

CHOOSE YOUR ATTITUDE, CHANGE YOUR LIFE

7 – Choose Perseverance over Discouragement

**“May the Lord direct your hearts into God’s love and Christ’s perseverance.”
- 2 Thessalonians 3:5**

**“We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials for we know that they are good for us—they help us learn to be patient. And patience develops strength of character in us and helps us trust God more each time we use it until finally our hope and faith are strong and steady.”
- Romans 5:3-4, LB**

Discouragement and weariness in doing good eventually invades every Christian’s life. Perseverance is determined faith in action. It is an attitude, regardless the circumstance, that steels itself in God’s gracious power to never give in, to never give way, to never give up.

Welcome

What discipline did you sometimes resent as a child that you appreciate now?

Word

Read Hebrews 12:1-17

1. C. S. Lewis once said, “*Pain is God’s megaphone.*” But to learn or benefit from God’s correction, we shouldn’t “*shrug it off,*” but neither should we be “*crushed*” by it (vs 5). When it comes to hardship, which of these two extremes do you gravitate toward?
2. According to verses 10-11, what is God’s ultimate purpose for disciplining us? How does discipline differ from punishment? With these things in mind, what does it mean to “submit” (verse 9) to the Lord’s discipline?
3. What is the hardest thing you are going through right now? How might God be using this in your life?
4. Restate, in your own words, each of the admonitions (“let us...”) in verses 1-2. In light of your present circumstances, which of these admonitions is most meaningful to you? Explain.
5. Self-pity often leads to *bitterness* or *self-indulgence* (notice the warnings in verses 14-17). What’s the opposite of each? Share some of the ways you’ve “strengthened your feeble arms and weak knees” and “made level paths for your feet” so that you wouldn’t fall into one of these pitfalls.

Worship

This is a wonderful opportunity to summarize the main points of the lesson by teaching and admonishing one another with spiritual songs: “O For a Faith that Will Not Shrink” (540), “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” (586), “The Joy of the Lord” (559), “Servant Song” (694).

Works

The writer of Hebrews says that Jesus “held on while wicked people were doing evil things to him” (Heb. 12:3), implying that Jesus could have quit the race, but He didn’t. The Bible encourages us toward the same. Spend time in intercessory prayer for one another, asking God to strengthen you so that you have great patience (has to do with difficult people) and endurance (has to do with difficult situations)... (notice Colossians 1:11).