

Do I Really Want to Persevere???

Any motivational speaker or coach will challenge their audience to persevere and not give up. A popular English proverb sums this up---When the going gets tough, the tough get going!! It's very easy to have this mindset or speak this truth into someone else's life, but things change when we are the one in the trenches, trudging through the trials of everyday life. At that point, it's easy to question God, become a recluse, or self-medicate with our 'drug' of choice. As Christ followers, our calling to persevere increases exponentially and we are not called to shrink back, run, or incessantly complain. Our call is to have joy in these trials and trust that God will mature us through them. **Read through and discuss James 1:2-4.**

How are we supposed to approach trials and what does James mean when he says, 'Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds'? What is joy here?

What is the biggest trial you have faced in life? What trial(s) are you currently facing and how are you approaching them?

In Greek, the root word for trials and temptations is the same, but trials are different than temptations. Temptations stem from our inward brokenness and can lead us to stray from God's desires for our life. Trials are external elements that happen to us. They can stem from choices we have made, God may create trials in our life, or the broken world may throw trials at us. The root cause of the trial is not paramount, but rather how we approach the trial and grow from it. **Read and discuss Romans 5:1-5.**

What is your normal approach to trials and is it healthy and God honoring?

What growth in your character and faith have you seen through trials?

What are God honoring ways to approach trials?

First of all, we need to prepare for trials. Worship, prayer time, word time, and a healthy community around us all prepare us for trials. We are made to go through life in a community and through daily connection with the Father---yet, we wonder why we crater so quickly when a trial comes our way. God uses these trials to grow us and mature us and---prepare us for more trials! We begin to develop a perspective and healthy approach to trials and ultimately realize that God is sovereign and faithful and as **Romans 8:28** says, 'And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him...'

Spend time praying through the trials in your life right now. Seek God and surrender these trials to him. Pray that you can trust him through these trials and receive His promises to grow and mature you as a result of them. Speak anything that's on your heart.

Thriving Through Trials

"Connecting With God" Weekly Guide

This booklet is a resource to help you "Connect with God" this week. He deeply desires ongoing personal connection with you. You are that important to Him.

This Page has some scripture verses for you to meditate on each day this week. Notice the helpful hints section – these are great things to consider when personally engaging with God through His Word.

The Center Pages contain the notes and outline for the message given on Sunday. The message is also available as an audio download from www.pointofgracechurch.org

The Back Page has a study written specifically for a small group of people (or an individual) to drill down deeper into a particular aspect of the week's theme. Small groups can review memorable points of the week's message and then work through the study concluding with a time of prayer.

Scripture & Meditation Guide - September 5–September 10

Helpful Hints:

- 1) Find a quiet place along with 15-20 minutes!
- 2) Focus on God for a few moments asking His Spirit to speak to your heart and offload-ing your heart of stifling, burdens, guilt, worry etc.!
- 3) Listen to Him by reading a section of scripture then rereading it several times, dwell-ing on "words and phrases" which grab your heart's attention. As you read and reread keep asking God, "What do You want me to hear?" "Why this word at this time?" "How are You inviting me to respond? Keep talking it over with Him—chew!"
- 4) Pray (and journal) everything that is on your heart and mind as you are ready!

Worship Him, Bless Him, Thank Him, Ask Him, Trust Him

Monday: James 1:1-12

Tuesday: Romans 5:1-5

Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Thursday: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Friday: Hebrews 12:1-13

Saturday: Matthew 11: 28-30