

FORWARD

Every lesson has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: God will help us persevere through challenges to fulfill his purpose for our lives.

Head Change: To know that God is still with us even if we want to give up.

Heart Change: To feel sobered by the reality of suffering.

Life Change: To endure and trust God during hard times.

OPEN

When was the last time you gave up on something? Why didn't you finish?

We can have a hard time finishing what we start. We often buy books we never get around to reading or start home improvement projects that often remain unfinished for months. Regardless of the reasons why we fail to finish a project or a book, we all know that it takes perseverance to get the job done.

Perseverance is an essential part of the Christian life. We will all face overwhelming challenges that can make us want to give up. God is aware of the hard times we go through and wants us to persevere to experience the fullness of the life he has planned for us.

In this session, Pastor Watson will walk us through how we can continue to move forward using the resources that God has already provided.

VIEW

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Pastor Watson's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

What is your first thought when you are faced with obstacles in your path?

How has God spoken to you in the past to enable you to continue the journey?

In what ways can we "sanctify" ourselves now in preparation for God's work in our lives?

REVIEW

1. What is one challenge you are currently facing?
2. Who or what encouraged the people of Israel to move ahead? How?

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3. What obstacles did Joshua and the Israelites face in moving ahead with God? How did they deal with those obstacles?
4. What was the miraculous parting of the river meant to demonstrate to the people?
5. What is the connection between faith and obedience?
6. The Israelites had a physical custom through which to sanctify themselves. How might we signify a new beginning with God, a new setting of ourselves apart for His service?
7. How is it significant that Joshua used the term “the living God” as the Israelites prepared to cross the Jordan?
8. What is the inheritance we are to claim as God’s children?
9. What step forward by faith might God be asking you to take?
10. What were the purposes of the stones placed at Gilgal and in the middle of the river?
11. What is our responsibility as Christians to the next generation? What is one step you can take toward fulfilling that responsibility?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

God’s people know a lot about grief and sorrow. Many places in Scripture remind us that God knows about suffering too. Hebrews 12 shows us how Christians should be motivated to endure difficult times because Jesus persevered to the end of his life.

Read Hebrews 12:1–4.

The passage opens with the phrase, “we have so great a cloud of witnesses.” **Who are the witnesses the writer is referring to?**

Many people have gone before us in the faith. **In what ways does the great cloud of witnesses encourage you to persevere now?**

What is the race that verse 1 is referring to? What does it mean that this race is “set before us”?

The writer of Hebrews acknowledged that one problem every Christian will face on their journey is sin—it can hinder us from persevering to the end of our race. **In what ways has sin slowed you down? What has helped you to keep going?**

Jesus is the ultimate example of perseverance. He did not give up when he was beaten, ridiculed, and killed. **What does following Jesus’s example of perseverance look like in your life right now?**

What does it mean that Jesus is the “author” and “perfector” of our faith?

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The passage says that Jesus saw his path as the “joy set before him.” **Why do you think the passage describes Jesus’s death on the cross as the “joy set before him”?**

Jesus does not expect any of us to enjoy suffering, but he does expect us to persevere through it. Verses 3–4 show us that surviving hard times is a normal part of being a member of God’s family. Christians should remember the suffering of Jesus as motivation to keep going when we want to give up. **In what ways does focusing on Jesus’s suffering help us to not give up when we endure hardships?**

What benefits have you seen from enduring hard times? How has suffering produced endurance in your walk with God?

We may experience some difficult times, but we have a heavenly reward ahead of us. Jesus is the perfector of our faith and models how to live faithfully. He will get us through our trials. **What could it look like to rejoice in our suffering?**

What trials are you going through right now? Does perseverance seem possible? Why or why not?

In what ways can your church community help you look to Jesus and persevere through the current challenges you’re facing?

LAST WORD

Now is the time to pursue all that God has for us. Let’s avoid spending time worrying about the obstacles ahead of us. God will always get us to our destination, and we will one day be safe with him for eternity. We are here on earth to serve God until the very end.

Jesus gives us hope in every situation. For Christians, trials and tribulations should not be a surprise. We can make it through suffering by God’s grace. If there is anything you are going through that makes you believe you should give up, allow others to help you keep going and remember Jesus is with you.

DEEPER WALK

Read: Reflect on the power of perseverance and how God uses our suffering for good by reading Hebrews 12:1–17, Romans 8:28, and James 1:1–4.

Pray: Pray that God will show you where you are weak and need encouragement from God’s Word and other believers to keep going. Ask God to help you persevere through difficult circumstances.

Endure: Do not give up on following God, no matter what you are facing. God is strong enough to keep you until the very end. Let Jonathan’s mother be an inspiration to you on how you can finish your race and receive your reward from God. Stay close to Jesus and stay close to his people.