

LESSON 9

Knowing Christ in the Church: Holding Fast Together

Hebrews 10:36–39

For you need endurance, so that after you have done God's will, you may receive what was promised. For yet in a very little while, the Coming One will come and not delay.

(Hebrews 10:36–37)

Class Overview: In this lesson, we examine the call to persevere in faith through difficulty, discouragement, and spiritual fatigue. Scripture teaches that perseverance is not passive endurance, but active trust in God's promises. Faith that endures is shaped by hope, grounded in Christ, and sustained by God's faithfulness. Drawing from Hebrews 10–12, James 1, and Jesus' own teaching, this lesson encourages believers to remain steadfast—not because the path is easy, but because the promise is sure.

Class Objectives:

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

1. Explain why perseverance is essential to genuine faith.
2. Understand the difference between endurance and resignation.
3. Recognize how trials shape faith rather than negate it.
4. Identify biblical sources of strength for persevering believers.
5. Commit to remaining faithful even when obedience is difficult.

Introduction

MOST PEOPLE DO NOT ABANDON THEIR FAITH IN A DRAMATIC MOMENT. Faith usually fades quietly. It wears down through unanswered prayers, prolonged hardship, spiritual fatigue, disappointment with people, or the slow grind of doing what is right without seeing immediate results. Over time, discouragement whispers that perseverance may not be worth the effort. The Word is realistic about this struggle. God never promised that faith would be easy or that obedience would always be rewarded quickly. Instead, He repeatedly calls His people to endure; to keep trusting, keep following, and keep believing even when the path is difficult and the outcome feels distant.

Perseverance is not about stubborn toughness or blind optimism. It is about sustained trust in God's promises. It is choosing to remain faithful when emotions waver, circumstances disappoint, and progress feels slow. Persevering faith does not deny pain; it anchors itself in hope.

The New Testament speaks often to those who were tired, pressured, and tempted to drift backward. These were faithful people who had suffered, sacrificed, and served, but who now needed encouragement to keep going. God's message to them was not shame, but a reminder: *Do not give up. Do not shrink back. Hold fast.*

This lesson invites us to examine where perseverance is needed in our own lives. Not where faith is loud and confident, but where it is weary and quiet. Because faith that endures honors God, strengthens the body, and points the world to a hope that does not depend on circumstances. As we turn to Hebrews, we hear a call that is both urgent and compassionate, a call not merely to believe, but to endure. And as we do, we are not alone. Scripture never treats perseverance as a private struggle, but as a shared calling lived out within the body of Christ.

The writer of Hebrews speaks directly to Christians who are tired, pressured, and tempted to drift backward. They have already endured hardship but now face the quieter danger of giving up. Rather than

scolding them, Scripture reminds them of what is required and what has been promised. As we turn to Hebrews 10, listen for how perseverance is presented, not as optional strength but as essential faith rooted in confidence that God will do what He has promised.

Perseverance Is a Mark of Genuine Faith (Hebrews 10:36–39)

The writer of Hebrews doesn't hold back when he says: *you need endurance*. Perseverance is not presented as an optional virtue or a trait for especially strong Christians; it is a necessity for all who desire to receive what God has promised. Faith is not merely believing at one moment in time, but continuing to trust God over time.

God's promises are certain, but they are often realized after endurance. The Christian life, then, is lived in the tension between what God has promised and what has not yet been seen. Perseverance is what holds faith steady in that space. Here, we see a contrast between two paths: *shrinking back* and *living by faith*. Shrinking back does not necessarily involve open rebellion or denial of truth. It often looks like a quiet retreat, less confidence, less commitment, and less willingness to trust God when obedience is costly. Faith that perseveres, by contrast, continues forward even when clarity is limited and encouragement is scarce.

Importantly, perseverance here is not self-generated strength. The passage points us back to confidence; confidence rooted in God's faithfulness. Endurance grows when faith rests in who God is and what He has promised, not in present circumstances. *We are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls*. Perseverance reveals the nature of faith. Genuine faith clings to God even when the path is difficult because it trusts that God will be faithful in the end. Faith that endures honors God and demonstrates that hope is anchored in what is beyond immediate sight.

Trials Strengthen Faith Rather Than Destroy It (James 1:2–4)

The Holy Spirit consistently challenges the assumption that hardship is a sign of failure or divine abandonment. Instead, trials are presented as one of God's primary tools for shaping enduring faith. In James 1:2–4, we are told to consider it joy when we encounter trials, not because suffering is pleasant, but because God is at work through it. Testing produces endurance, and endurance leads to maturity. Notice that perseverance is not incidental; it is *produced*. Trials expose what faith rests on and invite us to rely more fully on God rather than on comfort, certainty, or control. Without testing, faith remains unproven. With testing, faith is refined and strengthened.

Now, let's consider Romans 5:3–5, where Paul traces a progression: suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope. This hope is not fragile or uncertain; it does not disappoint because it is grounded in God's love poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Perseverance, then, leads not to despair, but to deeper assurance. Trials do not threaten genuine faith; they reveal and mature it. Faith that has never been tested is often easily shaken. Faith that has endured hardship learns to rest in God's promises rather than immediate outcomes. Over time, perseverance produces spiritual depth that cannot be gained any other way.

This does not minimize the pain we experience or suggest that suffering is easy. God never calls on us to deny grief or struggle. Instead, He teaches us to reframe them. Trials are not evidence that He is absent, but opportunities to experience His sustaining presence more deeply. When we understand this truth, we'll be protected against discouragement. When hardship comes, perseverance reminds us that God is still at work, shaping faith that is resilient, grounded, and hopeful. Trials may slow us, but they do not stop God's purposes. In fact, they often strengthen the very faith that carries us through.

Jesus is the Model and Source of Endurance (Hebrews 12:1–3)

Now, let's direct our attention to Jesus. Perseverance is not sustained by sheer willpower, but by fixing our eyes on Christ. In Hebrews 12:1–3, we are called to lay aside every hindrance and sin and to run with endurance the race set before us, *looking to Jesus*, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. Jesus serves not only as our example, but as the source of endurance. He endured suffering, rejection, and the cross because of the joy set before Him. His perseverance was purposeful. He trusted the Father's promises beyond immediate pain. When we focus on Christ's faithfulness, our endurance is renewed.

We need to consider Jesus carefully, reflecting on His suffering and perseverance, so that we will not grow weary or lose heart. Weariness often comes not from suffering alone, but from losing perspective. Looking to Jesus restores that perspective. It reminds us that suffering is not the end of the story. God is at work even in hardship. Christ's suffering led to victory, not defeat. His perseverance resulted in exaltation, not abandonment. Because Jesus endured faithfully, we can trust that endurance is not wasted; it is honored by God.

Can you see how this passage brings perseverance back to hope? Faith endures not because we are strong, but because Christ is faithful. When we grow tired, discouraged, or tempted to withdraw, Scripture does not call us to try harder, but to look again at Jesus. Perseverance is sustained by remembering who Christ is, what He endured, and where He now reigns. Fixing our eyes on Him transforms endurance from grim survival into hopeful trust. In Christ, perseverance is not merely possible; it is meaningful.

Finally, it is important to remember that Jesus does not call us to endure in isolation. The imagery of Hebrews 12 places us in a race surrounded by witnesses, not running alone. Perseverance grows within the life of the church through encouragement, exhortation, shared hope, and mutual accountability. Christ is known more fully as we walk together, reminding one another of God's promises and refusing to let weary hearts drift into isolation. Perseverance, then, is

not merely a personal discipline; it is one of the primary ways Christ is experienced and honored in the shared life of His people.

For Application

Persevering faith is not about having endless strength; **it is about continuing to trust God when strength feels limited.** Scripture reminds us that endurance is not reserved for exceptional believers but is the ordinary calling of every disciple. Faith is proven not by how confidently it begins, but by how faithfully it continues. We need to be honest about where perseverance is needed. Perhaps faith feels strained by disappointment, unanswered prayers, or ongoing difficulty. Scripture does not minimize those struggles. Instead, it assures us that God is at work through them, shaping faith that is mature, resilient, and grounded in hope.

Perseverance grows when we fix our eyes on Jesus. His endurance reminds us that suffering does not mean failure and that obedience is never wasted. Christ endured faithfully, and because He did, believers can trust that endurance has purpose beyond what is immediately seen.

We don't always need to push harder, but we do need to trust deeper. To remain anchored in God's promises. To resist quiet drift and renewed weariness by holding fast to Christ. Faith that endures honors God, strengthens the body, and bears witness to a hope that cannot be shaken. Remember **God has not formed His people to endure alone.** Perseverance is built up when we walk together, remind one another of God's promises, and refuse to drift in isolation.

Memory Verse and Weekly Challenge

Memory Verse:

"For you need endurance, so that after you have done God's will, you may receive what was promised." — Hebrews 10:36 (CSB)

Challenge:

This week, identify one area where your faith feels weary or stretched. Instead of withdrawing or becoming discouraged, choose to remain

faithful in that area—through prayer, obedience, or continued trust in God’s promises. Each day, remind yourself of one specific promise from Scripture and thank God for His faithfulness, even if the outcome is not yet visible. At the end of the week, reflect on how fixing your eyes on Christ made your endurance stronger.

For Reflection

1. Why does Scripture emphasize perseverance as essential to genuine faith rather than optional for mature believers?

2. How do trials test and strengthen faith rather than undermine it?

3. What does it mean to “shrink back,” and how can quiet spiritual drift show up in our life?

4. Why is fixing our eyes on Jesus so critical when faith feels weary or strained?

5. What is one practical way you can continue trusting God in an area where perseverance feels difficult right now?
