

# "In The Day ..."

**Introduction.** Among all the blessings of God-revealed religion, none are more striking than its ability to address life's circumstances. Its instructions, admonitions and consolations are suited to every possible situation we will endure. These instructions are good for the man and woman, the old and young, the parent and child, and the rich and poor. John Patrick said, "Pain makes man think. Thought makes man wise. Wisdom makes life endurable."

That being said, one of the greatest extremes through which we must pass is prosperity and adversity. God balances our lives by giving us enough blessings to keep us happy and enough burdens to keep us humble. If all we had were blessings in our hands, we would fall over, so the Lord balances the blessings in our hands with burdens on our backs. Ecclesiastes 7:14 tells us what to do during both of these days.

## I. *The Day Of Prosperity*

### A. A definition of prosperity.

1. Prosperity is defined as "a successful, flourishing or thriving condition." A cute little saying goes, "Prosperity is something that businessmen created for politicians to take credit for."
2. The word occurs almost 560 times in the Old Testament and is variously translated as "good," "wealth," "pleasant," "bountiful" and "cheerful."

### B. Considerations of prosperity.

#### 1. The dangers of prosperity.

##### a) Forgetting God.

- (1) When we prosper, we do not see much need for God (Deuteronomy 8:11-14; Hosea 13:6).
- (2) When the Sea of Galilee was calm, the disciples did not need the Master (Mark 4:37-38).

##### b) Pride.

- (1) We often unrighteously judge ourselves by what we have, rather than by what we are (Luke 12:15).
- (2) Nebuchadnezzar said that he built Babylon "by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty" (Daniel 4:30).

##### c) Worldliness.

- (1) Demas was rich, but he left Paul because he loved the present world (2 Timothy 4:10; cf. James 2:5).
- (2) War, famine and disease have killed millions, but greed has killed many more (Matthew 19:23-24). Calvin Coolidge said, "Prosperity is only an instrument to be used, not a deity to be worshiped."

2. The privileges of prosperity.
  - a) Enjoyment.
    - (1) God desires His creatures to be happy; prosperity is His bountiful gift (Ecclesiastes 2:24; 3:12, 22).
    - (2) Fathers and mothers love to see their children enjoy the luxuries they are able to give them.
  - b) Gratitude.
    - (1) Everything is from God, and He deserves our thanks (Ephesians 5:20).
    - (2) Gratitude will prevent us from exalting ourselves (cf. Luke 18:11).
  - c) Benevolence.
    - (1) We have been given everything by God to enjoy (1 Timothy 6:17).
    - (2) God desires that we "remember the poor" (Galatians 2:7-10).

## II. ***The Day Of Adversity***

### A. A definition of adversity.

1. Adversity is defined as "adverse fortune or fate; a condition marked by misfortune, calamity or distress." William Hazlitt said, "Prosperity is a great teacher; adversity is a greater. Possessions pamper the mind; privation trains and strengthens it."
2. The word occurs over 660 times in the Old Testament and is variously translated as "wickedness," "evil," "affliction," "hurt" and "mischief."

### B. Considerations of adversity.

1. Adversity is a result of sin.
  - a) The assumption has always been that God initiates suffering (cf. Job 1:6-11).
    - (1) Can you imagine God sending sickness, disease, blindness, deafness and other afflictions, only to have Jesus come and undo what God had done? Did Jesus heal people in opposition to God's will (Acts 10:38)? No!
    - (2) It is wicked to blame God for that which is not His responsibility (cf. Luke 13:16; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9).
    - (3) Satan takes great pleasure in ruining God's creation and causing misery and suffering through the agency of sin (Genesis 3:14-19; Job 4:8; 20:11; Proverbs 1:31).
  - b) Galatians 6:7 is an unchangeable law of life.
    - (1) The conditions that exist, the suffering which must be endured and the death that comes to all is a result of man being out of step with the law of God.

- (2) Suffering, therefore, is not sent from God. When God does test us, He does so for the purpose of making us better (Hebrews 12:5-10).
  - (3) Adversity is the price we must pay for being moral creatures who have the right of choice.
2. Adversity is of a limited duration.
- a) It is a "day" of adversity. Although we go through periods of extreme distress, the darkness will break (2 Corinthians 4:17-18). The Lord has called us to rejoice (Psalm 42:5, 11).
  - b) Christians are acquainted with both good and bad.
    - (1) We should seriously thank God for allowing us to experience hardships rather than granting us a tranquil life (2 Corinthians 1:3-7).
    - (2) If you were to walk down the aisles of any pharmacy, you would find that one of their most popular products is pain killers. They have shelves that are packed with bottles of Aleve, Advil, Tylenol, etc. Other shelves contain tubes of rub-on pain relief like Bengay and Aspergel. Or, you can check out various types of chemical ice packs and heating pads. Pain relief is big business in America. We spend billions every year because none of us want to hurt. Everyone wants to live a comfortable life.
    - (3) Be that as it may, no person is more unhappy than the one who never experiences adversity; the greatest affliction is never to be afflicted.

**Conclusion.** It is impossible to know if tomorrow will be good or evil, so the best we can do is learn to rejoice in the day of prosperity and thoughtfully consider the true nature of God in the day of adversity. Good days and evil days serve the higher purpose of God. Wisdom gives us perspective so that we are not discouraged during difficult times or arrogant during happy times.

Withholding information about the future causes us to look to God (1 Peter 5:7; Job 13:15). It takes a lot of spirituality to accept prosperity and adversity, for often prosperity does greater damage (Philippians 4:10-13). Prosperity discovers vice, but adversity discovers virtue. The greatest prosperity that anyone can have is spiritual prosperity, obtained by following God's will (Deuteronomy 29:9; 1 Chronicles 22:13; 2 Chronicles 31:21; Psalm 1:3; 3 John 2). Will you obey Him today?