

Adversity

President Spencer W. Kimball, “Tragedy or Destiny”, Imp Era, Mar 1966

“Now we find many people critical when a righteous person is killed, a young father or mother is taken from a family, or when violent deaths occur. Some become bitter when oft-repeated prayers seem unanswered. Some lose faith and turn sour when solemn administrations by holy men seem to be ignored and no restoration seems to come from repeated prayer circles. But if all of the sick 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. “If pain and sorrow and total punishment immediately followed the doing of evil, no soul would repeat a misdeed. If joy and peace and rewards were instantaneously given to the doer of good, there could be no evil – all would do good and not because of the righteous doing good. There would be no test of strength, no development of character, no growth of powers, no free agency, no satanic controls. “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.”

Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, pg 167-168

“I’m grateful that my priesthood power is limited and used as the Lord sees fit to use it. I don’t want to heal all the sick – for sickness sometimes is a great blessing. People become angels through sickness.

“Have you ever seen someone who has been helpless for so long that he has divested himself of every envy and jealousy and ugliness in his whole life, and who has perfected his life? I have. Have you seen mothers who have struggled with, perhaps, unfortunate children for years and years, and have become saints through it?... No pain suffered by man or woman upon the earth will be without its compensating effects if it be suffered in resignation and if it be met with patience.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Adversity”, Ensign, July 1998

“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? “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. 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.”

Martin Luther King Jr.

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

Gordon B. Hinckley – Ensign, March, 1997 – A Conversation with Single Adults

Anyone who imagines that marital bliss is normal, is going to waste a lot of time running around shouting that he’s been robbed. The fact is that most putts don’t drop, most beef is tough, most children grow up to be just people, most successful marriages require a high degree of mutual toleration, most jobs are more often dull than otherwise. Life is like an old time rail journey... delays, sidetracks, smoke, dust, cinders, and jolts, interspersed only occasionally by beautiful vistas, and thrilling bursts of speed. The trick is to thank the Lord for letting you have the ride.

President Ezra Taft Benson: Stockholm Sweden Area Conference, 1974

“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.”

Elder Howard W. Hunter, GC, April 1980

“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”

Elaine Cannon, “Adversity”, pg 133-134

“An old cowboy said he had learned life’s most important lessons from Hereford cows. All his life he had worked cattle ranches where winter storms took a heavy toll among the herds. Freezing rains whipped across the prairies. Howling, bitter winds piled snow into enormous drifts. Temperatures might drop quickly to below zero degrees. Flying ice cut into the flesh. In this maelstrom of nature’s violence most cattle would turn their backs to the ice blasts and slowly drift downwind, mile upon mile. Finally, intercepted by a boundary fence, they would pile up against the barrier and die by the scores.

But the Herefords acted differently. Cattle of this breed would instinctively head into the windward end of the range. There they would stand shoulder-to-shoulder facing the storm’s blast, heads down against its onslaught.

‘You always found the Herefords alive and well,’ said the cowboy. ‘I guess it’s the greatest lesson I ever learned on the prairies – just face life’s storms’”

Pg 47: “When we are pushed, stung, defeated, embarrassed, hurt, rejected, tormented, forgotten – when we are in agony of spirit crying out ‘why me?’ we are in a position to learn something.”

Scriptures on Adversity:

2 Ne 2:23: to appreciate joy, must be subject to misery
2 Ne 2:11: opposition necessary in all things
D&C 43:25: Lord calls upon nations by earthquakes, tempests, etc.
2 Ne 5:25: Lamanites to be scourge to Nephites (to remember Him)
Heb 12:6: Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth
Alma 62:41: War caused some to harden, some to soften: choice of response
2 Ne 2:1-2: God shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain (Jacob)
D&C 98:1,3: All things... afflicted shall work together for your good
D&C 121:7-8: ...peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity... small moment
D&C 122:7: All these things... experience and shall be for thy good
Ex 1:12: the more they afflicted the, the more they multiplied and grew
Mosiah 24:15: burdens made light... Lord did strengthen them to bear burdens
2 Cor 12:7,9: Paul, thorn in flesh: strength made perfect in weakness
Isaiah 48:10: I have refined thee... chosen thee in the furnace of affliction
Alma 36:3: Whosoever puts trust in God, supported in afflictions, lifted up

Adversity – Hartman Rector Jr. (GC, Oct 1972)

“[The] ability to turn everything into something good appears to be a godly characteristic. Our Heavenly Father always seems able to do this. Everything, no matter how dire, becomes a victory to the Lord. Joseph, although a slave and wholly undeserving of this fate, nevertheless remained faithful to the Lord and continued to live the commandments and made something very good of his degrading circumstances. People like this cannot be defeated”

Helen Keller

Believe when you are most unhappy that there is something for you to do in the world. So long as you can sweeten another’s pain, life is not in vain.

Footprints in the Sand

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking in a field with the LORD. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the snow; one belonged to him, and the other to the LORD.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the snow. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the LORD about it. "LORD, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd 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 when I needed you most you would 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 see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."