

(1.12) Adversity

Problems and difficulties often work for the betterment of our spiritual lives since they cause us to take pause of where we are and where we need to be, making us realize not to place our hope in things of this world.

Sometimes it is even beneficial when others contradict and reject us, or think poorly of us, even if we do good and intend good. Such experiences help us to develop humility and deliver us from vanity and pride; *many are the troubles of the righteous but the Lord delivers him from them all.*¹

When others slight us and give no credit to us, and we are past the point of reacting sharply to such situations, we strive for closer union with God. We need to so firmly establish ourselves in God that no problem will cause us to despair and to seek human consolation. *I need only say, 'I am slipping.' for your faithful love, Yahweh, to support me; however great the anxiety of my heart, your consolations soothe me.*²



When good people are deeply troubled, tempted, or distracted with evil inclinations, they begin to understand the need to call out to our Heavenly Father and that nothing can be done without Him. *For though the upright falls seven times, he gets up again; the wicked are the ones who stumble in adversity.*³

When troubles are great and sorrow encompasses us, we may feel like Paul who said: *I am caught in this dilemma: I want to be gone and to be with Christ*⁴ and yet we are encouraged to *be joyful in hope, persevere in hardship; keep praying regularly.*⁵

It is then that Jesus reminds us: *Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a peace which the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.*⁶

This article is based on Book 1, Chapter 12 of Thomas of Kempis' writing, "Imitation of Christ." It is not a translation, and there are many of those, but a personal (layperson's) reflection on his writing; if any of it helps give credit to Thomas of Kempis; if any of it fails the responsibility is mine. (rfm)

¹ Psalm 34:20

² Psalm 94:18-19

³ Proverbs 24:16

⁴ Philippians 1:23

⁵ Romans 12:12

⁶ John 14:27