

When the Water Boils, Make Coffee

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Urban legend reports that a daughter came home and poured out her heart to her father about how bad things had become in her life. She was tired of the fighting and struggling and the endless problems. She didn't know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up.

Her father, not saying a word, took his daughter into the kitchen where he was preparing dinner. Three pots filled with water were on the stove. In the first he placed carrots, in the second, eggs, and in the last he placed ground coffee beans. Turning the heat on high, the father stood quietly and watched them boil. The daughter bit her lip, wondering what her father was up to.

In about twenty minutes he turned off the burners. The carrots were fished out and placed in a bowl. The eggs were then pulled out and placed in a bowl. Lastly, the coffee was ladled out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to his daughter, the father asked, "What do you see?"

"Carrots, eggs, and coffee," she replied.

He brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She noted that they were soft. He then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, he asked her to sip the coffee. She smiled as she tasted its rich aroma.

The daughter asked, "What does it mean?"

Her father explained that each item had faced the same adversity: boiling water. Each one, however, had reacted differently to it. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. But after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water instead of the water changing them. The flavor of the bean had permeated the water and produced coffee. The father then asked, "Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

In our life, we are going to face adversity. How we choose to respond to it can be the difference that will make or break us. There are some who, like the carrot, seem hard, but with pain and adversity they wilt and become soft and lose their strength. There are some like the egg. They start off with a malleable heart and a fluid spirit, but something happens. A death, a breakup, a divorce, a layoff, or something in their life leaves them hardened and stiff. Their outer shell looks the same, but on the inside their hearts are hardened. And then there are some like the coffee bean. The bean changes the hot water. As the water gets hotter, the flavor gets better and the pleasant coffee aroma arises. When things are at their hottest, coffee bean people change the environment around them for the better.

When adversity comes, what type of person are you? With God's help, why not choose to be a coffee bean person? We can't avoid the hot waters of adversity in life, but with God's strength we can be a changing agent within them. When the water boils, let's make coffee!

"..We know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us." Romans 5:3-5.