

Responses to Adversity

Lesson 10

Hab. 3:17-18

"Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior"

When we experience adversity, we generally respond in one of three ways:

- (1) We become angry;
- (2) We try to gut it out; or
- (3) We accept it with joy.

Anger

When adversity comes our way, we say, "Why me, Lord?" We become bitter and resentful and blame God and others for our problems. We view ourselves as victims and demand that God answer our accusing questions: "Why don't You love me, Lord? We feel entitled to life, health, wealth, and happiness.

Gutting It Out

Another way we respond to adversity is by adopting an indifferent attitude, repressing our emotions. We lie to ourselves and say, "I'm gutting it out. I'm demonstrating endurance." In reality, we are merely isolating ourselves with a shell of false bravery. We don't meditate on God's love, we don't pray, we don't believe God really has anything good planned for us. We simply tell ourselves, "This will soon be over. I'm a survivor."

We never receive what God has planned for us if we stay here.

Acceptance with Joy

This is the response God seeks from us.

When adversity comes, we rest in His love and trust that He knows best. We realize that nothing can happen to us without His permission. If there is pain in our lives, we know it's because God deems it necessary for our growth or wishes to use our pain to minister to others.

Closing

God revealed to the prophet Habakkuk that Israel was soon to be invaded by the Babylonians. Habakkuk knew that Israel was about to suffer intense adversity as part of God's loving discipline of His people. Habakkuk faced the looming national tragedy with an attitude of acceptance with joy.

If Habakkuk could be joyful in the face of a national calamity, then we can rejoice in the Lord no matter what comes our way.

