



# **UNDER PRESSURE**

## **How God Uses Crisis to Shape You**

We all go through crisis events in our life. They're inconvenient and painful. Sometimes they can bring out the worst in us. Yet God sees these trials as critical moments in our lives. He allows us to go through them and uses them to shape us into the person he intended us to be.

In this Bible study, we'll explore why God allows us to go through a crisis and what exactly he is doing in the midst of it.

## 1) Change Requires Crisis

### Reflect/Discuss

- What was the last major trial you went through? How did it affect you?
- Do you become better or worse after going through a difficulty?

### Read

*“See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.” - Isaiah 48:10*

*“We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,” - Romans 5:4*

### Consider

The Bible uses the imagery of refining fire a lot when talking about suffering. Precious metals like gold or silver are often found in nature mixed in with other rocks. To extract the pure metal for use, it has to be put in the furnace, where extreme heat and pressure separates out the impurities, leaving only the precious metal. It's also only when metal is hot and under pressure that it is able to be shaped into what the maker intends.

In the same way, trials and afflictions will both reveal who we truly are and cause our faults to come to the surface to be removed. It's through this refinement process again and again that God shapes us into the people he wants us to be... if we are learning what he's teaching through the process.

### Act

- Recall your last major struggle, and write down what you learned from it.
- Take what you learned and put it somewhere memorable, such as a poster, keychain, or phone/computer wallpaper.

### Go Deeper

- [God's Purpose and Suffering](#)

## 2) Crisis Produces Endurance

### Reflect/Discuss

- What negative thought patterns or habits do you fall into when things get tough?
- How do you keep yourself from going down those unhealthy paths?

### Read

*“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” - James 1:2-4*

### Consider

When you run a race, endurance is necessary to finish. If you stopped whenever you felt tired, you would never complete it. Persevering also means continuing to do what you started out doing and not straying from that path.

We will go through a crisis from start to finish no matter what we do, so how does endurance factor in? The pressure, anxiety, and stress that hardships bring can cause us to fall into patterns of negativity and unhealthiness. Developing endurance in a crisis means we don't give up and give in to those temptations when we become emotionally tired. We persevere by remaining the kind of person God calls us to be all the way through the trial.

### Act

- Write down a verse, quote, or phrase that is encouraging to you that you can refer to when you feel anxiety coming.
- Make a list of people you can call and talk to for support and encouragement during a crisis.

### Go Deeper

- [Here's Why You Shouldn't Quit Even When Things Are Tough](#)

### 3) Crisis Produces Character

#### Reflect/Discuss

- What personality traits do you have today as a result of past struggles?
- In previous hardships, have you seen your “true self” come out, good or bad?

#### Read

*“In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.” 1 Peter 1:6-7*

#### Consider

Once again using the refinement imagery, gold is compared to your integrity. As fire removes the impurities from gold, it becomes more valuable. The “genuineness of your faith,” or how you act compared to what you claim to believe, is important to God. Both your reputation and God’s reputation are on the line.

Your character and integrity can only be refined during a crisis. When times are good, it’s easy to be joyful, thankful, and kind. It’s even easy to fake the qualities. It’s through the struggles that who you really are is revealed, and you also have the opportunity to decide who you will become.

#### Act

- Ask someone who knows you well about the last time you went through a crisis, and how they perceived your character during that time.
- Make a list or a description of the person you want to become the next time there is a difficulty.

#### Go Deeper

- [The Battleground of Character](#)

## 4) Crisis Produces Hope

### Reflect/Discuss

- What have you hoped for in previous hardships?
- What does a person do or not do when they have hope?

### Read

*“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.”*

- Hebrews 10:23

*“Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*

- 1 Peter 1:13

### Consider

The Bible often talks about hope as something that is unseen. There can only be hope in things that we don't have yet, otherwise it isn't really hope at all. That is a big part of faith - we place our hope in a God we cannot see. This is tested even more during trials when our vision gets cloudy. But it's the strength of our hope - the confidence that God is with us and will see us through - that is not only developed during a crisis, but also helps us get through a crisis.

Notice also that hope is not simply waiting and doing nothing. It requires a mind that is ready for action and clarity of focus. During struggles when the foundations of our beliefs are shaken, hope gives us a clear vision of who God is and an optimism that we will make it through stronger and better.

### Act

- Write down the attributes of God that give you the most hope during difficulty.
- Create a daily positive spiritual habit such as prayer or worship that you can make a routine out of, both in good times and bad times.

### Go Deeper

- [Why Christians Have Hope in the Worst of Times](#)

## 5) Anticipating Crisis

### Re-Read

*Romans 5:4, James 1:2, 1 Peter 1:6*

### Reflect/Discuss

- What do you notice is a common theme at the beginning of all those verses?
- Why do you think we should have that reaction in suffering?

### Consider

We often anticipate a crisis like we do a dentist appointment - something that will be uncomfortable and painful. So why does the Bible say so many times to be joyful during suffering? Perhaps a better comparison could be exercise. Whether you like it or not, exercise is painful. But those who find joy in exercise and do it regularly know the outcome of that pain. They will be stronger because of it.

You don't have to like being in hardship or pretend that everything is fine. But joy is different. Joy is a deep, abiding sense of contentment and fulfillment. If we trust that God is the one shaping us for the better, we can go through a crisis event knowing that we will grow in endurance, character, and hope. Even in the darkest days, we can find joy - not in the pain, but in knowing there will be an end to the pain and the suffering will result in something greater.

### Act

- Create a "Crisis Action Plan" for when you encounter future trials. Write down things like key Bible verses, unhealthy habits to watch out for, healthy habits to do, people to reach out to for support, pre-written prayers that you can recite, and the kind of person you want to become at the end of the crisis.

### Go Deeper

- [The Place to Find Real Joy](#)

We will go through various crisis events in our lives that will be inconvenient, uncomfortable, and painful. The pressure and anxiety of those trials may cause us to react negatively. But if we go through the struggles knowing that God is shaping us, we can enter hardships with joy, even when we suffer. We know that through the difficulties, God is producing within us endurance, character, and perseverance.

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