

Responding to Tough Times by Charles Stanley

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6

Tough times have a way of revealing our true nature. If two people were to face the same dilemma, one may grow closer to God and bear fruit while the other becomes anxious and doubts God's faithfulness. How we respond to trials makes all the difference.

Like it or not, hardship is part of life. Becoming a Christian doesn't change that fact (John 16:33). What shifts is our understanding of God's sovereignty—nothing touches our life unless He permits it. Consider David, for example: God allowed a murderous king to pursue him for years (1 Samuel 23:15; 1 Samuel 23:25), but David responded to adversity with faith and called God his stronghold and refuge (Psalm 59:16).

If we let them, challenges can grow our faith, change our perspective, or deepen our compassion. But no matter what, the Lord is available to help us in our affliction (Psalm 46:1). Either we can turn toward Him for comfort, guidance, and support, or we can get angry and resentful that we're not being rescued from our valley. When affliction strips away every crutch, one has only the Lord to depend upon. Though some people are destroyed by that kind of situation, others are built into undaunted believers.

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