**Study Series: Spiritual Warfare**

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**Lesson Title: “Adversity, Satan’s Most Effective Weapon” (pp. 156-166)**

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**The main point of this lesson is:** Adversity can drive us from God or drive us closer to Him, our choice.

**Focus on this goal:** To help adults determine principles by which they will live to cause adversity to be opportunities for growth in relationship with the Lord.

**Key Bible Passages:** John 16:33; 2 Corinthians 6:3-5

Before the Session

On a board, **draw** a stick-figure person to the left and a cloud **labeled** God on the right. **Leave room** for arrows and a list between the two. (Steps 1 and 7)

During the Session

**Step 1. Introduction / Discussion Starter**

**Direct attention** to the board.

**At the top**, between the figure and the cloud, **draw** two arrows pointing toward each other.

**Ask:** What are some things that draw us closer to God? (i.e., nature, blessings, God’s Word, etc.)

**Beneath the first arrows**, about halfway down the board, **draw** two arrows pointing away from each other.

**Ask** what things drive us away from God. (sin, rebellion, etc.)

**Stress** that getting further from God is always our choice.

**Say:** To conclude this series on spiritual warfare, today we’re going to look at Satan’s most effective weapon. And we’re going to see that it can either drive us from God or drive us closer to Him.

**Step 2. Day One – Deception**

**Share** a lighthearted time when you were deceived (April Fool’s prank, practical joke, surprise party).

**Ask** who has ever been deceived.

**Invite volunteers** **to briefly recount** the story.

**Acknowledge** Satan has deceived us, but it’s no laughing matter: he has convinced many Christians that believing in God will bring nothing but blessings and prosperity.

**Read** the Day One paragraph (p. 157) beginning, “Satan delights ….”

**Do** activity 1 (p. 157) **as a group** activity.

**Invite a volunteer to read** John 16:33.

**Ask:** Why do we struggle to accept these very clear words of Jesus?

**Step 3. Day Two – Purpose**

**Ask learners** to recall God’s purpose for us, as identified in Session 9 (to glorify Him, p. 106).

**Ask:** Who knows best how God can be most glorified? (God!)

**Help learners understand** that focusing on our comfort and welfare doesn’t glorify God, but peace and praise in the face of adversity certainly does.

**Enlist a volunteer to read** 2 Corinthians 4:17-18.

**As a group, consider** the phrase “eternal weight of glory” and how Jesus perfectly exemplified this: He knew the eternal implications of His obedience and faith and was willing to endure so God’s plan would be fulfilled (Heb. 12:1‑2).

**Read** the last two sentences from Day Two (p. 160).

**Step 4. Day Three – Growth**

**Ask:** What things did you struggle with as a child?

**Engage learners** in discussing hard classes, difficult chores, family struggles, or the like.

**Ask:** In what ways did these make you a stronger, more resilient, more compassionate person?

**Point out** that struggles in our young lives often lead us to success as adults. Conversely, those who never learn to persevere and respond to challenges as a child don’t develop the skill required for the responsibilities of adulthood.

**Use** Day Three information (p. 160) **to help learners see** the same is true of faith: we grow in adversities.

**Invite a volunteer to read** 2 Corinthians 1:3-5.

**Say:** Adversity is often manifested in disrupted plans.

**Read** the last Day Three paragraph (p. 161).

**Step 5. Day Four – Blessed**

**Invite volunteers to read** Isaiah 48:10-11 and 1 Peter 1:7.

**Say:** We see in these verses—from both the Old and New Testament—that we will walk through trials of fire because God refines us in those situations.

**Read** the paragraph from Day Four (p. 163) that begins, “We have deprived ourselves ….”

**Point out** that we see the blessings of our suffering only if we stay connected by faith to God, trusting Him for the results.

**Say:** Often, it takes looking back at a situation to see the blessing.

**Share** a time in your own life that seemed almost unbearable at the time but that now you can see God’s blessing on your life and faith because of it.

**Read** from the first sentence of the last paragraph of Day Four (p. 164): “When we complain … we are accusing God of mismanagement.”

**Challenge learners** to change their outlook and their attitudes in order to reflect full faith in Christ in hard times.

**Step 6. Day Five – Praise**

**Invite learners** **to open** their Bibles to random places in Psalms.

**Say:** Look at the opening lines of the psalms you find and read any that start with praise.

**After several learners have shared,** **note** how the mood and spirit of the room may have changed.

**Say:** Praise is powerful. We need not be in a group setting to experience this God-focused change; we can do the same thing when we praise God alone.

**Remind learners** from Day Five (p. 165) that praise puts focus on God rather than on our trials, stressing who He is, what He is doing, and His authority over all things.

**Step 7. Live Out the Lesson**

**Direct attention** back to the sketch from Step 1.

**Briefly summarize** the relationship between Joseph and his brothers (Gen. 37; 42–50).

**Explain** that, when the brothers realized who Joseph was and worried he might kill them for their sin, he had a powerful message for them.

**Invite a volunteer to read** Genesis 50:20.

**Say:** Similarly, the adversity Satan means to harm us can be used by God for His glory. It’s up to us!

**Close with prayer**, **inviting** each learner to confess their fears and reaffirm their faith.