Adversity

**A man sometimes finds profit in adversity.**

***(Ecclesiasticus 20:9)***

**And why Joseph, after being sold into slavery,**

**could say to his brothers, “You meant evil against me,**

**but God meant it for good.”**

***(Genesis 50:20)***

**And we know that all things**

**work together for good to them that love God.**

**(*Romans 8:28*)**

**Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; adversity not without many comforts and hopes. *(Francis Bacon)***

**Humphrey Bogart got his distinctive lisp as the result of a childhood**

**accident. A tiny piece of wood lodged in his lip, and the operation to remove it was botched. It left him with a partially paralyzed lip and a permanent speech impediment. *(Uncle John’s 4-Ply Bathroom Reader, p. 769)***

**Accidents -- and chance -- had a big effect on the career of Marlon Brando. Brando’s profile was thought too perfect until he broke his nose in a fight. His career, broken nose and all, took off after he played toughs in On The Waterfront and The Wild One. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 22)***

**Adversity causes some men to break, others to break records. *(William Arthur Ward)***

How can any tree live so amazingly long? The paradox is that typically the oldest pines are found on the most difficult sites: steep and rocky, 9500 feet or more above sea level, with only thin soil and little precipitation. Could what man has considered adversity actually contribute to long life? All trees older than 1500 years have only strips of bark up their trunks, slowing the growth, resulting in dense cells and abundant resin canals. Wood thus formed supports life for millenniums. Even after death the tree may not fall for 2000 years. Its wood may persist 4000 years, eroding rather than decaying. Bristlecone pines in richer conditions, grow faster, die earlier and soon decay. *(Darwin Lambert, in Reader’s Digest)*

**He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper. (Edmund Burke)**

**Men are undoubtedly more in danger from prosperity than from adversity. For when matters go smoothly, they flatter themselves, and are intoxicated by their success. *(John Calvin)***

**In a crisis, bend. Rick Miller learned early that you can’t always get what you want. He grew up in an unhappy family with an alcoholic father. By 1989, Miller had acquired a reputation as a hotshot, who could turn corporations around. Wang Laboratories recruited him to save the company from bankruptcy. But the computer maker turned out to be a nastier challenge than Miller had envisioned. After the recession hit, Miller had to swallow his pride. To save the business, he filed for Chapter 11 and sold off its manufacturing company. Wang became a shell of its former self. But it is profitable, and Miller has no regrets. Adversity in childhood actually helps people adapt and rebound. Resilient people know they cannot control their world. The most successful view failure like puberty: awkward, uncomfortable, but a transforming experience that precedes maturity. Today, Miller is AT&T’s top financial officer. When AT&T chief executive Robert Allen met him the first time, he said, “I view your Wang experience as a total plus.” At AT&T, Miller asks young employees who worry about failure if they can “look in the mirror and say. ‘I did my best.’ If they can, no matter what the outcome, that’s success.” *(Patricia Sellers, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Gary Cooper owed his movie career to a car accident in which he hurt his hip. His doctor encouraged him to ride horses as therapy and that ability led to his first film job as an extra and stuntman in cowboy movies. *(Ed Lucaire, in Celebrity Setbacks, p. 86)***

**Adversity attracts the man of character. He seeks out the bitter joy of**

**responsibility. *(Charles de Gaulle, in The Edge of the Sword)***

**In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity. *(Albert Einstein)***

**Comfort and prosperity have never enriched the world as much as adversity has. Out of pain and problems have come the sweetest songs, and the most gripping stories. When we take chairlifts high in the Alps to see the scenery, we gaze down from dizzying heights and see some of the most beautiful flowers found anywhere. It’s hard to believe that just a few weeks before, these flowers were buried under many feet of snow. The burdens of ice and winter storms have added to their luster and growth. Our burdens can have the same effect on our lives. As Christians face storms of adversity, they may rise with more beauty. They are like trees that grow on mountain ridges -- battered by winds, yet trees in which we find the strongest wood. *(Billy Graham, in Hope for the Troubled Heart)***

**The famed actor who owed much of his success to adversity, W. C. Fields, who was a vagrant at the age of 11, got his swollen red nose from alley fights, and his hoarse voice from childhood colds. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 317)***

**When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it. *(Henry Ford)***

**Mel Gibson, movie actor, born in America, won his leading role in the 1979 Australian film “Mad Max” because the part demanded someone who looked weary, beaten-up and scarred, and Gibson had been attacked by three drunks just the night before his scheduled screen test. (Ripley's Believe It or Not!: Strange Coincidences, p. 98)**

**While it is natural to give thanks when all is going well, giving thanks in adversity is more challenging. “Why should I give thanks when I am in pain?” you might ask. The answer lies in a universal law that tells us that all things work together for our highest good. Or, as M. Scott Peck put it, “Everything that happens to us in life does so to make us more holy.” (Douglas Bloch, in New Thought magazine)**

**Adversity reveals genius, prosperity conceals it. *(Horace)***

**Adversity is the state in which a man most easily becomes acquainted with himself, being especially free from admirers then. *(Samuel Johnson)***

**No one knows why life must be so punishing to some of God’s finest creatures. Perhaps it is true that everything has a price and we must sacrifice something precious to gain something else. The poets and philosophers say adversity, sorrow, and pain give our lives an added dimension. Those who suffer deeply touch life at every point; they drain the cup to the dregs while others sip only the bubbles on top. Perhaps no man can touch the stars unless he has known the depths of despair – and fought his way back. *(Ann Landers, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Contrary to what might be expected, I look back on experiences that at the time seemed especially desolating and painful with particular satisfaction. Indeed, everything I have learned, everything that has truly enhanced and enlightened my existence, has been through affliction and not through happiness. If it ever were to be possible to eliminate affliction from our earthly existence, the result would not be to make life delectable, but to make it too banal and trivial to be endurable. *(Malcolm Muggeridge, in A Twentieth Century Testimony)***

**“Adversity,” the meaning of which is “turn to.” What do I turn to when**

**conditions are seemingly out of order?” *(Mile Hi Church advertisement, 1989)***

**The olive tree is actually an evergreen – and it can survive in stony, inhospitable earth for hundreds of years. *(Samantha Weaver, in Tidbits)***

**Every adversity carries with it the seeds of a greater benefit. *(Lillian Gilcrest)***

**In 1996, the air-conditioning at the University of Oxford Botanic Garden failed. The temperature in the greenhouse soared, and horticulturists began to fear for the collection. Then it happened. A rare cactus, the century plant (Agave americana), bloomed for the first time since 1896. Will adversity destroy you or make you blossom? *(Ben Franklin’s Almanac, p. 362)***

**In the wake of a life-shattering crisis or global disaster, something surprisingly positive often happens. Two months after the World Trade Center terrorist attacks in 2001, a University of Pennsylvania survey of over 4,000 Americans found that they felt more gratitude, hope, kindness and love than they did before 9/11. And the effect wasn't transitory. In a three-year State Universityof New York at Buffalo study of 1,382 American adults, 58 percent said they continued to see positive consequences emerge from the attacks. *(Sari Harrar, in AARP - The Magazine / Real Possibilities)***

**Life, one mile beneath the ground: Nearly a mile beneath the Earth’s surface, scientists have discovered tiny worms thriving in a hellish realm of enormous heat and pressure – opening an entirely new realm of potential habitats for multicellular life. The tiny worm Halicephalobus mephisto thrives far underground despite just traces of oxygen and no sunlight – conditions researchers thought only single-cell bacteria could endure. H. mephisto is only two hundredths of an inch long, feeds solely on bacteria, and doesn’t need a mate to reproduce. Tests of the water where it was found – in rock fractures at the bottom of a South African gold mine – suggest it may have lived there for as many as 12,000 years. The discovery of complex life sealed away from the rest of the world “is pretty amazing,” Caleb Scharf, a researcher at the Columbia Astrobiology Center, tells New Scientist. Michael Meyer, lead scientist for NASA’s Mars Exploration Program, says the find implies that similar creatures could be living in harsh environments far below the surface of other planets, including Mars. The surprising survival skills of H. mephisto are proof, he says, that “the universe might have many more habitats than we thought.” (*The Week magazine, June 24, 2011)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***