



DEVOTIONAL

DEVELOP | JANUARY 31, 2021

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discussion Starter: How would you advise a new Christian to persevere—remain strong—in their faith?

Key Passage: “*And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*” (Mark 12:30)

The word ‘strength’ in Mark 12:30 means force—it describes the effort and passion with which we love God. While the heart, soul, and mind direct how we feel, decide, and think, “strength” is the force that determines the extent of our love. One of the best ways to determine the strength of our love for the Lord is to examine our resilience in our walk with Christ. Resilience refers to adapting to adversity in our lives and bouncing back from difficulties. When we are resilient—when we refuse to give up in hardship—we are demonstrating that we love the Lord with all our strength.

Discuss: Look up each of these verses and briefly summarize what they say about resilience: Romans 12:21; James 1:12; Philippians 3:13-15; Proverbs 24:16.

The Bible has numerous examples of believers who were resilient.

- **Old Testament**

Job showed great resilience. Even after losing everything and experiencing tremendous agony of body and soul, Job refused to give up or curse God. Job 1:22 says, “*In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.*” Despite his suffering, Job knew that God was in control, and that knowledge helped him stay resilient rather than giving in to defeat. His faith resulted in resiliency.

Discuss: How can faith that God is in control help you maintain your resilience amid suffering?

- **New Testament**

The apostle Paul showed great resilience even though he was criticized, jailed, beaten, stoned, and nearly killed many times (2 Corinthians 11:24–27). When Paul was in Lystra, he was stoned, dragged out of town, and left for dead, but, when his enemies left, Paul simply got up and went back into the city (Acts 14:19–20). His missionary work did not slow down. Resilience enables us to stay on mission, no matter the opposition.

Discuss: When have you needed to show resilience in sticking with your mission even though you faced obstacles and perhaps even opposition?

God will give us the strength to be resilient in all circumstances if we'll trust in Him.

- **Old Testament**

David wrote in Psalm 37:23-24: *"The Lord makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him; though he may stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand."*

- **New Testament**

The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9: *"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."*

Discuss: In what ways does the Lord uphold us when we stumble?

Discouragement can tempt us to give up.

When we don't see the results we'd hoped for, or our efforts aren't appreciated when we've been working on an endeavor we were passionate about, it's easy to become discouraged and want to give up. But Galatians 6:9 says, *"Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."*

Discuss: What can you do to keep yourself motivated as you serve the Lord?

Feeling tired can tempt us to give up.

Fatigue in ministry is a common occurrence among God's servants. One of the best things we can do when we feel exhausted—whether mentally, emotionally, physically, or spiritually—is to take a break. The Bible tells us that even Jesus often slipped away to recharge and spend time in prayer (Mark 1:35; Matthew 14:23; Luke 5:16).

Discuss: What do you do to recharge your batteries when you are tired?

Opposition can tempt us to give up.

When you and your work are under constant criticism and attack, giving up may feel like a good option. Our greatest example of resilience is Jesus, who remained resilient all the way to the cross. Hebrews 12:5 says, *"Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."*

Discuss: How does Jesus' example of resilience inspire you not to give up?

For Further Study

Disappearing Church: From Cultural Relevance to Gospel Resilience by Mark Sayers

Patience: The Benefits of Waiting by Stephen Eyre

"8 Tips to Foster Resilience in Your Kids" article by Lisa Murray at www.crosswalk.com