**Study Series: A Long Obedience in the Same Direction**

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**Lesson Title: “Perseverance” (pp. 28-38)**

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**The main point of this lesson is:** Though kicked around by circumstances and the enemies of God, disciples persevere, knowing God sticks with us.

**Focus on this goal:** To help adults identify areas they are tempted to give up and how they will persevere instead.

**Key Bible Passage:** Psalm 129

**To the Leader:** The Winston Churchill quote (Step 7) can be found at https://www.nationalchurchill museum.org/never-give- in-never-never-never.html

During the Session

**Step 1. Introduction / Discussion Starter**

**Request adults list** supplies they would consider absolutely essential to have if they were going to hike the Appalachian or Pacific Crest Trail.

**Ask:** Would perseverance be essential or optional if you were going to complete a long-distance hike? Why?

**State:** Following Jesus is a long obedience in the same direction, so perseverance must be a mark of genuine discipleship. From a Song of Ascents that pilgrims sang as they journeyed to Jerusalem to worship God, we’ll explore what perseverance is and how we can persevere in faith, rather than give up when the journey gets hard.

**Step 2. Day One – “They Never Could Keep Me Down”**

**Invite adults to state** synonyms for perseverance.

**Note** the author’s synonyms of stick-to-itiveness and patience.

**Read and discuss** the Paul Goodman quote about patience in Day One (p. 28).

**Discuss:**

1. Why is patient perseverance not enjoyable?
2. Why is it admirable?

**Discuss** Day One, activity 2 (p. 29).

**Step 3. Day Two – Tough Faith**

**Ask** why God’s people need perseverance according to Psalm 129:1-2.

**Declare:** Life is tough, because people and circumstances kick us around, but the people of God are tougher!

**Draw attention** to the margin/pull quote in Day Two (p. 30).

**Discuss** Day Two, activity 1 (pp. 30-31).

**Use** the second and third paragraphs of Day Two (pp. 30-31) **to explore** how Jesus is our ultimate example of perseverance.

**Discuss** Day Two, activity 2 (p. 31) **to** **explore** how Paul exhibited tough faith.

**Step 4. Day Three – Cut Cords, Withered Grass**

**Invite adults to describe** what they envision when they read Psalm 129:3.

**Invite volunteers to share** responses to Day Three, activity 1 (p. 32).

**Discuss** the word pictures the psalmist used to describe what happens to those who oppose God’s people.

**Discuss** Day Three, activity 2 (p. 33).

**Step 5. Day Four – The Passion of Patience**

**Invite adults to state** phrases from Psalm 129 that might trouble them.

**Read** the first paragraph of Day Four (p. 34).

**Explain** Psalm 129 is an imprecatory psalm, which the HCSB explains doesn’t “convey petty personal anger; [but] curses against those who had mistreated God’s people. [Imprecatory psalms] express a firm belief in the righteousness of God and a hatred for sin.”[[1]](#footnote-2)

**Assert** Psalm 129 reveals that perseverance is passionate, not passive.

**Read and discuss** the Day Four margin/pull quote (p. 35).

**Ask:**

1. Does that mean all our expressed anger is okay?
2. What does it mean?

**Request adults scan** Day Four and state what perseverance is not (perfection, resignation, being a doormat).

**Read** the last paragraph of Day Four (p. 36).

**Discuss:**

1. How can we offer our anger to God?
2. Why must patient love be creative?

**Step 6. Day Five – God Sticks with Us**

**Invite adults to identify** statements in Psalm 129 that best convey to them how they can stick it out when life is kicking them around.

**Ask a volunteer to read** the Day Five margin/pull quote (p. 37).

**Invite responses** to the questions in Day Five, activity 1 (p. 37).

**Remind adults** of the encouragement in Hebrews 10 (Day Two, activity 1, pp. 30-31) to not shrink back but press on in faith.

**Use remarks** in Day Five (pp. 37-38) **to describe** the Christians to whom that encouragement was addressed.

**Explain** the writer of Hebrews followed that encouragement with descriptions of people who lived by faith (Heb. 11), then a strong call to perseverance.

**Read** Hebrews 12:1-2 from Day Five (pp. 37-38).

**Ask:** What must we do to persevere?

**Step 7. Live Out the Lesson**

**Declare:** When life plows over us, those furrows can either bear fruit or fester. Perseverance will determine whether our trials make us bitter or better.

**Invite volunteers to share** what they have learned from Psalm 129 about how to persevere.

**Urge adults to prayerfully consider** Day Five, activity 2 (p. 38).

**Close by reading** a portion of Winston Churchill’s famous speech from 1941: You cannot tell from appearances how things will go. Sometimes imagination makes things out far worse than they are; yet without imagination not much can be done. Those people who are imaginative see many more dangers than perhaps exist; certainly many more than will happen; but then they must also pray to be given that extra courage to carry this far-reaching imagination. But for everyone … this is the lesson: never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never-in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.

**Close in prayer.**

After the Session

Often people need someone else to travel along with them during trials. If a participant is being kicked around by life right now, invite them to do something with you this week to let them know they’re not alone.

1. HCSB Study Bible, 2010, study note for Psalm 109:1-31, pg. 989 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)