

## RELENTLESS: ARM YOURSELF

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**Intro:** In this life, we are guaranteed to encounter trouble and adversity (Phil 1:29). We can respond in two ways, in the spirit or in the flesh. When we respond to adversity in the flesh, our thinking sounds like:

*"I can't believe what is happening!"*

*"Why me?"*

*"Why do I have to go through this?"*

*"I hate this!"*

Has this been your experience when you faced a challenge or tough situation? In the face of adversity, Christians suffer shock, bewilderment, and amazement, often *reacting* instead of *acting* in the Spirit. Reacting in the Spirit does not come natural and we have to guide ourselves towards that point. Making the effort to "arm ourselves" for adversity is a key to moving along this path (1 Pet 4:1). Adversity is the training ground for spiritual growth.

John Bevere used the example of a type of flight training that pilots use that prepares them for the "adversities" of flight. Flight simulators create an artificial environment where pilots can be exposed to many different possible scenarios, such as weather and emergency situations. These help to build a reactionary framework from which pilots can draw upon in case any of these scenarios occur during a real flight in a real airplane. Adversities in our life are like simulations that allow us to grow to the next level in what God is accomplishing in our life.

### Main Points:

1. **Adversity or hardship will happen—it's inevitable.** We just cannot escape the fact that we live in a world where we will be subject to problematic issues and situations. Jn 16:33, Acts 14:22
2. **You have the strength to overcome what you're facing.** The power of Christ is available to us to overcome every adversity, no matter if it is severe or light. 1 Cor 10:13, Jas 1:13, Lk 10:19, Eph 1:19
3. **You never have to lose.** Christ is not partially powerful, but all powerful. His ways are sure and solid. Because we operate in His power, we are as ensured of victory as His authority. 2 Cor 2:14
4. **You must embrace a positive attitude toward adversity.** We can choose to be "spiritual" or fleshly in our response to adversity. When you face a problem, what way will you choose? Is your adversity an obstacle or an opportunity? What model will you embrace? 2 Cor. 12:9-10
  - "Greater persistence requires greater power to overcome, therefore producing a greater victory..." Rom 8:35,37; Jas. 1:2-3

- Bottom Line: God uses your present conquests to strengthen you for greater conquests in your future.
- Adversity builds us into relentless believers.

### **The Benefits of Adversity:**

1. Greater battles yield greater victories.
2. Your capacity expands and increases.
3. Your character is matured.
4. Increased leadership over life's adversity.

### **When you face adversity with a spiritual mindset, your attitude will be:**

*"How exciting!"*

*"This is no obstacle, this is an opportunity!"*

*"My capacity level is growing!"*

### **Discussion questions for "Relentless (Adversity)":**

1. What qualifies as adversity in our lives? When adversity hits, which attitude do you tend to display? Even though having a fleshly attitude is a very natural response, why is it not the right choice for a Christian? In other words, why does it matter?
2. Do you see adversity as an opportunity? Why or why not? What is it an opportunity for? What areas do you see as opportunities in your life? How does the analogy of the flight simulator help you to have a different perspective of adversity? Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What actions can you take in times of temptation? What does this verse say God will do? How do they fit together?
3. Who is the power behind overcoming adversity and how can we be a stronger conduit of that power? In what ways does the power of God give you assurance in adversity? Read 2 Corinthians 2:14-17. What is affected by our "triumph in Christ?"
4. How can we adopt a positive attitude towards adversity without it being "positive thinking?" Which benefit of adversity do you desire the most and why? Think of your last time of adversity. What lessons did you learn? What did you learn from this sermon that would have helped (or supported) your situation?
5. **(Gold Star Question)** Imagine that you are discussing overcoming adversity with another believer. You want to demonstrate to them that many people in the bible faced adversity. From your memory, how many bible figures can you think of that faced adversity and responded in the spirit? Time permitting, what lessons can you take from their example(s)?

As a side note, if you are facing adversity, some of the best lessons can be learned by studying the life of those who trusted God in their times of adversity. Take note of both their failures and their victories.