

Central Idea

What do you think is the central theme of chapter 12?

Developing Trust

1. a. Think about the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. How does adversity encourage each of the following?

- Love

- Joy

- Peace

- Longsuffering

- Kindness

- Goodness

- Faithfulness

- Gentleness

- Self-control

b. Which of these have grown in your life through adversity?

c. Did the growth you experienced endure after the adversity passed? Explain.

3. a. Read Romans 5:3-5 and James 1:2-4. What should our attitude be in the midst of adversity, and why?

b. How did Jesus maintain this attitude (Hebrews 12:2)?

KJV Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,

despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

c. How can we cultivate this same attitude?

3. What does Philippians 1:6 say about our spiritual growth?

KJV Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

4. a. What happens when we resist God's working in our lives through adversity?

b. What warning is given to us in Job 36:21?

KJV Job 36:21 Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.

5. a. Have you been drawn to God's Word in times of adversity? Why or why not?

b. What portions of Scripture have become especially important to you during trying times?

6. a. According to John 15:2 what is the purpose of God's pruning?

KJV John 15:2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

b. Even in the Church, Christians sometimes seek things that are not true spiritual fruit, such as position, success, and reputation. What counterfeit fruit have you been tempted to seek?

7. What is the connection between adversity (or discipline) and holiness, as expressed in Hebrews 12:10?

KJV Hebrews 12:10 For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness.

8. Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-9 and 12:10. How does adversity teach us to depend on God?

KJV 2 Corinthians 1:8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: 9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

9. a. Hebrews 10:36 and 12:1 speak of the need to persevere. What is the goal of our perseverance?

KJV Hebrews 10:36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

KJV Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

b. How can we learn to persevere? (See question 2.)

10. a. Why does suffering deepen the fellowship between believers?

b. Describe a time when you experienced deeper fellowship through suffering.

11. What does Psalm 34:18 say about how adversity affects our relationship with God?

KJV Psalm 34:18 The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

12. Which of the seven results of suffering—pruning, holiness, dependence, perseverance, service, fellowship, relationship with God—which are discussed under “Examining Trust,” have you personally experienced?

Trust in Action

1. Memorize James 1:2-4

2. Contact someone you know who is suffering. Offer to get together to pray.

3. One of the best ways to remember what God has taught us through different experiences is to write down those lessons while they are fresh. If you haven’t started a journal, begin now by recording the lessons God has been teaching you lately. Then, sit down once a month and record your recent discoveries in your walk with God. Over the years this will have a big impact on how well you remember what God has done in your life.