

FIGHT FOR IT

HOW TO BUILD RESILIENCE

Better For It

It's not a question of *if* we will face trials and disruptions in life, but rather a question of *when*. And whether these disruptions entail difficult circumstances that test our resolve, or positive changes that tempt us to become complacent, the key to succeeding in the midst of trials lies in our ability to be resilient, to bounce back from extreme change. But of course resilience doesn't happen by accident, and it isn't something we can merely hope for when we need it. If we want the ability to bounce back, we have to fight for it.

Start Talking

If you had to select one of the four major seasons to live in all the time, what would it be? And why?

Do you prefer transitional seasons like Spring and Fall, or the seasons of extreme like Summer and Winter?

When you think of major change in your life, what events, circumstances, and seasons come to mind?

Looking Back

Last week we discussed the ways in which the resurrection of Jesus has the power to impact our daily experiences. In what tangible ways did that reality impact you this past week?

In the crucifixion of Jesus we see an example of what it looks like for a person to forgo the temptation to leverage power for their own benefit, but instead willingly endure hardship to benefit other people, even their enemies. When and where did you find opportunities to do the same this past week? How did you respond?



What About You?

1. When you hear the word, 'change,' what emotions stir in your mind? Does it feel primarily positive and exciting? Negative and scary?
2. Do you find it harder to bounce back from positive or negative disruptions in your life? Why?
3. How would those closest to you characterize your relationship with change? Would they say you tend to dive into the unknown headfirst? Force it to drag you along kicking and screaming?

Look It Up

Read the Following Passages: James 1: 2–4, John 16:33

1. If we make ourselves more or less vulnerable by how we think about our trials, what kinds of thoughts do you think make us more vulnerable? What kinds of thoughts make us less vulnerable?
2. If you think back upon your negative past experiences, as horrible as they were, what positive developments have they produced in your character? How did that process happen?
3. If past trials have served to produce more mature, complete versions of you, what purposes may be served by your current and future hardships?
4. Where would you hope to be, in terms of maturity and character, in 20 years? What circumstances would it take to produce that person?
5. How does Jesus' statement about overcoming the world make you feel? What all do you think he means by it?

Putting It All Together

6. It's fairly certain that in the days and weeks to come, bad things will happen to us. How would our response to those trials change if we reoriented our focus from asking "Why is this happening to me?" to asking, "What is this experience growing and perfecting in me?"
7. If Jesus truly has "overcome the world," how should this change the way we view our troubles on Earth?
8. What events, encounters, or conversations are you dreading in the near future? How can you begin preparing your resilience 'muscles' now for them?
9. What would it look like for you to start reframing the traumatic events of your past as opportunities that, while unfortunate or even tragic, nonetheless served as opportunities for growth?
10. How can you prepare now to confront the traumatic events of the future as opportunities for growth?

