

Advancing through Adversity

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: II Corinthians 12.

B. God advances us through adversity.

C. Salvation is not God's big purpose—it is only part of it. His purpose is to glorify Himself through us. (Ephesians 1, John 17)

D. God's purpose is for something greater than our comfort. God intended for our lives to be God-centered not self-centered.

II. Much of our religious activity is self-centered activity.

A. God sometimes sends adversity in our life in order to get our attention.

B. One of the primary purposes of adversity is that God wants to deal with the SELF. (Galatians 2:20)

C. The self is crucified with Christ, and Christ lives in a person. (Colossians 1:28)

D. The goal is to know Christ in His resurrection power. (Philippians 3:10)

E. One must understand that at conversion the old self died and accept the new life that is Christ.

F. God sends adversity so that self can be crucified and so that Christ's life can be expressed beautifully.

G. We must examine our lives, for God's purpose is holiness.

H. The only way to deal with self is the cross—it must die.

Application questions:

1. What is God's overall purpose for adversity?

2. What does it mean that the self is "crucified?"

3. How would you respond to someone who argues that adversity is always a sign of God's judgment? Explain.
