

UNDERSTANDING ADVERSITY

Compiled by Laura M. Brotherson, LMFT, CST - [The Marital Intimacy Institute](#) (Mar 2022)

This handout is a compilation of insights, scriptures, quotes, etc. to help us better understand the purposes and blessings of our trials and challenges including scriptural counsel and promises regarding adversity. Sometimes it's hard to [trust the Lord](#) when you're just tired and worn out from all the adversity in your life. Hopefully something here will inspire you to keep going and maybe help you see the Lord's hand in your afflictions.

Blessings/Purposes of Adversity

- Greater reliance on the Lord/ Developing an intimate partnership with Him
- Patience
- Refinement of our rough edges
- Greater love and compassion
- Greater empathy for others' weaknesses and struggles
- Meekness and humility
- Opportunity to develop a disciplined mind -- requisite for true faith
- Opportunity to yield our hearts and wills to God
- Opportunity to learn to use our agency more intentionally
- Opportunity to more fully partake of the comfort, strength, and healing power of the Atonement
- Enlargement of soul, which increases our capacity for love and joy
- To prove ourselves--whether we will abide all things faithfully (D&C 98:12, 14-15; 101:4; 136:31)
- To give us experience and help us grow (D&C 122:7).

How We Can Endure Adversity Well

- Maintain meekness, don't let bitterness poison and harden your heart.
- Trust in God that all things will give you experience and be for your highest good (D&C 122:7).
- Trust in the Lord's timing and divine purposes (even if they are unknown to you).
- Go to humble. Look for the personal learning and growth to be gained. Ask yourself "What personal weakness could now become a strength?"
- Know that the Lord has perfect love, understanding, empathy, and compassion for each of our struggles and weaknesses.

The Lord's Counsel Regarding Our Experience with Adversity

- Be patient, knowing that afflictions are but a small moment (D&C 24:8; 31:9; 54:10; 121:7; Alma 17:11)

- Rejoice and give thanks (D&C 98:1) -- see "Blessings of Adversity" above
- Remain obedient and cleave unto good (D&C 98:11)
- Care for the soul (things eternal) ... and seek the Lord (D&C 101:36-38).
- Don't fear what man can do, for God is with thee forever (D&C 122:9; D&C 98:13).

Scriptural Counsel Regarding Adversity

- **D&C 24:8** – "Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for, lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days."
- **D&C 31:9** – "Be patient in afflictions, revile not against those that revile. Govern your house in meekness and be steadfast."
- **D&C 121:7** – "My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment."
- **D&C 54:10** – "And again, be patient in tribulation until I come; and, behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, and they who have sought me early shall find rest to their souls."
- **D&C 98:1** – "... fear not, let your hearts be comforted; yea, rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks;"
- **D&C 98:11** – "And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, that ye shall live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God."
- **D&C 101:36-38** – "Wherefore, fear not even unto death; for in this world your joy is not full, but in me your joy is full."
- **D&C 101:37** – "Therefore, care not for the body, neither the life of the body; but care for the soul, and for the life of the soul."
- **D&C 101:38** – "And seek the face of the Lord always, that in patience ye may possess your souls, and ye shall have eternal life."
- **D&C 122:9** – "Thy days are known, and thy years shall not be numbered less; therefore, fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever."

- **Jacob 3:1** – “...Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions.”

The Lord’s Promises Regarding Adversity

- The Lord will be with us, stand by us, and heal us in our afflictions (D&C 3:8; 24:8; 112:13; 122:4; Jacob 3:1; Mosiah 24:13-14; Alma 36:27).
- Those who are faithful in tribulation will receive glory, joy, and other blessings (D&C 58:2–4; D&C 101:35–36; D&C 103:12; D&C 121:29; D&C 127:4; D&C 136:31).
- All things will work together for our good and to the Lord’s glory, afflictions consecrated for our gain (D&C 98:3; D&C 122:7; D&C 90:24; D&C 100:15; 2 Nephi 2:2; Romans 8:28).
- Those who are faithful in affliction will be exalted (D&C 121:8; D&C 127:2).

Scriptural Promises Regarding Adversity

- **Mosiah 24:14** – “And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, ...and this will I do...that ye may know for a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions.”
- **D&C 84:88** – “...I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mind angels round about you, to bear you up.”
- **D&C 112:13** – “And after their temptations, and much tribulation, behold, I, the Lord, will feel after them, and if they harden not their hearts, and stiffen not their necks against me, they shall be converted, and I will heal them.”
- **D&C 98:3** – “Therefore, he giveth this promise unto you, with an immutable covenant that they shall be fulfilled; and all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good, and to my name’s glory, saith the Lord.”
- **2 Nephi 2:2** – “thou knowest the greatness of God; and he shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain.”

Questions to Ask Ourselves in Times of Adversity

- “How can I maintain a softened heart and be strengthened through my trials rather than becoming bitter?”
- “Of what do I need to repent?”
- “What am I to change about myself and my life?”
- “If I am sufficiently humble, what personal weakness could now become a strength?”
- “What am I to learn from this experience?”
- “Whom am I to help?”
- “What would the Lord have me do?”

Favorite Quotes Regarding Adversity and Trials

- *“Sometime in the eternities to come, we will see that our trials were calculated to cause us to turn to our Heavenly Father for strength and support. Any affliction or suffering we are called upon to bear may be directed to give us experience, refinement, and perfection”* (Delbert L. Stapley, *Ensign*, Nov. 1977).
- *“Do not presume, because the way is at times difficult and challenging, that our Heavenly Father is not mindful of you. He is rubbing off the rough edges and sensitizing you for your great responsibilities ahead. ...There is a divine purpose in the adversities we encounter every day. They prepare, they purge, they purify and thus they bless”* (James E. Faust).
- *“In the pain, the agony, and the heroic endeavors of life, we pass through a refiner’s fire, and the insignificant and the unimportant in our lives can melt away like dross and make our faith bright, intact, and strong. ... It is part of the purging toll exacted of some to become acquainted with God. In the agonies of life, we seem to listen better to the faint, godly whisperings of the Divine Shepherd”* (James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 1979, 53).
- *“I have seen the remorse and despair in the lives of men who, in the hour of trial, have cursed God and died spiritually. And I have seen people rise to great heights from what seemed to be unbearable burdens. ‘Finally, I have sought the Lord in my own extremities and learned for myself that my soul has made its greatest growth as I have been driven to my knees by adversity and affliction’”* (Marion G. Romney, *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1969, 69).
- *“Adversity can also come ‘to accomplish the Lord’s own purposes in our life that we may receive the refinement that comes from testing’”* (Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 16).
- *“God uses challenges that we may grow by conquering them”* (Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 43).
- *“Into the life of each of us come what I call golden moments of adversity...these painful friends that break my heart, drive me to my knees, and make me realize I am nothing without my Savior”* (Glenn L. Pace).
- *“No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude and humility. All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts, expands our souls, and makes us more tender and charitable, more worthy to be called the children of God...and it is through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we come here to acquire and which will make us more like our Father and Mother in heaven”* (Orson F. Whitney, in Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, 98).

The Savior Carries Us in Our Suffering

The following poem is a nice reminder that the Savior is always with us and carrying us through our trials even when we may not readily notice...

“Footprints in the Sand”

(attributed to Mary Stevenson*)

*One night I had a dream—
I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord
and across the sky flashed scenes from my life.
For each scene I noticed two sets of footprints,
one belonged to me and the other to the Lord.
When the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that many times along the path of my life,
there was only one set of footprints.
I also noticed that it happened at the very lowest
and saddest times in my life.
This really bothered me and I questioned the Lord about
it.
“Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you,
you would walk with me all the way,
but I have noticed that during the most troublesome times
in my life
there is only one set of footprints.
“I don’t understand why in times when I needed you
most,
you should leave me.”
The Lord replied, “My precious, precious child,
I love you and I would never leave you
during your times of trial and suffering.
“When you saw only one set of footprints,
it was then that I carried you.”*

Joseph’s Suffering – A Type of Chris’s Suffering

Just like Joseph (who was sold into Egypt - see Genesis 37, 39-50) the Lord is mindful of us and walks with us throughout our suffering. He was with Joseph in the pit, when employed by Pharaoh, in prison, and with him again as he worked under Pharaoh to address the coming famine in Egypt. God knows what He is doing and has a purpose for all things—even our suffering. (See Genesis 50:20 – “...ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good.”)

Joseph is a type of Jesus Christ and His suffering. Our suffering is also a type of Christ and His suffering.