

INTRODUCTION

God wants us to grow even when we are experiencing challenging times. We can grow on purpose, in fact we can be strategic about how we grow during adverse times. With strong faith and the help of the Lord, we can make the most of the growth opportunities that adversity can bring.

A. Benefits of Adversity

- We are called to attention
- A demand is made on our gifts and talents
- We become more creative and innovative

B. We Can Choose to Grow on Purpose

- Be intentional about taking steps toward growth
- Growth is a decision, it isn't automatic
- Never let a crisis go to waste

A. Our theme this year is GROW

"The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;"
Psalms 92:12 NIV

- Our theme for the year is "Grow"
- We are growing in all aspects of life: faith, family, finances, relationships, mindset etc.
- Crisis does not negate God's word, we will flourish like palm trees and grow like a cedar in Lebanon
- Palm trees are able to stand firm in the harshest of winds
- Palm trees are bendable, flexible and can adjust to conditions

B. Growth Principles

"Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind 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 NLT

1. **Trouble Will Come** - the scripture says when trouble comes, not if trouble comes
 - All faith must be tested
 - "Adversity introduces man to himself." - Albert Einstein
2. **We can't really know the Depth of our Character until we see how we react under pressure**
 - "Adversity is like a strong wind. It tears away from us all but the things that cannot be torn, so that we see ourselves as we really are" - Arthur Golden
 - Pressure doesn't create character, it only reveals it
3. **God wants to make us Mature and Complete not keep us from all pain**
 - God never intended the life of faith to be a pain free experience
 - "We don't develop courage by being happy every day. We develop it by surviving difficult times and challenging adversity. - " Barbara DeAngelis
4. **We must Change our Perspective**
 - The James 1:2 teaches that we should consider troubles as an opportunity for great joy
 - Perspective determines how you approach a challenge
 - How you approach a challenge determines how you come out of it

- “Strength does not come from winning. Your struggles develop your strengths. When you go through hardships and decide not to surrender, that is strength.” - Mahatma Gandhi

5. God will not leave you alone with your problems - He will stay close and help you to GROW in the midst of your problems

C. Lessons from Joseph - Genesis 39:1-6; Psalms 105:17-22

1. **Remember that God is with us**
2. **Maintain Your Identity** - Joseph didn't see himself based on his problem. He saw himself according to the way God saw him
3. **Keep Serving** - Keep serving in adversity, don't quit
4. **Walk in integrity** - Don't take license to sin, be a person of integrity