

## ADVERSITY AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

In an on-line article for *Leadership* journal, John Ortberg discusses how adverse situations are necessary for our spiritual growth. He writes:

Psychologist Jonathon Haidt had a hypothetical exercise: Imagine that you have a child, and for five minutes you're given a script of what will be that child's life. You get an eraser. You can edit it. You can take out whatever you want.

You read that your child will have a learning disability in grade school. Reading, which comes easily for some kids, will be laborious for yours.

In high school, your kid will make a great circle of friends; then one of them will die of cancer.

After high school this child will actually get into the college they wanted to attend. While there, there will be a car crash, and your child will lose a leg and go through a difficult depression.

A few years later, your child will get a great job—then lose that job in an economic downturn.

Your child will get married, but then go through the grief of separation.

You get this script for your child's life and have five minutes to edit it.

What would you erase?

Wouldn't you want to take out all the stuff that would cause them pain?

I am part of a generation of adults called "helicopter parents," because we're constantly trying to swoop into our kid's educational life, relational life, sports life, etc., to make sure no one is mistreating them, no one is disappointing them. We want them to experience one unobstructed success after another.

One Halloween a mom came to our door to trick or treat. Why didn't she send in her kid? Well, the weather's a little bad, she said; she was driving so he didn't have to walk in the mist.

But why not send him to the door? He had fallen asleep in the car, she said, so she didn't want him to have to wake up.

I felt like saying, "Why don't you eat all his candy and get his stomach ache for him, too—then he can be completely protected!"

If you could wave a wand, if you could erase every failure, setback, suffering, and pain—are you sure it would be a good idea? Would it cause your child to grow up to be a better, stronger, more generous person? Is it possible that in some way people actually need adversity, setbacks, maybe even something like trauma to reach the fullest level of development and growth?