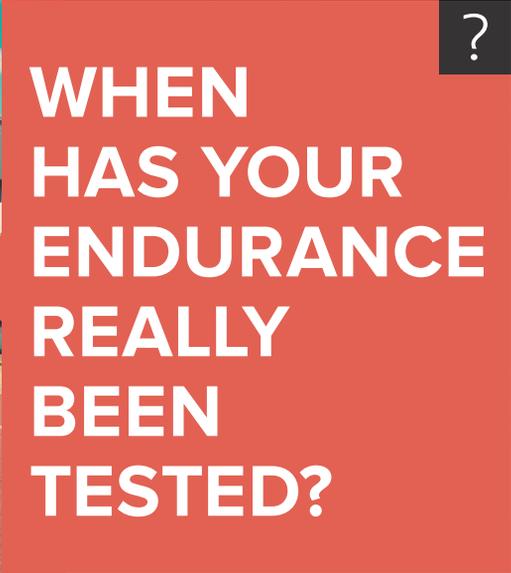




4

The Endurance of Our Hope



WHEN HAS YOUR ENDURANCE REALLY BEEN TESTED?

The POINT >

We can endure suffering because of our hope in Christ.

> 1 PETER 3:8-17

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. ⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. ¹⁰ For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹ let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” ¹³ Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? ¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵ but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being

prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷ For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

Women have twice as many pain receptors as men.¹



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // SALVATION

We can be confident in our salvation when we, as a matter of desire, live in obedience to God and in ways that reflect Jesus.

No one signs up for pain, sorrow, disappointment, betrayal, or rejection, but they happen—especially if you’ve ever decided to run track, play an instrument, join the football team, get a job, or go to college. Come to think of it, just about anything worthwhile requires some level of discomfort. Just ask the freshman football player or the guitarist who’s been practicing an hour a day for the past three weeks. Sometimes the pain we experience is literal and physical. Other times it may be internal and emotional.

Though we might like to think differently, loving Jesus doesn’t insulate us from pain and suffering. Some people may tell us that all our problems will disappear and life will be easy after we come to Christ. But this simply isn’t the case. Throughout the history of the church, many have suffered in the worst ways because they chose to follow Christ. In fact, all the apostles, except John, were killed for their faith.

We may not suffer physically for our faith, but all Christians will experience suffering on some level. Christ must be the source and sufficiency of our identity. We can endure because our hope rests in Him.

1 PETER 3:8-12

1 How do the teachings in these verses compare and contrast with the values in our culture?

2 List some good practices for turning away from evil and resisting temptation on a daily basis.

The hope of Christ will never flow out of our lives and lips if it's not first in our hearts.
#BSFLHope



1 PETER 3:15-17

6 How can our lives demonstrate to others that Christ is Lord?

1 PETER 3:13-14

3 In what ways have you seen people suffer as a result of their faith in Christ?

4 When have you experienced difficulties because you follow Jesus?

5 How can our Christian hope sustain us through difficult circumstances?

7 How can we honor Christ in our interactions with those who cause us pain, conflict, or rejection?

8 Where is the line between responding with gentleness and allowing ourselves to be abused or falsely accused?





LIVE IT OUT

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // SALVATION

We can be confident in our salvation when we, as a matter of desire, live in obedience to God and in ways that reflect Jesus.

Jesus told His followers that we will suffer in this life—generally because of sin’s curse, and specifically for following Him. Trials reveal the truth about our faith. If we turn away from Jesus when life gets hard, then we know that our faith isn’t genuine. However, if we press on in following Christ because of our love for Him, then we know that our eternal salvation is secure.

> CHRIST

Jesus suffered, even to the point of giving His life, because of His great love for God’s people.

9 How have you suffered for Jesus in the past?

10 How specifically may living for Jesus this week bring hardship to your life?

Commit to following through, even when it’s difficult. Pray that the Spirit would supply the strength you need to live sacrificially.

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD



> COMMUNITY

Not only are we called to make sacrifices for Christ, we're also to make sacrifices for others.

11 When has someone made a sacrifice to show you love and kindness? How did this affect you?

12 How will you make a sacrifice to love or encourage someone in your church?

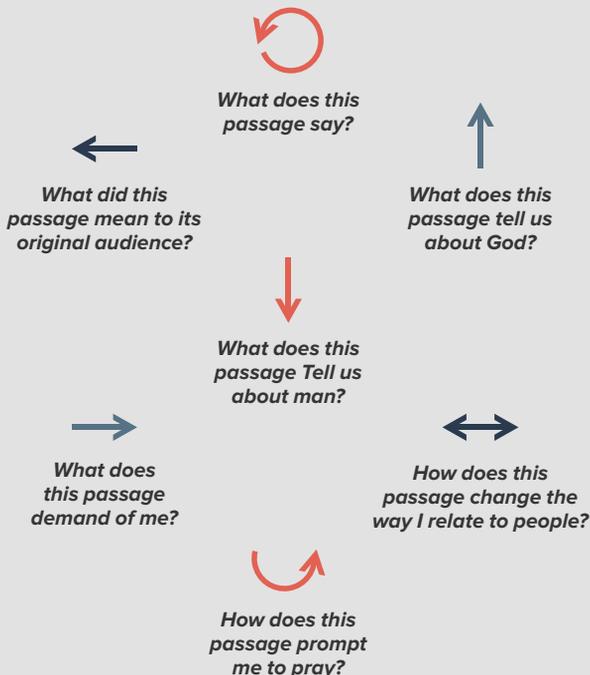
> CULTURE

13 Who has treated you like an enemy? This week, make it a point to show love, compassion, and humility to that person.

DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day One ROMANS 5:1

Many people see peace as an inner sense of calm that we experience when all is right with the world. However, this isn't at all what Paul meant when he mentioned peace. In a certain sense, peace does refer to tranquility or the freedom from turmoil or disorder. However, more specifically, peace has to do with the state of affairs between two parties. Those who are sinners—which is all of us prior to coming to faith—make themselves enemies of God. We chose rebellion over obedience, and in terms of our relationship with God, we had no peace. But when we receive the gospel, turn away from our sins, and by faith live in obedience to God, He forgives us for our rebellion and declares peace over our relationship. When we were in sin, there was no way we could make peace with God. Thankfully, Jesus did all that was necessary to bring peace to all who would trust in Him.

- **When have you experienced a lack of peace in your life?**
- **How has God helped you to experience real peace?**

Day Two

ROMANS 5:2



In Old Testament times, not all believers had access to God. In fact, there was a thick curtain that separated all people from God's presence with one exception. Only the high priest could enter into the presence of God once a year. The priest would enter the Most Holy Place with the blood of a sacrifice to atone for the sins of the people. The people engaged with God only through a priest. But when Jesus died on the cross, this all changed. Now, for those who have faith in Christ, we have continual access to God. Because of our sin, we don't deserve to be in God's presence. But because of His grace, God has granted us access through Jesus.

- **Why is it such a privilege that we can come into God's presence?**

- **What does it take for us to approach God?**

Day Three

ROMANS 5:3

We all want to be great. For some, we may want our athletic prowess to shine on the court. Others may dream of being a famous musician or an esteemed surgeon. Whatever the case, most people aspire to do great things. However, there are far fewer people who are actually willing to do the necessary work to achieve these kinds of things. Here's why: Achieving great things requires not only hard work, but also sacrificing many comforts. This same principle applies to our spiritual lives. All Christians want to live for God and make a significant impact for the sake of the kingdom. However, growing in faith, maturity, and Christlikeness doesn't come easy. Just like it takes spending hours in the gym every day to gain world-class strength, becoming a champion for the Lord requires that we face tests and struggles. But for those who buy in—who are willing to do whatever it takes to follow God's purposes—we rejoice in the struggles because we know it makes us stronger.

- **When has a struggle helped you become stronger?**

- **What is something you dream of accomplishing for God?**

Day Four

ROMANS 5:4

For runners, workouts are intended to produce physical stamina, so on race day, their endurance propels them to the finish line in a faster time than all the other athletes. In our faith, what we strive for is different. We long for the prize that's given to those who cross the finish line. Before that, however, there's another goal we should seek. Scripture teaches that, as we endure difficult times, character is formed in us that serves as proof of the transformation God has worked in our lives. When hard times come, for those who respond poorly and in the ways they did before professing their faith in Christ, there's no proof of change. However, when we endure hard times, refusing to fall away into our old sinful patterns, this proves that Christ is at work in our lives, and we can have confidence in our salvation. This proof allows us to have hope that Christ will allow us to share in His eternal kingdom.

- **How does your character provide proof for the change God has made in you?**

- **Why are you confident you'll share eternity with Jesus?**

Day Five

ROMANS 5:5



We hope for all kinds of good things—a new car, a job that pays \$50 an hour, for the best looking girl or guy in school to ask us to prom—but we never expect to receive them. This sort of cultural hope is really a matter of chance. However, the hope we find in Jesus is altogether different. Most of the time, when we hope for things in a worldly way, we end up disappointed. However, Paul teaches that the hope available to us in Jesus will not disappoint us—ever! Because God loves us, He withholds nothing good from those who follow Him. Because He is faithful, He will deliver on all His good promises. When we hope in God, we will receive those things we've hoped for.

- **When have you hoped for something but been disappointed?**

- **How is hope in Christ different from worldly hoping?**