

Adversity

Getting Started

Adversity hits us in many different ways. It can come as an illness, the death of a loved one, betrayal from a friend, or any unexpected difficulty. None of us know when it will hit, but we all know that sooner or later, we will have to face it. Adversity can make us angry with God. We might ask questions like, “God, why are you doing this to me?” Or, “God, why won’t you help me? Why are you letting me suffer so much?”

The book *Streams in the Desert* says comfort is, “one of God’s most precious gifts.” But in order to have comfort we must first have pain. Is there anything good that can come from adversity? Is there any purpose behind it?

Improving Your Vocabulary

adversity (n) – suffering; trouble; difficulty

betrayal (n) – the act of being false or disloyal; the breaking of a trust

comfort (n) – encouragement or help

precious (adj) – very valuable

bitter (adj) – very painful; full of bad feelings

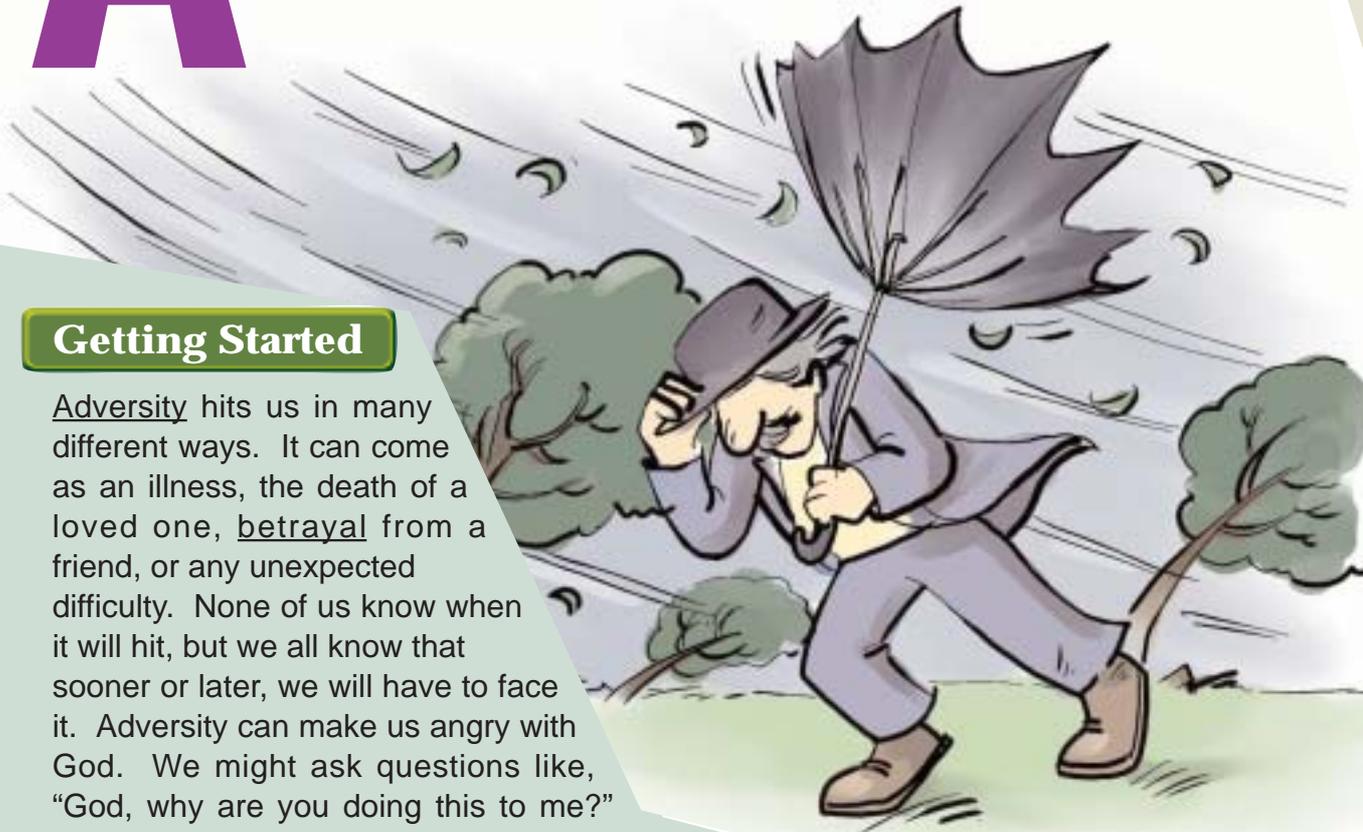
condemn (v) – to say someone is guilty

cruel (adj) – very unkind

ignorant (adj) – lacking knowledge or education; uninformed; foolish

marvel (n) – something wonderful and unbelievable

repent (v) – to feel sorry or regret for a wrongdoing, with a desire to change



Reading God's Word

Job was a good man who believed in God and followed God's laws. Job suffered a mountain of adversity; his children died, he lost all his money, and he became very poor and sick. Job even became angry with God, but did he ever lose his faith in God?

Job 1:8-11

8 "Did you notice my servant Job?" the Lord asked. "There is no one on earth as faithful and good as he is. He worships me and is careful not to do anything evil."

9 Satan replied, "Would Job worship you if he got nothing out of it? **10** You have always protected him and his family and everything he owns. . . **11** But now suppose you take away everything he has—he will curse you to your face!"

Job 10:1-3 and 7

1 I am tired of living. Listen to my bitter complaint. **2** Don't condemn me, God. Tell me! What is the charge against me? **3** Is it right for you to be so cruel? To despise what you yourself have made?. **7** You know that I am not guilty, that no one can save me from you. Your hands formed and shaped me, and now those same hands destroy me.

Job 19: 25-27

25 But I know there is someone in heaven who will come at last to my defense. **26** Even after my skin is eaten by disease, while still in this body I will see God. **27** I will see him with my own eyes, and he will not be a stranger.

Job 38: 1-5

1 Then out of the storm the Lord spoke to Job. **2** "Who are you to question my wisdom with your ignorant, empty words? **3** Now stand up straight and answer the questions I ask you. **4** Were you there when I made the world? If you know so much, tell me about it. . . **5** Do you know all the answers?"

Job 42: 2-4 and 6

2 I know, Lord, that you are all powerful; that you can do everything you want. **3** You ask how I dare question your wisdom when I am so very ignorant. I talked about things I did not understand, about marvels too great for me to know. **4** You told me to listen while you spoke and to try to answer your questions. . . **6** So I am ashamed of all I have said and repent in dust and ashes.

Job 42: 12-13 and 16-17

12 The Lord blessed the last part of Job's life even more than he had blessed the first. . . **13** He was the father of seven sons and three daughters. . . **16** Job lived a hundred and forty years after this, long enough to see his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. **17** And then he died at a very great age.

For further study, see Matthew 11:28; Romans 5:3-5; 8:17-18;
Hebrews 12:7 and 1 Peter 2:19-20.

Taking a Closer Look

1. God said Job was “faithful and good.” (1:8) Was God punishing Job?

2. Did Job lose his faith in God? (Job 19:25-27) Where did Job find comfort?

3. How did God answer Job’s questions? (38:1-5)

4. How did Job respond to God’s answer? (42:2-6)

5. What did Job repent of? (42:2-6)

6. Put yourself in Job’s position. Can you think of anything good that came out of his pain?

7. Has anything good ever come from a painful experience you’ve had?

8. Why did Job keep his faith in God? Was it because he knew God would bless him? Or because he knew God deserved his love and trust no matter what?

Taking Action

1. Job never did fully understand why God let him suffer so much, but he was sure God loved him. How can we be sure God loves us?
2. Many times people come to God for the wrong reasons – because they want him to give them what they want. How can we be more like Job, who came to God for the right reasons?
3. How can we comfort each other in times of adversity?

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merciful Father, the God from whom all help comes! He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God.

Improving Your Vocabulary

Fill in the blanks with one of the new vocabulary words.

1. Even if we know we are wrong, it can be very hard to _____ and say we are sorry.
2. Everyone experiences _____ at some time in their lives.
3. When children are hurt, they usually turn to their mothers for _____.
4. A _____ from someone you love hurts much more than a _____ from a stranger. (The same answer in both blanks.)
5. Airplanes, computers, and the Internet are _____ of technology.
6. When Jack was fired from his job, he was very _____.



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