

Dealing with Difficulties

Topic: Spiritual Warfare (Part One)

Purpose of this study:

To provide students with a fundamental understanding of adversity, temptation, Satan and sin.

Motivation for teaching this study:

Discipleship is a battle. Satan works overtime to discourage, take away and prevent God's kingdom from advancing on any front. Your students need to know that being a Christian is not a cakewalk or trip to Disneyland, but they are involved in warfare with the world, their own flesh and Satan. The Christian life is a marathon of learning to persevere in the midst of difficulties regardless of the cause or the cost.

Introducing the Lesson:

I might begin with an analogy from sports, "Have you ever been in a sports competition of any sort? If so did you win? Was it hard?" In order to win at sports repeatedly you have to practice and go through a lot of ups and downs in order to get in shape and become proficient at your sport. In the same way in order to grow in our Christian faith, we must endure many difficult and trying times. Today we want to talk about dealing with difficulties in your Christian life.

The top third of the page is designed to get your students involved in interacting with difficulties and why we have them. Don't try to answer every question of objection but use it primarily as a means of discussion starters.

The World

- a. Splurging, bulimia, lust, drinking, sex and drugs are just a few sins of the flesh.
- b. Fancy cars, having the "right" designer clothes, hoarding lots of money, and excessive collections (CD's, DVD's, etc.) are but a few of the lusts of the eyes for students.
- c. Becoming overly busy, membership in all the right clubs at school, and being overly popular are symptoms of the pride of life in student's lives.

The natural consequences of foolish decisions.

Thought provokers for foolish decisions: driving while under the influence, procrastinating writing your big paper until the last day, doing something foolish with your friends.

Thought provokers for good decisions: planning ahead, admitting you were wrong, saving your money for something

Great question to ask: Can you share a time when God brought good out of what obviously a "bad" situation, in the spirit of Romans 8:28?

Things God allows for our spiritual growth

God as a loving Father, disciplines us as children when we go astray. He disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness (Heb. 12:4-13). This discipline is unpleasant but it yields righteousness.

Allowing God to build endurance in our lives through trials is essential for spiritual growth. Rigorous training produces strong Christians.

Closing the Lesson:

Identifying the source of adversity in our lives is nearly half the battle. Once the source is identified, then we can know how to respond Biblically to our difficulties.

Evaluation

1. Do your students truly understand that adversity and difficulties are a normal part of the Christian life?
2. Can your students distinguish the source of their difficulties?
3. Do your students have a "game plan" for how to endure their present difficulty?

* Many concepts in this study are from *Personal Disciplemaking* by Chris Adsit. Visit www.ccci.org/disciplemakers or call 888-342-2235.