



THE IMMEASURABLE GREATNESS OF  
GOD'S MAJESTY & POWER

# *Introduction*



In adversity, we need God's wisdom and perspective.

In our losses, we need comfort.

In our pain, we need healing and relief.

In our suffering, we need God's assurance.

In our loneliness, we need God's presence.

*The counsel of God's Word and the Insights of Godly People Follow.*

*May the Lord use both for His glory and for your good.*

# *Common Thoughts During Adversity*



1. I don't know how to turn to God in times of trouble.
2. I am not confident that God is good *and* all-powerful. I want to be assured of the goodness and power of God when I struggle with adversity.
3. I have been asking questions about adversity for a long time and have never heard any satisfactory answers.
4. My first question at the onset of my suffering was: "Why did God allow this to happen?" I don't know the answer to this question.
5. I long to know that the Lord is with me all the time, that He will not abandon me – even when I suffer.
6. I don't know how to trust God during suffering and loss.

# *What Is The Impact Of Darkness On You?*



- Does it breed fear and terror?
- Does it threaten you?
- Does it make you want to flee or hide?
- Does it make you want to give up?
- Does it whisper a lie in your ears that life is futile?
- Does it provoke you to maintain as much control as possible?
- Does it suggest to you that you are forsaken?
- Does it urge you to lament the day you were born?

# *What Is The Impact Of Darkness On You?*



- Does it shatter your soul?
- Does it fill your heart with sorrow?
- Does it reinforce the idea that God is mysterious and unknowable?
- Does it reveal the true nature of your heart?
- Does it play with your moods and emotions?
- Does it envelop you with a cloak of opacity and impenetrability?
- Does it expose your limited knowledge, understanding, and power?
- Does it urge you to abandon all hope?

# *Learning To Trust God: A Definition*



“Learning to trust God in adversity, pain, suffering, and loss is a slow and difficult sanctifying process whereby our minds and hearts are gradually transformed by the truth of Scripture and the comforting presence of the Holy Spirit so that we may be conformed to the image of Christ and see deeply into the heart of the triune God, fully embracing His glory, power, goodness, mercy, grace, and love, and trusting His promise that everything in our lives is working together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose” (John Musselman).

# *The Shades of Adversity*



There are many words that describe the various forms of adversity which one may experience. Circle all that apply to you.

- Trials
- Sorrow
- Affliction
- Difficulties
- Heartaches
- Darkness
- Numb
- Death
- Suffering
- Grief
- Burdens
- Brokenhearted
- Tragedy
- Despair
- Overwhelmed
- Hopeless
- Pain
- Betrayal
- Weary
- Loss
- Abandonment
- Shattered
- Illness
- Trouble

# *Biblical Truths For Personal Meditation*



- “Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7).
- “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me” (Ps. 23:4).
- “Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (James 1:12).
- “In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials...” (I Pet. 1:6).

# *Biblical Truths For Personal Meditation*



- “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you” (1 Pet. 4:12).
- “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful but sorrowful” (Heb. 12:11).
- “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Rom. 8:18).
- “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

# *Quotes Worth Pondering in Adversity*



- “Sooner or later all people suffer loss, in little doses or big ones, suddenly or over time, privately or in public settings” (Jerry Sittser).
- “Our world is full of the inexplicable, the inscrutable, the unfathomable, the impassable, and the insurmountable. We cannot take three steps in any direction without running into a solid wall of mysteries, riddles, paradoxes, and profundities. We constantly confront problems we cannot solve, labyrinths we cannot find our way out of, hieroglyphics we cannot decipher, sphinxes that simply will not speak” (D. James Kennedy).

# Quotes Worth Pondering in Adversity



- “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose” (Jim Elliot).
- “Our evils can never be so great to oppress, as His power is great to delivers us” (Stephen Charnock).
- “There can be no trust in God without an eye to His power” (Stephen Charnock).
- “God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge and the free and immutable counsel of His own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy” (*Westminster Confession of Faith*).

# *Quotes Worth Pondering in Adversity*



- “The biblical view of providence is dramatically specific; it unqualifiedly affirms particular divine providence, that is, that God works out his purposes not merely in life’s generalities but in the details and minutiae of life as well. The Bible relates to divine providence not only general and universal structures but also personal experiences; nothing falls outside God’s will and concern” (Carl F.H. Henry).
- “Nearly everyone has his box of secret pain, shared by no one” (John Steinbeck).

# Quotes Worth Pondering in Adversity



- “What matters supremely is not, in the last analysis, the fact that I know God, but the larger fact which underlies it – the fact that *He knows me*. I am graven on the palms of His hands. I am never out of His mind. All my knowledge of Him depends on His sustained initiative in knowing me. I know Him, because He first knew me, and continues to know me. He knows me as a friend, one who loves me; and there is no moment when His eye is off me, or His attention distracted from me, and no moment, therefore, when His care falters” (J.I. Packer).
- “You can’t see anything properly while your eyes are blurred with tears” (C.S. Lewis).

# *Quotes Worth Pondering in Adversity*



- “God makes it clear that whatever event comes upon us, no matter how grim or ghastly in itself, as soon as it touches our lives, the hand of God will reach down and take it captive. And God will not let go until it yields up its treasure to our soul. That is the promise of the Almighty” (D. James Kennedy).
- “In theory it is easy to understand the premise that all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose, but to get this into our bloodstreams is another matter. It is one of the most difficult tasks of the practicing Christian. It involves not only believing in God but believing God” (R.C. Sproul).

# *Quotes Worth Pondering in Adversity*



- “The appointed day of judgment marks the point in redemptive history when humanity’s response to God’s mercies is brought into account. On this day the blessings received by the impenitent will become tragedies, and the tragedies endured by the believer will be seen as blessings” (R.C. Sproul).
- “Nothing is more important...than for God’s people to be firmly convinced that Scripture teaches God’s efficacious, universal control over the world, and teaches it over and over again. Scripture mentions and implies this control in many different historical and doctrinal contexts and applies it to our own life with God in a great number of ways....For not even the smallest motion of the smallest object can occur without his government, preservation, and concurrence” (John Frame).

# *Quotes Worth Pondering in Adversity*



- “The reason, therefore, why any event occurs, or that it passes from the category of the possible into that of the actual, is that God has so decreed. The decrees of God, therefore, are not many, but one purpose. They are not successively formed as the emergency rises, but are all parts of one all-comprehending plan” (Charles Hodge).
- “This world does not just drift along on its own, but is the place where a great person lives and acts” (John Frame).
- “There is no pit so deep that He is not deeper still” (Corrie ten Boom’s sister, Betsy ten Boom).

# *Quotes Worth Pondering in Adversity*



- “By nature man is independent. He wants to solve his own problems and make his own decisions....Man has to overcome pride to admit that he needs wisdom. But wisdom is not something he possesses. Wisdom belongs to God, for it is his divine virtue. Anyone who admits the need for wisdom must go to God and ask him....The believer must ask God for wisdom” (Simon Kistemaker).
- God “draws us to the extreme edge of life where we cannot live by careful, well-planned control. This is where the desert begins. It is where darkness draws us to a realm of desperation and dependence. It is the place where trust can grow. God’s passion is to rig the world so that we are compelled to deal with whatever blocks us from being like His glorious Son” (Dan Allender).

# *Quotes Worth Pondering in Adversity*



- “There is no tale ever told that men would rather find was true” (J.R.R. Tolkien).
- “From heaven, the most miserable earthly life will look like one bad night in an inconvenient hotel” (St. Teresa).
- “He came. He entered space and time and suffering. He came, like a lover. Love seeks above all intimacy, presence, togetherness. Not happiness....He came. That is the salient fact, the towering truth, that alone keeps us from putting a bullet through our heads. He came. Job is satisfied even though the God who came gave him absolutely no answers at all to his thousand tortured questions” (Peter Kreeft).



# *A Glimpse Of God's Character*

“All emotions, including the darker ones, give us a glimpse of the character of God....Far more important than the way in which emotions reveal the movement of the heart is the way in which our most difficult emotions – anger, fear, jealousy, despair, contempt, and shame – uniquely reveal something about the heart of God....The darker struggles with emotion can point us to priceless glimpses of God's character through scriptural revelation of God's own emotions.”



**Dan Allender, PhD**

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# *Where God Meets You*



**"Hanging by a Thread"**

"Don't assume that resolving your turbulent emotions is the key to meeting God. It is actually within the inner mayhem of life that a stage is built for the intrusive story of His light and hope. The absence of tumult, more than its presence, is an enemy of the soul. God meets you in your weakness, not in your strength. He comforts those who mourn, not those who live above desperation. He reveals Himself more often in darkness than in the happy moments of life" (Allender).

# *A Great Light*

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned” (Is. 9:2).

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me” (Ps. 23:4).



# *Learning to Trust God*



- It can be a slow and difficult process.
- Trusting God must take into account that the fall of man was a “catastrophic personality shock” (Carl F.H. Henry) and effected all of creation.
- Do we really want to see “deep into the heart of God?” (Larry Crabb)
- Do we just want our problems solved or do we want an encounter with the God of all creation?
- Will we be open to our internal world and become aware of what we really feel (emotions)?
- For how long have we been trying to escape from God?

# *Learning to Trust God*



- Do you believe that God meets you in your weakness, not in your strength?
- How invested are you in having control over your life?
- Can you identify a time in your life where you felt you were on the very edge?
- Are you comfortable in lodging your complaints against God?
- Do you know that God loves you?
- Why do you (if you do) try to eliminate the risk of trusting God?
- Do you believe that real joy is possible again?

# *Lessons Learned In Suffering*

We learn to stop sinning

We share in the sufferings of Christ

We are transformed by Christ

We are able to comfort others

We magnify God to the world



“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Rom. 8:18).