

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

2. Perseverance



Introduction

We have been learning about the importance of Christian character. When we become Christians the Holy Spirit begins working in our lives to make us more like Jesus. He is our role model and example. In the last study we made a list of the qualities that God wants us to have, and one of these is perseverance.

- ◆ What is perseverance? What does this word mean to you?

(The meaning in God's Word for perseverance is 'to continue steadfastly in something', or to keep on-going and not to give up.)

Many of us have developed perseverance in areas of our lives. Perhaps you have learnt to play a musical instrument or drive a car, or play a sports game. This required perseverance to master the skills you needed. You kept on trying because you were determined to learn. God's Word tells us that we also need to persevere in our Christian lives, even though at times it may be difficult.

- ◆ What helps perseverance develop in our lives according to Romans 5:3-5 and James 5:10-11?

(Both of these verses mention 'suffering'.)

- ◆ We have already seen that Jesus is our model. How did Jesus set us an example to persevere?
Read Hebrews 12:1-3.

(Jesus persevered even though he faced the continual opposition of sinful men. He chose not to give up or take the easy way out, even when faced with carrying the weight of all mankind's sin and a terrible death by crucifixion.)

- ◆ What gave Jesus the courage to persevere through this experience? Hebrews 12:2, John 4:34, Luke 22:42

(Jesus loved his Heavenly Father and longed to do his will. Even though he knew what great suffering was ahead, he surrendered to his Father's will. He believed the promises in the Scriptures that he would be raised up and seated at the right hand of the Father, ruling and reigning with him for all eternity, and because of that joy and hope before him, he endured the suffering.)

- ◆ Have you ever felt like 'giving up' in your Christian life? What happened that made you feel like that? And what encouraged you to keep going?

- ◆ Look at the following scriptures: Romans 5:4-5, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. How do they encourage you to persevere in the Christian life even when things are difficult? Share.

Conclusion

It's not always easy to live the Christian life! You may be the only believer in your family, or in the place where you study or work, and others will discourage and even persecute you. Not only that, we have an enemy who accuses us and wants us to fall away from the Lord. Just as Jesus experienced suffering, so will we, but this produces perseverance, character and hope in our lives. And as it says in Romans 5, hope WILL NOT disappoint us.

