

HARD LESSONS IN LIFE: LIFE WILL TEST YOU

Be strong enough to go through tough times

Compiled by Joe Keim and taught in a group setting

1. Opening Thought

Life will test you.

There will be seasons of:

- disappointment,
- loss,
- stress,
- loneliness,
- fear,
- failure,
- and hardship.

Nobody escapes difficult times.

Some people quit when life gets hard.

Others grow stronger through the struggle.

Strength is not pretending life is easy.

Strength is continuing to move forward even when life feels heavy.

- Tough times can build endurance and maturity.
- God often uses difficult seasons to shape our character.
- You may not choose every trial, but you can choose how you respond to it.

Strong people are not people without problems.

They are people who keep trusting God through their problems.

Illustration

Gold is purified by fire.

The heat does not destroy the gold.

It removes impurities and makes it stronger.

In the same way, difficult seasons can strengthen our faith and character if we allow God to work in us.

2. Scripture

James 1:2-4 –

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.”

- Trials can develop patience, endurance, and maturity.
- God can use difficult experiences for growth.

Example

Athletes become stronger through resistance and training, not comfort and ease.

Isaiah 41:10 –

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee...”

- God does not abandon us during hard times.
- He promises strength and help.

Bible Illustration

David faced lions, bears, Goliath, enemies, and personal failures.
Yet God strengthened him through every battle.

Romans 5:3-5 –

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

- Hardship can build character and hope.
- Growth often comes through struggle.

Illustration

Coal and diamonds both come from the earth.

The difference is pressure.

A diamond is formed through intense pressure over time.

In the same way, difficult seasons can shape a person into someone stronger, wiser, and more mature if they continue trusting God through the pressure.

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 –

“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;”

- Christians still face struggles.
- But with God’s help, we do not have to be destroyed by them.

Example

The apostle Paul endured:

- prison,
- persecution,
- beatings,
- rejection,
- and suffering,

yet he continued serving God faithfully.

3. Discussion Questions

1. Why do hard times affect people differently?
 2. What are some unhealthy ways people respond to stress or hardship?
 3. How can tough times help a person grow stronger?
 4. Why is faith important during difficult seasons?
 5. Who is someone you admire that remained strong through hardship?
 6. What practical things help people endure difficult times?
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4. Practical Examples

- School or work: Facing pressure, failure, criticism, or disappointment.
- Relationships: Dealing with rejection, betrayal, or loneliness.
- Family struggles: Conflict, financial hardship, sickness, or loss.
- Mental and emotional stress: Anxiety, fear, discouragement, or uncertainty.
- Spiritual struggles: Seasons when God feels distant or life feels confusing.
- Health challenges: Injury, illness, exhaustion, or emotional pain.
- Daily life: Unexpected setbacks and difficult circumstances.

Real-Life Illustration

Imagine someone training for a marathon.

The training includes:

- sore muscles,
- exhaustion,
- discipline,
- and difficult days.

But every hard workout increases strength and endurance.

Life works much the same way.

Difficult seasons can prepare you for challenges ahead.

5. Challenge for This Week

Think about one challenge or struggle you are currently facing.

Finish this sentence:

“This week I will stay strong by _____ instead of _____.”

Examples:

- “I will stay strong by praying instead of giving up.”
- “I will stay strong by talking to trusted people instead of isolating myself.”
- “I will stay strong by trusting God instead of living in fear.”

- “I will stay strong by taking one step at a time instead of becoming overwhelmed.”

Weekly Action Step

1. Identify one struggle you are carrying.
2. Pray honestly about it.
3. Ask God for strength and wisdom.
4. Take one healthy step forward each day.
5. Encourage someone else who may also be struggling.

Strength grows through perseverance.

6. Closing Thought

Life will test you, but tough seasons do not have to break you.

Some of the strongest people are those who:

- kept going,
- kept believing,
- and kept trusting God through difficult times.

Storms may shake you, but they can also strengthen you.

With God’s help, you can walk through hardship with courage, endurance, and hope.