

## Endurance

### Lesson 04 of the series, "Training Camp"

#### I. We will have trouble in this world.

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33 (NIV)

"...everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12 (NLT)

"Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world. So be happy when you are insulted for being a Christian, for then the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you."

1 Peter 4:12-14 (NLT)

#### II. God wants us to live godly lives anyway.

"By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires." 2 Peter 1:3-4 (NLT)

##### a. God promises to always be with us.

"Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:35-39 (NLT)

##### b. God promises to reward us for our sufferings.

"God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way."

Matthew 5:11-12 (NLT)

*Note:* "Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong. But if you suffer for doing good and endure it patiently, God is pleased with you." 1 Peter 2:20 (NLT)

##### c. God promises to cause all things to work together for our good.

"God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." Romans 8:28 (NLT)

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people." Genesis 50:20 (NLT)

#### III. Endurance makes us more useful to God.

"In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence (goodness), and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins."

2 Peter 1:5-9 (NLT)

##### a. Endurance helps us mature in our faith.

"We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love." Romans 5:3-5 NLT

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.”

James 1:2-4 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We must keep our eyes on Jesus.

“...let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God’s throne. Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won’t become weary and give up.”

Hebrews 12:1-3 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We can help each other endure.

“He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. For the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. Even when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation! For when we ourselves are comforted, we will certainly comfort you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer.” 2 Corinthians 1:4-6 (NLT)

b. God’s plans take time.

“But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.” 2 Peter 3:8-9 (NLT)

“Think back on those early days when you first learned about Christ. Remember how you remained faithful even though it meant terrible suffering. Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule and were beaten, and sometimes you helped others who were suffering the same things. You suffered along with those who were thrown into jail, and when all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy. You knew there were better things waiting for you that will last forever. So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God’s will. Then you will receive all that he has promised. For in just a little while, the Coming One will come and not delay.” Hebrews 10:32-38 (NLT)

*Life Application:* “So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up. Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.” Galatians 6:9-10 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We can pray for each other.

“We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need.” Colossians 1:11 (NLT)

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## Connect Group Questions

To prepare for this week's meeting, take some time to focus on the following questions and write out a few brief answers. Be prepared to share them with your group.

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching on endurance was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
2. Describe a time in your life where you realized later that you gave up to soon on a dream or goal. What happened? Why did you quit? What did you learn from the experience?
3. In his message this week John reminded us of the following three promises God makes to us:
  - God promises to always be with us. Romans 8:35-39
  - God promises to reward us for our sufferings. Matthew 5:11-12
  - God promises to cause all things to work together for our good. Romans 8:28, Genesis 50:20

Discuss these promises and their supporting Scripture references. How do these promises make you feel? How should these promises impact the way we live?

4. What do the following Bible passages teach us about developing endurance?
  - Romans 5:3-5
  - James 1:2-4
  - Hebrews 10:32-38
  - Hebrews 12:1-4
  - Galatians 6:9-10

How much endurance do you have? How important is endurance for living as a Christian?

5. Read Colossians 1:11, 4:12-13. Spend some time as a group discussing hardships and challenges facing you now because you are a Christian. Then pray for each other asking God to give each of you endurance and the ability to comfort each other.
6. Discuss the following quotations:

"The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose." Frederick Douglass

"Endurance is patience concentrated." Thomas Carlyle

"Heroism is endurance for one moment more." George F. Newman

"Never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty, never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy." Winston Churchill