

HARD LESSONS IN LIFE: LIFE ISN'T FAIR

Things won't always go your way... and that's part of life.

Compiled by Joe Keim and taught in a group setting

1. Opening Thought

Life is not always fair.

Things do not always go the way we hoped, planned, or prayed for.

Sometimes:

- good people get hurt,
- hard workers get overlooked,
- friendships fall apart,
- and difficult things happen that we do not understand.

Many people become angry or bitter when life feels unfair. But part of growing up is learning how to handle disappointment in a healthy and godly way.

- We cannot control everything that happens to us.
- But we can control how we respond.
- God often uses hard seasons to grow our faith, strength, patience, and character.

Learning this lesson early in life will help you become emotionally and spiritually strong.

Illustration

A tree that grows in strong wind develops deeper roots.

A tree protected from every storm often becomes weak and fragile.

In the same way, hard seasons can help us become stronger if we allow God to work in our lives.

2. Scripture

John 16:33 –

“In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

- Jesus never promised an easy life.
- He promised peace and strength during difficult times.

Example

Jesus Himself was rejected, mocked, betrayed, and crucified even though He never sinned.

If unfair things happened to Jesus, we should not be surprised when life is difficult for us too.

Romans 5:3-4 –

“...tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope:”

- Hard times can help us grow.

- Trials often teach us patience, maturity, and endurance.

Illustration

Athletes become stronger through resistance and training.

Muscles grow by carrying weight.

Character often grows the same way.

Ecclesiastes 9:11 –

“...the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong... but time and chance happeneth to them all.”

- Life does not always seem fair or predictable.
- Sometimes things happen that we do not expect.

Example

A student may study hard and still fail a test.

A good worker may lose a job.

A kind person may still be treated unfairly.

1 Peter 4:12 –

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you...”

- Trials are part of life.
- Difficult seasons do not mean God has abandoned us.

Bible Illustration

Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, falsely accused, and forgotten in prison.

None of that was fair. Yet God used those hard years to prepare him for leadership.

3. Discussion Questions

1. What is one situation in life that felt unfair to you?
 2. How do people usually respond when life does not go their way?
 3. What is the difference between being hurt and becoming bitter?
 4. How can hard situations help a person grow stronger?
 5. Why do you think God allows trials in our lives?
 6. What does trusting God look like during difficult times?
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4. Practical Examples

- School or work: You worked hard but still did not get the result you wanted.
- Friendships: Someone you trusted disappointed or hurt you.
- Family: Some people grow up with more struggles than others.
- Finances: You cannot always afford what others have.

- Health: Sickness, pain, or stress can affect anyone.
- Ministry or church: Even faithful Christians sometimes face criticism, rejection, or disappointment.
- Daily life: Traffic, delays, misunderstandings, and unexpected problems happen to everyone.

Real-Life Illustration

Imagine two people standing in the rain.

One complains the entire time and becomes angry.

The other opens an umbrella and keeps walking.

Neither person can stop the rain.

But one learns how to move forward anyway.

Life works much the same way.

5. Challenge for This Week

Think about one difficult or unfair situation you are facing right now.

Finish this sentence:

“This week I will respond to hardship by _____ instead of _____.”

Examples:

- “I will respond to disappointment by praying instead of complaining.”
- “I will respond to stress by trusting God instead of panicking.”
- “I will respond to unfair treatment by showing patience instead of anger.”
- “I will respond to difficulty by learning from it instead of quitting.”

Weekly Action Step

When something frustrating happens this week:

1. Stop before reacting.
2. Pray quietly.
3. Ask yourself: “What can God teach me through this?”
4. Choose a calm and wise response.

6. Closing Thought

1. Life is not always fair, but God is always faithful.
2. Hard times do not have to destroy you. They can strengthen you.
3. The people who grow the most are often the people who learn how to trust God during difficult seasons.
4. You may not control every situation in life, but with God’s help, you can control your response.