

6 Weapons to Wield When Facing Adversity

What protection do you have in the face of adversity, particularly an adversity generated by another person? David wrestles with that question in Psalm 141—the trauma caused by an “enemy.” It’s a familiar theme in David’s prayers.

Take comfort from David’s endless struggles. God permitted him to write his psalms so we would not fail in faith when our own sufferings do not come to an end all at once. Yes, time and struggle are needed if you are to overcome. David asked God to act quickly (v. 1), but emergencies on earth are not always emergencies in heaven.

What are the protections you need in your difficult times?

Worship

Prayerlessness and withdrawal from God during adversity only intensify your problems. David practiced the truth in the gospel song: “Take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there.”

In temple sacrifices, incense served the practical purpose of perfuming the stench of burning animal parts. Your problems, by themselves, can make you nauseous. Prayer deodorizes the foulness of your circumstances by perfuming them with praise and trust in the Lord.

In lifting your hands, you take the posture of a suppliant yielding yourself to God and His perfect will. Your upraised hands surrender your need to the Lord and bring the peace of His presence in what otherwise would be a completely unmanageable situation.

Self-control

Your tendency when deeply injured is to mouth off. You need others to feel your pain. That's why David placed a filter on his words by asking the Lord to put a guard over his mouth. Don't surrender your tongue to revenge, rage, self-pity, and blame. Ask the Lord to give you discretion over what you say and who you say it to. Leave more unsaid than spoken.

Avoidance

The short New Testament letter of Jude tells us that when the archangel Michael disputed with the devil about the body of Moses, he did not dare bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." In other words, when you fight the devil, be careful you do not become like him. Michael acted like the good angel he was. Too many have shipwrecked their faith by acting like the devil when fighting the devil.

David recognized the same danger, and asked the Lord to help him avoid acting like the evil persons who had caused him grief. If another person has misused or abused you, set a different standard for your own conduct—even in dealing with them.

Correction

Take good advice. Consider it fortunate when a good and godly person warns you about your attitudes or behavior.

Anger

No emotion is more misunderstood by believers than anger. Anger is a gift from God to help you create distance between yourself and the wrongdoer. If, for example, you see an adult mistreating a child and you don't become angry, then something is wrong with you. In the same way, you need to let anger create distance between you and someone who violated your trust.

David is so angry he asks the Lord to push his enemies off cliffs and desecrate their graves. Notice, however, David didn't volunteer for the job. He found a way to release anger without destroying himself or others.

Perspective

"My eyes are fixed on you, O Sovereign Lord," David affirms.

It's no easy task bringing your focus back upon the Lord rather than on your external circumstances or internal feelings. The aspect of "eyes fixed" connotes a steady and unbroken gaze.

You must avoid the mistake of glancing only occasionally at God during the time you are wounded. You can't afford to go a single day without integrating His Word into your life, or conversing with Him in prayer.

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