

Adversity

Teaching Objectives

- Give comfort to those that mourn or have lost their faith in God due to their adversities
- Give hope to those bearing great afflictions
- Help all to learn to depend on the Lord for strength and help

Examples of adversities

Example 1	Two dear friends who have a daughter born to them with severe birth defects. She is unable to speak, to walk, or reason. She is confined to a wheelchair for her entire life and requires 24 hour care.
Example 2	Twin towers of New York – three thousand died with many more deeply affected. Fathers and mothers of young children were killed. Children left without parents.
Example 3	Trent Kunz paralyzed below the neck playing high school football
Example 4	A young mother dies of cancer leaving behind 5 young children and a grief stricken husband
Death	Steven Sanders – heart disease, left 7 children behind
Death	Howard Harju – a young man

Questions

Did God cause the birth defect of the daughter of my dear friends?
Did He cause the terrorists to fly the planes into the twin towers in New York?
Does our Heavenly Father cause a car to ignore a stop light and crash into another, killing all of its occupants?
Does God cause a young mother to have cancer and die, leaving behind her children and husband?
Could God have protected the victims of these examples?
Could He have intervened and prevented the bombing in Madrid that killed 200 and injured 1500?
Why doesn't He intervene and prevent these things?
Does He have the power to prevent all of these things?

Why do we have adversities?

	Our foolish and unwise choices
	Our wickedness or disobedience
	The choices of others affect us
	The Lord gives us adversity (several reasons)
	Natural consequences or processes (sicknesses, weather)

Why doesn't God prevent adversity, protect us from sorrow, sickness, and death?

God's plan is not for mortal life	We arrive into mortality without a memory of our life before. But the Gospel teaches us that we lived for thousands or even millions of years before coming to earth. We learn that we are immortal and will live longer than the stars. We learn that mortal life is not the purpose of God's plan but is, instead, a school and time of testing to prepare us for the eternities. -dj
S.W. Kimball,	"If we looked at mortality as the whole of existence, then pain, sorrow, failure, and

Tragedy or Destiny, Imp Era, Mar 1966	short life would be calamity. But if we look upon life as an eternal thing stretching far into the pre-earth past and on into the eternal post-death future, then all happenings may be put in proper perspective”
S.W.Kimball, Tragedy or Destiny, Imp Era, Mar 1966	<p>“If all of the sick for whom we pray were healed, if all of the righteous were protected and the wicked destroyed, the whole program of the Father would be annulled and the basic principle of the Gospel, free agency, would be ended. No man would live by faith.</p> <p>“If joy and peace and rewards were instantaneously given the doer of good, there could be no evil – all would do good but not because of the rightness of doing good. There were be no test of strength, no development of character, no growth of powers, no free agency, only satanic controls.</p> <p>“Should all prayers be immediately answered according to our selfish desires and our limited understanding, then there would be little or no suffering, sorrow, disappointment, or even death; and if these were not, there would also be an absence of joy, success, resurrection, eternal life, and godhood.”</p>
S.W. Kimball, ibid	“Being human, we would expel from our lives physical pain and mental anguish and assure ourselves of continual ease and comfort, but if we were to close the doors upon sorrow and distress, we might be excluding our greatest friends and benefactors. Suffering can make saints of people as they learn patience, longsuffering, and self-mastery. The sufferings of our Savior were part of his education. “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered...” (Heb 5:8-9)
Moses 6:55-56	Conceived in sin, sin conceiveth in their hearts and they taste the bitter that they may know to prize the good
Moses 4:3	Satan rebelled and sought to destroy the agency of man
2 Nephi 2:11	Opposition necessary in all things to know good, joy
2 Ne 2:11	To accomplish Gods purposes there must be opposition
2 Ne 2:23	To appreciate joy we must be subject to misery
Howard W. Hunter	We came to mortal life to encounter resistance. It was part of the plan for our eternal progress. Without temptation, sickness, pain, and sorrow, there could be no goodness, virtue, appreciation for well-being, or joy. (God will have a Tried People, Ensign, May 1980, pg 25

Opposition: Satan fights against everything good

JS-H 1:15-20	Satan tries to stop the First Vision. Before great things there can come adversity, opposition, and darkness.
Moses 1	<p>Moses talks with God face-to-face (1-2). Satan tries to thwart him (13-22). Moses beholds every particle of the earth and its inhabitants (27-28).</p> <p>==> Don't give up. Don't let your guard down. Don't assume that because you have a marvelous testimony, that you are too strong for Satan.</p>
2 Nephi 2:11	Opposition necessary in all things to know good, joy
Alma 17:2-5, 11	Sons of Mosiah, men of God: many afflictions, suffer much in body and mind: Lord charges them to be patient in their suffering and afflictions (v11)
2 Ne 26:32-33	Lord commands that we should not lie, steal, murder. None of these come of Him
2 Ne 26:22-24	Satan is the founder of all these things... Lord doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world because He loves the world

Our foolish and unwise choices

Moses 4:3	Agency is the basic law of the gospel.
Brian / stock	Brian made \$70,000 and then lost it all
Gal 6:7	... for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap

Our wickedness or disobedience

Heb 12:6	Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth
D&C 130:20-21	There is a law irrevocably decreed... there are always consequences
Alma 41:10	Restoration, wickedness never was happiness – natural consequences

The choices of others affect us for good or for bad

Gen 4:8	Cain slays Abel
Bev – hit by drunk	In 1998, while I was at church watching the general conference priesthood meeting, Beverly was hit from behind by a drunk driver. Saved young mother and child in front. Bev's injuries still affect her
Unwed births	Young girls and young men who do not keep the law of chastity, often bear children. What of these children who are often raised without fathers by mothers not prepared to be mothers, unable to support their children? Entire families suffer
Governments	... make decisions, impose taxes, restrict our freedoms, all of which affect us. For centuries, Italians were prohibited from reading or owning a Bible. What affect did this have on them as a people?

The Lord gives us adversity to teach us

Heb 12:6	Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth
Orson F. Witney	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...
2 Cor 12:7,9-10	My grace is sufficient for thee... my strength is made perfect in weakness
2 Ne 2:1-2	To Jacob - Lord will consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain
DC 122:7	All these things shall give thee experience & shall be for thy good
ET Benson, Philippines Area Conf, 1974, pg 70, 11	It is not on the pinnacle of success and ease where men and women grow most. It is often down in the valley of heartache and disappointment and reverses where men and women grow into strong characters. Every reversal can be turned to our benefit and blessing and can make us stronger, more courageous, more godlike.
Alma 32:6	Their afflictions had humbled them
Alma 62:41	Softened because of afflictions to depths of humility
Elaine Cannon - Adversity 133	<i>When we are pushed, stung, defeated, embarrassed, hurt, rejected, tormented, forgotten - when we are in agony of spirit crying 'why me?', we are in a position to learn something</i>
D&C 98:1,3	All things with which you have been afflicted will be for your good

We are often victims of natural events or consequences

Isa 29:6	God visits all nations to repentance
2 Ne 27:1-2	In the last days... drunken with iniquity and all manner of abominations... visit with earthquakes, etc.
DC 88:89-91	After your testimony cometh earthquakes...
DC 43:25	How often have I called you... voice of thunderings, tempests
2 Ne 5:25	Lamanites a scourge to stir them up in remembrance of God
Natural law	We live in a world of natural law.

Why doesn't the Lord rescue us from adversity?

DC 42:44-48	Death sweet, administer to sick, faith healed - God provides an escape - 1) ordinance performed 2) faith 3) not appointed unto death
TJS, pg196	<i>The Lord takes many away even in infancy, that they may escape the envy of man, and the sorrows and evils of this present world; they were too pure, too lovely, to llve on this earth; therefore, if rightly considered, instead of mourning we have reason to rejoice as they are delivered from evil, and we shall have them again...</i>
SWK, Tragedy or Destiny	<i>God will sometimes use His power to protect us... God controls our lives, guides and blesses us, but gives us our agency. We may live our lives in accordance with His plan for us or we may foolishly shorten or terminate them. I am positive in my mind that the Lord has planned our destiny.</i>
SWK, ibid	<i>We knew before we were born that we were coming to the earth for bodies and experience and that we would have joys and sorrows, ease and pain, comforts and hardships, health and sickness, successes and disappointments. We knew also that after a period of life we would die. We accepted all these eventualities with a glad heart, eager to accept both the favorable and the unfavorable.</i>
Alma 62:41	Because of war many hardened & many softened
Ether 12:27	I give unto men weakness that they may be humble, weak things become strong
Isaiah 48:10	Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

How can I get through my difficult trials?

Mosiah 24:15	Burdens made light thru prayer
Alma 36:3	...whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions...
1 Nephi 17:13	And I will also be your light in the wilderness... keep the commandments

Perseverance: What we should do in the midst of affliction

J.R. Holland, Cast Not Away Therefore Thy Confidence	I wish to encourage every one of you today regarding opposition that so often comes <i>after</i> enlightened decisions have been made, <i>after</i> moments of revelation and conviction have given us a peace and an assurance we thought we would never lose.
Heb 10:32-39	Cast not away therefore thy confidence (35)
1 Ne 3	Nephi fails 2 times. After each failure, recommits and tries again with resolve

JRH (ibid)	“...once there has been genuine illumination, beware the temptation to retreat from a good thing. If it was right when you prayed about it and trusted it and lived for it, it is right now. Don’t give up when the pressure mounts... Don’t give in. Certainly don’t give in to that being who is bent on the destruction of your happiness. He wants everyone to be miserable like unto himself. Face your doubts. Master your fears. Cast not away therefore thy confidence. Stay the course and see the beauty of life unfold for you.”
JSH-1:16	...exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized me... at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction... just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light... => Don’t give up! Endure! God’s power is greater than his!
DC 8:2-3	Spirit of revelation – Moses crossing the Red Sea. Why did the Lord use THIS example? Because it was when they were in the deepest despair and had to seek with “all my powers to call upon God to deliver me” (JS-H). We each have Red Seas to cross
D&C 103:12	For after much tribulation... cometh the blessings
Ether 12:6	...ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.

Do not fear

JRH (ibid) DC 9:5,10-11	Don’t let fear change your mind. “...in the process of revelation and in making important decisions, fear almost always plays a destructive, sometimes paralyzing role. To Oliver Cowdery, who missed the opportunity of a lifetime because he didn’t seize it in the lifetime of the opportunity, the Lord said, “ <i>You did not continue as you commenced.</i> ” ... “ <i>it was expedient when you commenced; but you feared, and the time is past...</i> ”
Moses 1:20	<i>Moses began to fear exceedingly... saw the bitterness of hell.</i> That’s when you see it – when you are afraid!
Ex 14:10-12	Israelites fear exceedingly, wanted to go back. What if they had turned back? What about what had already happened (miracles, etc.)?
Ex 14:13-15	Moses: <i>fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord... Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward</i>

God will always provide the means and power to achieve His purposes

Ex 14:10-12	God provided the means for Israel to escape – miraculously
JR Holland, ibid	“...along with the illuminating revelation that points us toward a righteous purpose or duty, God will also provide the means and power to achieve that purpose. Trust in that eternal truth. If God has told you something is right, if something is indeed true for you, he will provide the way for you to accomplish it.
1 Ne 3, 4	Retrieving the brass plates from Jerusalem
DC 103:17-20	<i>Therefore, let not your hearts faint... mine angel shall go up before you... and also my presence, and in time he shall possess the goodly land.</i> What goodly land? Our promised land!

What adversities do to us

Dallin H. Oaks, Adversity, BYU, 17 Jan 98	Adversity will be a constant or occasional companion for each of us throughout our lives. We cannot avoid it. The only question is how we will react to it. Will our adversities be stumbling blocks or stepping-stones?
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	<p>Our responses will inevitably shape our souls and ultimately determine our status in eternity. Because opposition is divinely decreed for the purpose of helping us to grow, we have the assurance of God that in the long view of eternity it will not be allowed to overcome us if we persevere in faith. We will prevail. <u>Like the mortal life of which they are a part, adversities are temporary. What is permanent is what we become by the way we react to them.</u></p>
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