

What Do You Do When Faced With Adversity?

I've always had an interest in lists. When I was a boy I filled my mind with meaningless sports statistics such as home run leaders, Super Bowl winners and college football rankings. But it went beyond that, beyond memorizing World Series Winners and greatest sports teams, I liked memorizing states' capitals, most populated cities and details about personal computers.

I remember more sports information than I would care to admit. I was a real sports junkie. That was me, and it is a part of who I am today. I used to think that all that memorization and fascination over trivial things was a waste of time and meaningless, but I no longer do. Perhaps back then it was meaningless, but I think God was preparing my mind all along for what I do now and in the future.

Although I may struggle to memorize Scripture word-for-word, I have memorized many Biblical stories, events, and spiritual truths. God has been filling my mind with a whole different type of information and it is being used to bring glory to Him. But my ability to analyze and memorize started developing as a child and I am in awe at how God has taken something which I've dismissed as meaningless and is using it for His purposes today and in the future.

He is an amazing God.

Romans 8: 28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

I am convinced that God has done this in anyone's life that has a heart for Him. That's just the way He is. I don't think He wastes any part of our lives. The more we consider our lives with this mindset and from His perspective the more

grateful we become, the more unique it makes us and the more joy we'll have. Bitterness from a disappointing past can be melted away and the future can be willingly embraced with optimism that can only come from a loving God.

In the Bible there are many lists, just to name some of them: genealogical lists, sibling lists, lists of tribes, lists of enemies, census lists, the 10 commandments, Levitical laws, historical events, lists of kings, lists of nations, men and women of faith in Hebrews 11, lists of good and bad fruit found in Galatians 5, and let's not forget the list of things God hates found in Proverbs 6:16-19. I could go on, but I think that's a long enough list. □

There is one list in particular that I'd like to bring to your attention and we'll get into the message from there. It is a short list and is found twice in the same chapter. Have you ever wanted to know who the most righteous people in the Bible are? I mean there are a lot of people to think of and I could come up with another list, but I'll spare you. Take a look at these verses and we'll discuss them:

*Ezekiel 14: 19 "Or suppose I were to pour out my fury by sending an epidemic into the land, and the disease killed people and animals alike. 20 As surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, even if **Noah, Daniel, and Job** were there, they wouldn't be able to save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved by their righteousness.*

Of course, verse 19 is added just for context, but check out the short list in verse 20. Isn't that a cool list? The same list is also found in verse 14. But I love how we see a very unique, very short list of what may be the most righteous in the Lord's eyes, at least those that were familiar to the Jews of that day. To me it is not surprising, consider this verse regarding Noah:

Genesis 6: 9 This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah

was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God.

And then there's Job:

***Job 1: 8** Then the Lord asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil."*

Then last, but certainly not least, is Daniel. I don't have an "easy to remember verse" that is a quick summary of Daniel's character like I do for Job or Noah but reading about Daniel tells us all we need to know, and I think all Christians should read the book of Daniel once a year. It is a short book with many exciting stories.

Daniel and Ezekiel were contemporaries and both were exiled to Babylon.

Of course everybody, at least when I was growing up, is familiar with the story of Daniel in the lion's den. It is one of the most popular stories in the whole Bible and even famous artists have painted the scene. The story is a great tale to be told and remembered, but there is more to the story that often gets overlooked and perhaps this will make it familiar to you again or for those that are not as familiar, this may be brand new to you.

Here's another question: How did Daniel end up in the lion's den anyway? Was he simply leaning over the railing too far and fell in? No? Well, then what did he do to cause him to be put there?

Here's a key verse:

***Daniel 6: 12** So they went straight to the king and reminded*

him about his law. "Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?"

"Yes," the king replied, "that decision stands; it is an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked."

13 Then they told the king, "That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day."

Daniel was set up!

That's not fair, is it? His very own colleagues devised a plan to get rid of him, kind of reminds you of Abel, Joseph, David, Nehemiah, Mordecai, John the Baptist, Jesus, and Paul doesn't it? Each of these men were targets of the enemy and were subjected to plots and plans to be killed. Let's read the catalyst of this dastardly plan:

1 Darius the Mede decided to divide the kingdom into 120 provinces, and he appointed a high officer to rule over each province. **2** The king also chose Daniel and two others as administrators to supervise the high officers and protect the king's interests. **3** Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the other administrators and high officers. Because of Daniel's great ability, the king made plans to place him over the entire empire.

You see, Daniel was not only on God's short list, but he was a favorite of king Darius as well. God was pleased to give Daniel a great ability and have him find favor with the king. This favor of Daniel and jealousy of him drove them to devise the vilest plan.

4 Then the other administrators and high officers began

searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. 5 So they concluded, "Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion."

In verse 4 we see some great attributes of Daniel, "He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy." And his opponents couldn't stand it, they were quite angry indeed. Daniel was blameless, they found no fault in him, and so they had to find a creative way to get him convicted. It is ironic that the very God that Daniel was loyal to was the same God that gave him the ability and qualities that he had. So here's what they did:

6 So the administrators and high officers went to the king and said, "Long live King Darius! 7 We are all in agreement—we administrators, officials, high officers, advisers, and governors—that the king should make a law that will be strictly enforced. Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions. 8 And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so it cannot be changed, an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked." 9 So King Darius signed the law.

It's interesting to note here that Darius goes right along with their plan, but why? We don't know exactly why King Darius agreed to the law. I suspect that Darius just wasn't thinking at the time and God had simply planned this all to happen to begin with. At the very least we certainly know that Darius was quite fond of Daniel:

14 Hearing this [Daniel's "transgression": my note], the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to

save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament.

Here are the \$64,000 questions: If Daniel knew about the law, why didn't Daniel go to the king when he first learned about this law (especially since they seemed to be close), and if he knew, why couldn't he be a little more discreet about worshipping God, at least just for the next 30 days? While we may not know the answers to all these questions I think it is more important to know exactly what He did do, let's find out...

9 So King Darius signed the law.

10 But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God.

Did you catch that?

He **did** know about the law and what does he do? It's business as usual for Daniel, he doesn't change a thing! This makes me want to add him to the list in Hebrews 11, it would read something like this:

"By faith, Daniel continued to worship God as he always had done, knowing that his very life was in jeopardy."

He doesn't run and hide, he doesn't sulk, he doesn't beg before King Darius, he doesn't try to get even with the others, no, what does he do?

Here is the real key to the story and if you get just one thing from this message, this is it: **He doesn't plead before his earthly king, instead he goes before his Heavenly King. Not only that, but he gives thanks to God.** How's that for faith? He wasn't worried, He knew His God well enough to know that he would be taken care of. He knew that it wasn't up to

the evil-doers to determine his fate, but he put his life in God's hands. I suspect that he thanked God for the opportunity to be a witness to King Darius. Perhaps he suspected all along that God would use him in some grand way to show King Darius just how great He is.

And that's just where we end up, after being tossed in with the lions:

19 Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions' den. 20 When he got there, he called out in anguish, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?"

21 Daniel answered, "Long live the king! 22 My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty."

23 The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God.

And as a result of this wonderful miracle:

25 Then King Darius sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world:

"Peace and prosperity to you!

26 "I decree that everyone throughout my kingdom should tremble with fear before the God of Daniel.

*For he is the living God,
and he will endure forever.*

*His kingdom will never be destroyed,
and his rule will never end.*

*27 He rescues and saves his people;
he performs miraculous signs and wonders*

*in the heavens and on earth.
He has rescued Daniel
from the power of the lions.”*

One more person was reached for Jesus, not to mention those saved because of the king’s endorsement.

And lastly, I’d like you to consider this: You and I are in this same struggle today. Because the devil has dominion on this earth he will do all that he can to plot and scheme for your soul. He is diligent about tripping you so that you’ll fall. But when we are faced with adversity and his evil plans let’s go about our business, as usual, continue reading the Word, continue spending time in prayer, giving thanks and let’s not forsake the gathering with other believers so that we can be encouraged. Can I get an amen?

“Dear Lord in Heaven, thank you for your continued love and mercy. Thank you for opening our eyes that we might know the Truth and be set free. Thank you for taking care of us in times of adversity and for delivering us in all circumstances. Please give us the courage and endurance we need to continue doing what you’d have us do. Help us to remain faithful to you throughout our lives that we may be found secure in your hands and live eternally in your presence. In your Son’s precious name, amen.”

Photo by [James Pond](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The following is a list of related passages for those that desire a deeper study.

Read the rest of Daniel 6 to find out what happens to the accusers and then ask yourself this: Why weren’t the lions hungry when Daniel was in the den?

John 10: 9 Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me

will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. **10** The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

Philippians 4: 6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. **7** Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

Joshua 1: 8 Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 10: 25 And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

2 Peter 3: 11 Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live, **12** looking forward to the day of God and hurrying it along. On that day, he will set the heavens on fire, and the elements will melt away in the flames. **13** But we are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness.

14 And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight.

Psalm 1

1 Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked,

or stand around with sinners,
or join in with mockers.

2 But they delight in the law of the Lord,
meditating on it day and night.

3 They are like trees planted along the riverbank,
bearing fruit each season.

Their leaves never wither,
and they prosper in all they do.

4 But not the wicked!

They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind.

5 They will be condemned at the time of judgment.
Sinners will have no place among the godly.

6 For the Lord watches over the path of the godly,
but the path of the wicked leads to destruction.

Psalm 112

1 Praise the Lord!

How joyful are those who fear the Lord
and delight in obeying his commands.

2 Their children will be successful everywhere;
an entire generation of godly people will be blessed.

3 They themselves will be wealthy,
and their good deeds will last forever.

4 Light shines in the darkness for the godly.
They are generous, compassionate, and righteous.

5 Good comes to those who lend money generously
and conduct their business fairly.

6 Such people will not be overcome by evil.
Those who are righteous will be long remembered.

7 They do not fear bad news;
they confidently trust the Lord to care for them.

8 They are confident and fearless
and can face their foes triumphantly.

9 They share freely and give generously to those in need.
Their good deeds will be remembered forever.

They will have influence and honor.

10 The wicked will see this and be infuriated.
They will grind their teeth in anger;
they will slink away, their hopes thwarted.