

# Discussion Questions



## Key Scripture Passages

- **Romans 5:3-4** - "We glory in our suffering, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."
- **Galatians 6:7-10** - Reaping what we sow; not becoming weary in doing good
- **Mark 5:23-30** - Jesus stops during an urgent mission

## Sermon Summary

This sermon explored the tension between our culture's emphasis on efficiency (amplified by AI) and God's call to perseverance in spiritual formation. While AI excels at making tasks faster and easier, spiritual growth cannot be rushed. The sermon emphasized that suffering → perseverance → character → hope is a necessary chain that cannot be short-circuited without damaging our spiritual development.

## Discussion Questions

### Understanding the Message

1. **Pastor Ike defined perseverance and efficiency this way:**
  - *"Perseverance assumes the long, costly road is the right road."*
  - *"Efficiency asks whether a shorter road exists."*

How have you seen these two approaches play out in your own life? Where do you naturally lean?

2. The sermon stated: **"An efficient approach to spiritual formation is destructive."** Why do you think this is true? Can you think of examples where trying to "speed up" spiritual growth backfired?
3. In Mark 5, Jesus stopped during an urgent mission to heal Jairus's daughter. Pastor Ike said, **"Efficiency sees interruptions as obstacles. Jesus sees interruptions as ministry."** How does this challenge the way you view interruptions in your daily life?

## Going Deeper

4. Look at Romans 5:3-4 again. Visualize the chain: **Suffering → Perseverance → Character → Hope**
  - Why can't we jump directly from suffering to hope?
  - What happens to our character when we try to eliminate perseverance?
  - Share an example from your life where you've seen this chain work itself out.
5. The sermon mentioned that AI gave a "21-day spiritual plan" with two major flaws:
  - It was entirely works-based
  - It included nothing about suffering, perseverance, or character

Why are spiritual "formulas" or "quick fixes" so appealing? What's dangerous about them?
6. **"The less we are willing to persevere, the less we will be able to persevere."** (Spiritual muscle atrophy)
  - In what areas of your spiritual life have you noticed your "perseverance muscle" weakening?
  - What factors in modern life make it harder to develop perseverance?

## Personal Application

7. Think about your current spiritual practices (prayer, Bible reading, worship, service, etc.). Are you approaching them with an "efficiency mindset" or a "perseverance mindset"? What would need to change?
8. The sermon referenced Galatians 6:9 about planting and harvesting.

- What spiritual "seeds" have you planted recently?
- Are you in danger of giving up before the harvest? What would it look like to persevere?

9. **Where is God asking you to wait, struggle, or endure right now?**

- How does viewing this through the lens of Romans 5:3-4 change your perspective?
- What might God be developing in your character through this season?

---

## Key Takeaways

✓ **Spiritual formation requires perseverance, not efficiency**

- We cannot rush our relationship with God or spiritual growth

✓ **Suffering → Perseverance → Character → Hope is a necessary chain**

- Each link is essential; we cannot skip to the end

✓ **Jesus never treats interruptions as obstacles**

- Ministry happens in the "inefficient" moments

✓ **Perseverance is a muscle that must be exercised**

- The less we practice perseverance, the less capable we become

✓ **God's timing is always perfect, even when it feels slow**

- He is faithful and has not abandoned us in the waiting

## Practical Applications for This Week

### Individual Practice:

Choose ONE of these to focus on this week:

#### 1. Identify Your "Efficiency Idols"

- Where are you trying to shortcut spiritual growth?
- What would it look like to embrace the slower, harder path in that area?

#### 2. Practice "Interruption Ministry"

- This week, when interrupted, pause and ask: "God, is this an opportunity for ministry?"
- Journal about what happens when you shift your perspective

#### 3. Perseverance Inventory

- List spiritual disciplines or practices you've started but abandoned
- Pick ONE to recommit to for 30 days, regardless of immediate results

#### 4. Suffering Reframe

- If you're in a difficult season, write out Romans 5:3-4
- Each day, journal one way God might be building character through this trial

### Group Challenge:

**Accountability Partners:** Pair up with someone in the group. Share one area where you're tempted to take the "efficient" route spiritually. Check in with each other throughout the week to encourage perseverance.

### Closing Reflection

Read together as a group:

**James 1:2-4** - "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your

Derived from Sunday morning sermon via Pulpit AI

faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

### **Reflection Questions:**

- What is one thing God is speaking to you about perseverance?
- How can this group pray for you this week?

---

### **Closing Prayer**

*Pray for each member by name, asking God to:*

- Give strength to persevere in current challenges
- Develop character through present struggles
- Help us resist the cultural pressure for spiritual "efficiency"
- Remind us of His faithful presence in the waiting