

What system do you have to dig into the truth of God's Word?

d. You can memorize the Scripture. Proverbs 7:3 (NIV)

...write them on the tablet of your heart.

What advantage is it to have memorized Scripture?

e. You can meditate on Scripture. Psalm 1:2 (NIV)

...and on his law he meditates day and night.

Do you make time to be alone and reflect on promises from God's Word?

Thursday:

2. "Endurance" is gained through time you spend listening and talking with God. (Prayer)

a. Time spent in Scripture helps you know God's will, plan and purpose. How does that support prayer? 1 John 5:14 (MsgB)

And how bold and free we then become in his presence, freely asking according to his will, sure that he's listening.

b. How does the fruit of prayer equip you to have "endurance"?

Ephesians 3:20 (MsgB)

God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.

Friday:

3. "Endurance" is gained through keeping your eyes on Jesus.

Hebrews 12:2 (MsgB)

Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God.

a. Compare some of your "hopeless" situations to the trials of Jesus.

Do you have a stronger faith that if you will trust God and follow Jesus' example you have a better chance? _____

b. How has inviting Christ into your life made a 180 degree turn around in being able to experience success in enduring through the crunch times? 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

You can have "endurance" only through a right relationship with Christ and you can have assurance that it is a real relationship. 1 John 2:5 (MsgB)

But the one who keeps God's word is the person in whom we see God's mature love. This is the only way to be sure we're in God.

FELLOWSHIP NOTES

*Reaching People for Christ
and
Helping believers grow to be like Him*

CHARACTER CRUNCH

PART 6: ENDURANCE

In order to build a strong character capable of withstanding the crunch of daily pressures and temptations you must build it on the foundation of: "Self-control"; "Confidence"; "Contentment"; "Integrity" and "Morality". A key character trait that must be applied in all of the other traits is "**Endurance**".

Looking at "Endurance" from God's perspective does not mean you adopt a passive spirit and just sit back and put up with the trials of life. The Greek word used in the Bible that is translated "endure" is describing a very active behavior.

"Endurance" from God's perspective is believers going about conquering and overcoming trials and temptations. The real challenge is to accept that you cannot achieve "endurance" on your own. The world's philosophy is that if you just have enough stamina, fortitude, perseverance, grit, guts, backbone, or tenacity you can get through. These are certainly admirable character traits, but you must have God to activate them. He holds the "unlocking key" that will activate them to generate "endurance" in your life.

Philippians 4:13 (MsgB)

Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am.

John 15:5 (MsgB)

"I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing.

Monday:

Lack of Endurance brings two things:

1. Frustration.

When you fail to endure in life's experiences you gain the disapproval, distrust, and disappointment of others. Knowing that others look at you negatively, you feel insecure and dissatisfied. Being insecure and dissatisfied generates "frustration"

Isaiah 8:21-22 (MsgB)

Frustrated and famished, they try one thing after another. When nothing works out they get angry, cursing first this god and then that one,

Looking this way and that, [22] up, down, and sideways—and seeing nothing, A blank wall, an empty hole. They end up in the dark with nothing.

- a. In verse 21, who is doing the “trying”? _____
- b. These people through their stamina, fortitude, perseverance, grit, guts, backbone, or tenacity were trying every thing in their power to set their world up straight. In verse 22, what is described as the end result of their self efforts?

- c. Carefully examine how you are dealing with the trials and pressures of daily life. Are you trying to act bullish and charge head first into that freight train of trials and pressures? If the answer is yes, then based on 2 Peter 2:17 what can you expect?

2 Peter 2:17 (NIV)

These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them.

- d. To avoid the disapproval, distrust, and disappointment of others toward you, what two steps can you take? Proverbs 3:5 (TEV)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know.

Tuesday:

2. Hopelessness

When the blanket of frustration has been thrown over your head, you are blinded. You lose your ability to see direction and purpose. Without direction and purpose the feeling of “Hopelessness” will choose a path of life for you. It will not be one of “endurance”. Psalm 88:3-5 (TEV)

So many troubles have fallen on me that I am close to death.

[4] I am like all others who are about to die; all my strength is gone.

[5] I am abandoned among the dead; I am like the slain lying in their graves, those you have forgotten completely, who are beyond your help.

- a. When you look at life through human eyes and assess circumstances with only human resources, “hopelessness” is always the result. How does the Psalmist describe “hopelessness”? (Psalm 88:3-5)

- b. When have you ever felt so overwhelmed by your problems that in your thinking you were beyond God’s help and even deserted by all of your friends?

- c. Humans judge situations by their feelings rather than facts. God deals in truths and promises based on those truths. How does the following promise from God override feelings of “hopelessness”?

Isaiah 41:13 (MsgB)

That's right. Because I, your God, have a firm grip on you and I'm not letting go. I'm telling you, 'Don't panic. I'm right here to help you.'

- d. In a very “hopeless” situation Abraham decided to trust God’s promise rather than allow “hopelessness” created by his human

limitations to defeat and destroy him. Abraham’s hopeless situation was that he and his wife could not have children. Now that he was almost 100 years old and she was 90 years old, from a human perspective it was clear that God was the only hope. After reading about his experience apply it to your situation as God’s gift of “hope” and “victory” for you. Romans 4:18 (MsgB)

When everything was hopeless, Abraham believed anyway, deciding to live not on the basis of what he saw he couldn't do but on what God said he would do. And so he was made father of a multitude of peoples. God himself said to him, "You're going to have a big family, Abraham!"

- e. In order for you to enjoy the blessing of experiencing life from God’s perspective, who has to be allowed to do the work instead of you?

- f. Who do you know that is feeling like his or her life is “hopeless”?

- g. How can you share these Scriptures of promise with that individual? _____

Wednesday:

Acquiring Endurance

Now you know to defeat “hopelessness” and then live a life marked by “endurance” requires that you allow God to be the Lord of your life. You must allow Him to work through you rather than you trying to work for Him.

The remaining question is: How do you make the change from living life from your perspective to enjoying life from God’s perspective?

1. “Endurance” is gained through your personal exposure to Scripture. Romans 15:4-5 (NIV)

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. [5] May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus,

- a. You can listen to Scripture. Romans 10:17 (MsgB)

The point is, Before you trust, you have to listen. But unless Christ's Word is preached, there's nothing to listen to.

Do you have the Bible or at least the New Testament on tape? What situations can you create as opportunities to listen?

- b. You can read the Scripture. Deuteronomy 17:19 (NIV)

It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees

What is helpful to you about reading the Bible?

- c. You can study the Scripture. Acts 17:11 (NIV)

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.