

Lessons from a Tea Bag

Ready:

"Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But endurance must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing." — James 1:2–4

Set

Have you ever found yourself “between a rock and a hard place,” “at the end of your rope,” “out on a limb,” with “your back against the wall,” or in “hot water?” These are just a few ways people describe life’s challenges. In football terminology, life can cause a “sudden change.” Changing our circumstances cannot always be avoided. Still, we can control how we respond to them. Life is 5 percent what happens to us and 95 percent how we respond.

James, the brother of our Lord and a leader in the early church, gives us some good advice: Celebrate when trouble comes your way. This may sound silly, but before you dismiss James, carefully consider what he says. James teaches that our faith is tested and perfected in the midst of our trials. One could call this the “tea bag philosophy.” You will never know how strong a tea bag is until you put it in hot water. The heat of the water tests the strength of the tea bag, and the true flavor of the tea leaves is then released. The same is true for us. Our strength is best determined during the difficulties of life, and our true character is released when we are tested by life’s challenges.

In every difficult situation, our attitude should be, I am going to get the most out of this, and I will be stronger at the end than I was at the beginning.

Go

1. What challenges am I facing today? What can I learn about myself from them?
2. What are the areas of weakness in my life on which I need to work?
3. Am I wasting my time complaining rather than seeing the opportunity?

Workout

Extra Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 2:18; James 1:12

Overtime

Lord, help me to stop complaining during the sudden changes of my life. I realize I will face situations over which I have no control. I commit to focus on the opportunities and not on the obstacles. Thank You, Lord, for helping me get the most out of the difficulties in my life. Amen.



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