



SESSION

4

ACT WITH COURAGE



WHEN HAVE YOU BEEN IMPRESSED BY SOMEONE'S PERSISTENCE?

THE POINT > PERSISTENT PROBLEMS CALL FOR COURAGE.

> 2 CHRONICLES 15:1-9

¹The Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded, ² and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The LORD is with you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. ³ For a long time Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest and without law, ⁴ but when in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found by them. ⁵ In those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in, for great disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands.

⁶ They were broken in pieces. Nation was crushed by nation and city by city, for God troubled them with every sort of distress. ⁷ But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded."

⁸ As soon as Asa heard these words, the prophecy of Azariah the son of Oded, he took courage and put away the detestable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities that he had taken in the hill country of Ephraim, and he repaired the altar of the LORD that was in front of the vestibule of the house of the LORD. ⁹ And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who were residing with them, for great numbers had deserted to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:
THE PERSISTENCE
OF MEMORY IS
SALVADOR DALI'S
MOST FAMOUS
PAINTING. WHEN
ASKED DIRECTLY
ABOUT HIS
INSPIRATION, DALI
DECLARED HIS TRUE
MUSE FOR THE
DEFORMED CLOCKS
WAS A WHEEL OF
CHEESE THAT HAD
MELTED IN THE SUN.²

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. We've all heard this cliché. But it can be pretty discouraging when one failure follows another, and every door seems to slam before us. Many people give in to the discouragement and move on to other pursuits. However, some keep going, no matter what.

- **Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team.**
- **Steven Spielberg was rejected by a film school three times.**
- **Walt Disney was fired from a newspaper for having no imagination.¹**

Even when we get past the initial pain and difficulty related to failure, there are always more challenges. When life knocks us down again and again, it's then we're most tempted to give up. But if we want to make a difference, we must remember that it's often those who are most persistent who have the biggest impact on the world.

King Asa provides a great example of having courage in the face of challenges. He knew that continued success required his persisting in the good work he was doing. If the people were to remain focused on God, Asa had to continue leading in the same direction. When challenges persisted, he persisted more.

2 CHRONICLES 15:1-2

1 What spiritual truths have you learned as the result of previous failures?

2 How have you seen the effects of obedience and disobedience in your life?



*Move forward with courage
and a renewed passion for
God. #BSFLgodlylife*



2 CHRONICLES 15:3-7

3 When has God rewarded you for your persistence in your walk with Him?

4 Has following God become easier or more difficult as you have grown in your faith?

5 What helps you remain faithful, listen to God, and follow Him?



2 CHRONICLES 15:8-9

6 How do Asa and Azariah serve as examples for how we can encourage others to follow God?

7 When have you been inspired by someone's courage and obedience to God?

8 Where do followers of Jesus have opportunities to demonstrate courage in our culture?



LIVE IT OUT

► CHRIST

We are delivered from our sins and enter into a relationship with Christ the very moment we come to saving faith. However, relational intimacy and trust are built over time as we persist in spending time with God.

9 How will you demonstrate persistence in cultivating your relationship with Christ this week?

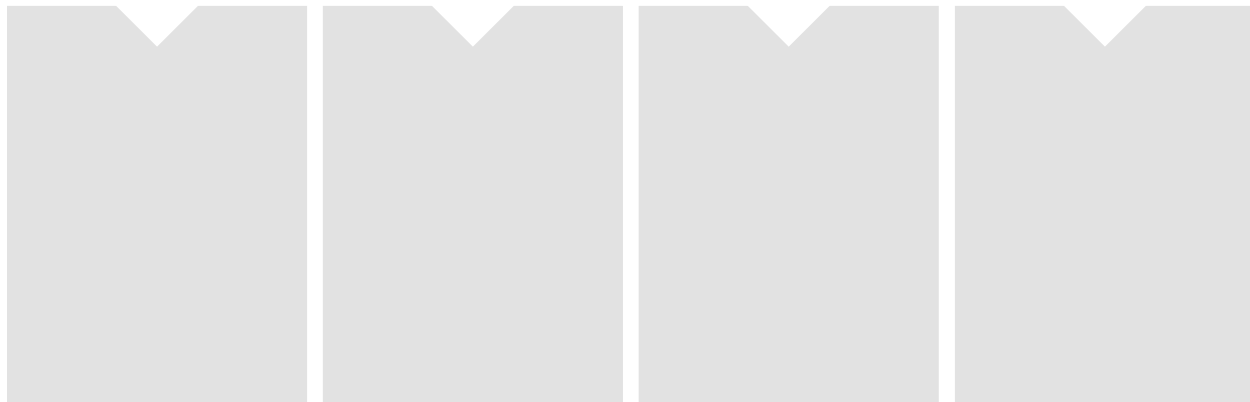


10 How have you seen this persistence help you through difficult times in the past?

► COMMUNITY

The relationships that are the most valuable take time and work, but they're worth it. The benefits of close relationships with other Christians are immeasurable.

11 What steps have you taken to pursue relationships with others in your church family?

Four vertical rectangular boxes, each with a decorative top edge featuring a central V-shaped notch. The boxes are arranged horizontally and are intended for writing answers to question 11.

12 How will you be persistence in pursuing these things?

► CULTURE

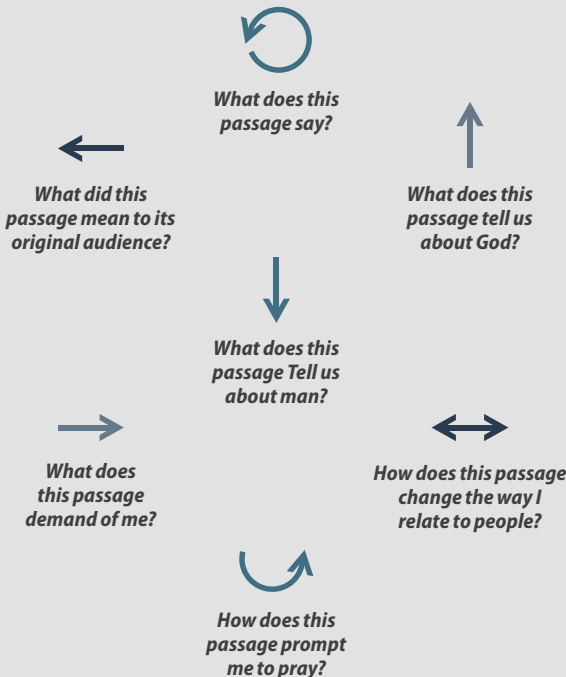
Helping people who are far from God to understand their situation, and then to lead them to God certainly has some challenges. However, God has called us to this task, and it takes boldness, commitment, and dependence on Him.

13 This week, how will you be persistent in sharing the gospel with a lost friend? (You may worry that your persistence will be annoying or offensive. However, we must realize the alternative—their being eternally separated from God's goodness—is far worse.)

DAILY DEVOTIONS



THE 7 ARROWS OF BIBLE READING



DAY ONE PSALM 27:7-8

There may be times in our lives when we feel like we aren't as close to God as we should be. In fact, we may even feel like God isn't listening when we pray. David certainly felt like this at times. But he knew God had called him to seek His face. God's "face" represents His presence, and because God created us to live in relationship with Him, we are invited continually into His presence. David begged and pleaded with God to be gracious with him. Even though things didn't always go the way David wanted, he was committed to seeking God no matter what. At times, he may have questioned how things were going to turn out, but deep down in his heart, David always knew it was best to seek after God.

- **When have you felt like God wasn't listening?**
- **Why is it always best to seek God, even when we may not feel like it?**

DAY FOUR PSALM 27:13

Have you ever said something like this? *I just don't see any way this can ever get better!* When we get caught up in the difficulties life inevitably throws at us, it often seems as if there's no end to the tunnel and certainly no light to be seen. However, we serve a God who is good in ways we can't even begin to imagine, and when things seem hopeless to us, God sees the bigger picture, and there's always hope in Him. David had been through times that seemed hopeless before, and he's seen God provide in unexpected ways. Based on God's track record, David had faith that God would come through again. Therefore, David said with confidence, "I am certain that I will see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living." David knew that, no matter what, God was working for his good, and he fully expected God would preserve his life.

- **When have you felt like things would never get better?**

- **How has God been faithful in the past? How can this help you see beyond difficult circumstances?**

DAY FIVE PSALM 27:14



We live in a culture where we expect to get what we want when we want it—and that's usually right now! This often translates into our expectations about God. When we face hardships, we want it to be over immediately. And when we pray, we expect God will instantly give us exactly what we've asked for. However, this isn't the way God works. He can choose this, if He wants. But more often, God wants us to wait. This leads to patience, steadfastness, and ultimately, Christlike maturity. David encouraged himself with these ideas—*Wait on God. Wait because God loves you, and He's at work.* When we struggle, let us be encouraged. There are good things in the waiting.

- **What are you waiting on right now?**

- **How can you honor God as you wait?**