

PERSEVERANCE

Purpose

- To demonstrate that overcoming obstacles is a common challenge to us all. Like Joshua, we must be “strong and of good courage.” (Joshua 1:9, 16)

Objective

- The Israelites ‘believed a bad report’ and were guilty of **fearing** the wrong thing. Perseverance is about moral courage. It’s about casting out fear. (1 Jhn. 4:18)
- Far too many give up and quit. The Israelites were guilty of this. In Luke 18, the parable of the widow tells of her continual requests to the Judge that ultimately reaps the desired result. In verse 1, men are told to pray and to “faint not.” Fainting means to “grow weak” or “languish.” Understand that moral courage (perseverance) demands that we faint not.
- We are soldiers of Christ and soldiering requires courage and endurance (Det. 31:6; Eph. 6:11; 2 Ti. 2:3-4; 3:12).

Outcome

- Suffering is a way of life; all of us will have to endure things we find to be distasteful. We must “learn” to be content and maintain our objective: “press toward the mark for the prize” (Phil. 3:14).
- Like Paul, we need to focus on the right objective, and not be discouraged by life’s problems. This requires microscopic (daily) and macroscopic (eternity) focus.
- We must never quit. Never!

Key thought

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” (Psa. 23:4). Do we believe this? By the way, prayer is the antidote for fainting.

Into each life some rain must fall
Some days be dark and dreary
-- Longfellow

Discussion

1. Some Bible quitters: Lot’s wife (Gen. 19:17, 26; Lk. 17:32); Jesus’ disciples (1 Cor. 10:8; Heb. 3:18-19); Judas (Jn. 13:18-27; Lk. 22:47-48); Demas (2 Ti. 4:10).
2. Identify types of suffering that can discourage us.
3. When things get tough, am I good about asking God for help?
4. Am I good about helping others through tough times?
5. Do I become easily discouraged– becoming hard to live with over the small things?
6. Do I see God’s hand in events of my life?
7. Do I study God’s word when times get tough?
8. Am I strong enough to face the facts of life and to deal with the inevitable?
9. Do I think about my course ahead of time and then determine to stay the course?
10. Do I understand that all who live in Christ will suffer persecution?