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## Growing in Tough Times

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Free media and discipleship resources for pastors, leaders, and growing disciples.

# Growing in Tough Times

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God uses tough times to develop Christ's character in us. It is the potholes, detours, and difficulties along the journey that provide opportunities to reshape and refine our attitudes and actions. This takes time and it's his goal we not get derailed from his plan, but become champions of endurance.

The apostle Paul explains:

*We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love. (Romans 5:3-5)*

Usually, these trials dominate a day or a week, sometimes, they last for months. Then there are other times when we encounter a crisis that is life-altering. When that happens, we find ourselves walking through a valley so dark and deep we wonder if we will ever see sunshine again.

With every trial, we face the temptation to abandon God while the evil one whispers in our ear "Give up on God. After all, hasn't he abandoned you?" But in reality, God is with us even in our darkest hours, regardless of what our emotions or demonic voices tell us. God knows what we are going through and reaches out his hand, not to save us from the situation but so we can walk through that valley with him.

*When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. (Isaiah 43:2)*

*"Our loving God uses difficulty in our lives to burn away the sin of self and build faith and spiritual power." —Bill Bright*

Adversity looks a whole lot better when you see it through your rear-view mirror. It is only when a crisis is far enough in your past that you can see the bigger picture and appreciate the good that God accomplished through fear, calamity, or suffering.

God uses adversity as a tool to refine us and increase our capacity for greatness.

James, the brother of Jesus, admonishes us,

*Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. (James 1:2-4)*

Difficult life experiences shape us. Through those experiences, God allows us the opportunity to grow in our spiritual character so we reflect more of his values and strength. But it is our choice whether we allow that transformation to take place. If we harbor resentment toward God and others for our hardship, we will leave the valley of trials diminished instead of stronger.

Paul reminds us:

*And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. (Romans 8:28)*

Trust God in tough times. Persevere in hardship and allow the Holy Spirit to transform you.

[Watch the summary video](#)