcame adversity, so can we too!
  - D. What can we learn about *“Bearing up”* under adversity like Paul? Let’s explore 7 key lessons to learn.
- III. SEVEN KEY LESSONS TO LEARN.
  - A. Adversity Draws Us Closer To Or Further Away From God
  - B. Two possible responses to adversity:
    - 1. Job’s wife -Job 2:9.
    - 2. Job’s responded - Job 2:10
  - C. Paul’s response to five types of adversity:
    - 1. 2 CO 12:10.
    - 2. Many show their lack of faith by questioning God.  
 “Why me?” “Why did God allow this?” “Why now?” “What did I do to deserve this?” “Why does God not answer my prayers?”
    - 3. Bottom Line: Our *attitude* and level of faithfulness is directly linked with how we respond.
  - D. Adversity Will Bother Us
    - 1. Adversity hurts. It hurt and bothered Paul. 2 CO 7:6; 1:8).

2. We may feel like: Quitting and giving up, but we don't. We can't take it anymore, but we can. Ending our life, but we don't. Adversity hurts and will challenge every fiber of our being, but we hang on by the thread of faith.
  3. *"We acknowledge that life is a warfare and then are surprised when someone gets wounded."* – Robert Hicks
  4. Bottom Line: Flesh wounds will heal. When we are knocked down, we are not out. Adversity will be painful.
- E. Overcoming Adversity Is Based On A Solid Foundation
1. The foundation of our faith is built on sand or solid rock. Jesus says: MT 7:24-27
  2. Adversity is like stormy weather beating against our house. All (wise and foolish) will face the storms of life.
  3. Our house will endure, if it is built on hearing and doing what Jesus says.
  4. Paul's foundation of faith was solidly built on Jesus Christ. 1 CO 3:11; GA 2:20; PH 1:21; 4:13.
  5. Paul's faith was in Jesus and nothing else.
  6. Bottom Line: If we have a solid foundation of faith based on Jesus, then we can weather the storms of life.
- F. Adversity Is Momentary
1. When faced with adversity, we must see the *"big picture."* 2 CO 4:16-18.
  2. Keep adversity in perspective. Adversity in this life is temporary, light and brief in comparison to eternity.
  3. Remember: Death is not the end, but the beginning of life. By Faith, look at the *"big picture."* 2 CO 5:7.
- G. Adversity Builds Character
1. We must know that adversity will build perseverance. JA 1:3.
  2. *"What doesn't kill you makes you strong."* 2 CO 12:9
  3. Adversity is God's classroom. Adversity teaches us:
    - a. The right priorities in life. EC 7:3. PH 3:14. There is nothing worse than a life filled with adversity from which nothing good ever comes. Adapt God's perspective and priorities.
    - b. Humility. 2 CO 12:7. We must recognize that we are powerless without God.
    - c. Dependence upon God not ourselves. 2 CO 1:9-10. When in trouble, we either trust in God or ourselves. Some lack character by quitting and stop worshipping, praying, studying, doing right and then blame God and others when facing adversity.
  4. Bottom Line: Overcoming adversity is all about character which is learned from *"the school of hard knocks."*
- H. Seek Spiritual Help
1. We must allow ourselves to be helped. 2 TI 4:17.
  2. God offers comfort and help in several ways:
    - a. God is aware of our suffering and provides comfort. EX 3:7; 2 CO 1:3.
    - b. Comfort comes from our brethren. 2 CO 7:6, 13.
  3. God offers comfort and help in several ways: Comfort can come from study and prayer. 1 TH 4:18; Acts 27:25; HE 4:16; 1 PE 5:7.
  4. Bottom Line: We are comforted to comfort others. 2 CO 1:3-4.  
*"There is gold in them thar' pews."* and *"Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love."*

- I. Maintain A Conqueror's Attitude
  - 1. Paul suffered much, but he remained faithful in overcoming adversity. We must remember:
    - a. God's love transcends all adversity. RO 8:38-39.
    - b. A godly person is a "*conqueror*." RO 8:31, 33-35, 37.
    - c. *Conquerors* will: Walk according to their spiritual condition, Set their minds on spiritual things, Be lead by their spiritual character, and Allow their spiritual attitude to help in their weaknesses. (RO 8:4-5, 14, 26-27)
    - d. Our roots must be deep in Christ. Godly people get depressed, but do not stay depressed. *Christians are conquerors!*

#### CONCLUSION

- A. We are planted in *different* and *difficult* places. Be fruitful where you are planted. Acts 16:23-25; CO 4:18.
- B. Christians are called to "*bear up*" under adversity.
- C. How have you responded to adversity? We will either *give up* or *bear up*!