



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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Peas, Not Pebbles

For most of us who grew up in larger families, home cooking was much more a way of life than "eating out". Meal preparation became a family affair, with cooking tips being passed on from one generation to the next.

One such tip pertained to the cooking of home-made pea soup. Built around ham stock fortified by dried split peas, the soup featured pieces of carrot, potato, and ham set within the creamy base. Before the dried peas could become part of the soup, however, they had to be carefully sifted by hand. This was done not to eliminate bad peas, but to identify and remove ... pebbles!

Occasionally a pebble would make it through the processing and packaging of the peas, and unless it was removed prior to cooking, it provided an unpleasant surprise later on. Before the peas and pebbles shared the same bag, they shared the same field - the peas above and the pebbles within the soil. Since they were the same size and hardness as the peas, the pebbles masqueraded as peas all the way to the bag. Yet, when it actually came to functioning like a pea, these imposters couldn't come through.

After all, peas and pebbles really are different. Consider these comparisons.

1. Peas soften with heat. Given enough heat, peas sacrifice their individuality and join with other peas to form a powerful meal of smooth, velvet nutrition.

Pebbles, on the other hand, do not soften with heat. They maintain their shape, separateness, and hardness in spite of heat, resisting focused efforts to alter or blend them.

2. Peas benefit their consumer. They provide nutrition and support health and strength.

While pebbles might blend in and ride along with the peas, they can't provide the same service as the peas. Eventually, they show what they're really made of and why they don't belong. Besides failing to perform the positive function of the peas, they become at best annoying, and at worst harmful.

It's interesting how much we humans are like either peas or pebbles. Like the soup in the pot, we also experience "heat" in our lives. It may take the form of hardships we must endure, disappointments we must accept,

discipline we must experience, or difficult service we are called to perform. Often, this heat is applied to address some "hardness" in our hearts. This hardness can take the form of pride, stubbornness, selfishness, or simple complacency.

Some of us soften with the heat, and growth occurs. Our attitude changes; our patience expands. Our perspective broadens as humility assumes its proper position. Empathy replaces judgment; encouragement crowds out criticism. We change, and as a result, we become more useful and effective in our service at home, at work, in our church, in our community - wherever we choose to contribute.

Some of us resist changing and stay limited by our solo wisdom, wishes, and effort. Our benefit to others is minimized as we pursue our personal agendas, ignoring opportunities to serve others or work together with them toward a greater common good.

Clearly, peas and pebbles appear the same, at least until the heat is on. But it is the heat of life that brings out their true nature, just as it does ours. So what are you - a pea, or an imposter?



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work.

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Spirituality and Peas/Pebbles

It may seem strange, perhaps even foolish, to many in our society to suggest that personal achievement and personal promotion may not be our highest calling. After all, Scripture itself notes that each of us is gifted by the Spirit of God with gifts and talents we are to discover, develop, and use.

Yet, and this makes all the difference, Scripture also emphasizes that these gifts are to be used in the service of others, for the glory of our God and the building of His Kingdom.

Consider again our pot of pea soup. While the peas blend their contributions to form the bulk of the soup, they also act as a support system for the carrots, potatoes, and ham. This system enables these unique parts to stand out in a special way. Even though each part of the soup provides nutrition, some parts are more obvious in their service than others.

For us, then ... if we are called to serve in a way that draws attention to our self, let's serve with humble excellence, always recognizing the importance of the "peas" that surround us, support us, and make our special service possible. And let's pass the glory on to the One who prepared us in advance to serve, and then provided the opportunity.



"A man wrapped up in himself makes a very small bundle."

- Benjamin Franklin

"In the time we have, it is surely our duty to do all the good we can to all the people we can in all the ways we can."

- William Barclay