

July 19, 2011

Charles Stanley's Life Principle #26

Adversity is a bridge to a deeper relationship with God.

PRAYER FOCUS: _____

Lessons from Paul's Life of Adversity

Paul's life helps us understand how adversity can bridge to a deeper relationship with God. Through this apostle, who God inspired to write the majority of the New Testament, we are given much insight into how we should live our day-to-day Christian life. Let's look at some of the Scriptures he wrote to see how he learned from his adversities that bridged him closer to God.

Contentment in the Midst of Adversity

Philippians 4:10-13 ~

Supernatural Strength in Our Weaknesses

2 Corinthians 12:6-10 ~

Realization of the True Supplier of Our Needs

Philippians 4:14-19 ~

Trust in the Lord's Faithfulness to Carry us Through

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 ~

Strengthens Our Witness and Comfort Others

Philippians 1:12-14 ~

2 Corinthians 1:3-7 ~

Ponder on Your Own: Paul's Thorn in the Flesh

Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:8-10

God had a specific purpose for Paul's adversity. Paul's thorn had a particular function: it was designed to keep him humble and dependent on God, despite the astounding spiritual revelations he had been given. Ultimately, Paul was able to look beyond the thorn to the throne of grace where he was able to rejoice always.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"

Philippians 4:4

Matthew 7:7 tells us, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." Consider this . . . Could it be that the asking is not for the benefit of getting, but instead the benefit of learning what God wants for you? Paul asked three times for his thorn to be removed. Yet, God did not remove it but taught Paul that His grace was sufficient. So the question in mind is in the midst of asking are you prepared to ask yourself what it is I want from God and why do I want it? And could it be that in asking that question we then begin to learn what the rest of Matthew 7:7 means when it says, ". . . seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you." - Kelly Dixon