

Survival – Part One

Everyone who lives will undergo hard times. Even those of us who are Christians are not exempt from trying times and unfortunate circumstances. Jesus told His disciples that tribulation was guaranteed, but He had overcome the world (John 16:33). Paul reminded Timothy that all people who live godly will suffer persecution (2 Timothy 3:12). There are general hardships that we face just because we are human. More importantly, there are specific things that happen to us because we are Christians. While we know these things will come into our lives, what we often need help with is how to cope with them. How can we survive when we are in the storms of life? How can we keep from giving up when surrender seems like the easier option? We must first of all see the benefits of adversity. As Christians, we must remind ourselves that adversity can be used to bring about good in our lives. This does not mean that the adversity itself is good, but God can use all things to bring about what is best for His people, and He does (Romans 8:28). The world may frown upon any type of discomfort or inconvenience, but as the people of God, we must remember that it is often through hard times that the best things come about. Paul told the Romans that tribulation produces patience, patience produces experience, and experience produces hope (Romans 5:2-5). When we are going through hard times we should be asking, “What is it that I can learn at this time? What is God potentially trying to teach me? How can I use this as a way to grow?” James instructed Christians to count it all joy when we fall into various trials because of what happens as a result (James 1:2-4). The man that endures the test is blessed with a crown of life (James 1:12).

Joseph had a lot of things happen to him that he did not enjoy. Joseph was sold by his brothers, lied on by Potiphar’s wife, and forgotten in prison (Genesis 37- 39). Yet for all that Joseph endured, he kept his relationship with God intact and was able to look back later and see God working (Genesis 45:5; 50:19-20). He saw the benefits of adversity and was able to save the family lineage of Abraham from famine. For some, it may be extremely difficult to see anything good about what they are going through at the moment. Sometimes we can only notice the positive aspects of adversity in hindsight. Nevertheless, we can press on through unfavorable times if we can appreciate that there may be a blessing in the burden that we are temporarily called to bear.

We can survive by worshipping God. On arguably the worst day of Job’s life, he lost his children, his servants, and a good amount of his property (Job 1:13-19). Job was no doubt hurt and distraught, so he tore his clothes in anguish and shaved his head. However, he did not allow all that he was going through keep him from worshipping the Lord. Job fell down and worshipped God (Job 1:20). Job then opened his mouth and blessed God, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; but blessed be the name of the LORD.” (Job 1:21) Job realized a few things: The LORD is the giver of good things, the LORD does what is best always, and the LORD is still to be blessed even on our bad days. We can imitate Job’s behavior by resolving to worship God in the hard seasons of life.