The Blessing of Adversity

Barry C. Black

Consider the title of this book. What does it mean to find blessing in adversity? What are some examples (from the book, the Bible, or your own life) of someone who found blessing in adversity? What are the difficulties of searching for blessing in a moment of suffering? What are the benefits?

Of the six things Barry Black puts forth to help celebrate your troubles (chapter 1), which do you find the most needful or beneficial? Which do you struggle with the most? Why?

In Chapter 3, the author says, “God has placed limits on the evil that can come your way.” What biblical examples does he give? Can you think of others? What does this statement mean to you as you consider the troubles you face in this world? What promises has God made about this life and our heavenly home that can help sustain us?

What does it mean to “waste” our sufferings, and why does Barry Black encourage us not to do so? Think of times when suffering has produced fruit—in someone’s character, in his or her relationships, in the world. What might have happened instead if this suffering had been “wasted”?

What does the author mean when he reminds us to think about “our Egypt” (chapter 7)? In what specific ways will memories of Egypt serve as a blessing to us and to others?

When we’re in pain, it can be hard to see our suffering as an opportunity. But in what ways might it also be comforting? Consider your specific situation and what opportunities it gives you right now to grow closer to God and to others. Pray that God will meet you in your suffering and open your heart to such opportunities as they arise.

Throughout the book, the author quotes Scriptures that are meaningful to him, as well as works by poets such as Longfellow or Browning. What Scripture, poem, song lyrics, or inspirational quote has helped you through difficult times? Is there someone in your life who is struggling and might like to hear it today?

Barry Black acknowledges that “if you’re going to discover the blessing in your adversity, you must learn how to deal with a Savior and Lord who is sometimes silent” (chapter 12). When we cry out to God and experience apparent silence in response, what does the author encourage us to do (or not do)? Do you think God’s silence necessarily means the person praying to him has sinned in some way? Why or why not?

Barry Black discusses the importance of spiritual disciplines in chapter 16. Which of these (or others) is a primary way in which you connect to God? How has it served as a blessing to you during times of adversity?

“What good gifts have you received from God?” (chapter 20). Name some of your own gifts. Do you agree with the author that “cultivating an attitude of gratitude means being ready to thank God even when facing hardships”? Why or why not?

What does Barry Black describe as “the perfect prayer” in chapter 22? Why does he name it this? How does this prayer relate to the theme of the book: the blessing of adversity? Are you ready to pray this prayer today?