



BUILD CHARACTER

STEADINESS & PERSEVERANCE

Spiritual Outcome Defined:

Exhibit a rooted peace and a patient endurance through trials, opposition, tedium, changing life seasons, and hardship – keeping one’s eyes fixed on the eternal reward promised by Christ.

Spiritual Outcome Described:

New endeavors have an advantage. They are embraced and enjoyed not just for themselves but for the fact that they are new. The new dating relationship, the new job, the new exercise routine, all of these have a unique appeal not just for their intrinsic quality but for their newness. Following Christ is no exception to these realities. The

new follower of Christ is discovering new ideas and new realities that are transforming one’s life. This is both good and exciting, but it is also temporary.

The authentic follower of Christ knows the power and importance of both steadiness and perseverance. Scripture abounds with story after story of those who have persevered in their faith, decade after decade, and consequently developed profound depth in their lives.

“The disciplined person is the person who can do what needs to be done when it needs to be done.”
-- Richard Foster

Abraham and Sarah persevered through infertility. Joseph persevered through enslavement and imprisonment. Moses persevered in his leadership. Such living demands a perspective that doesn’t need the new and flashy idea or opportunity but is content to be faithful with what was learned years before, even in the midst of hardship. This demands a shift in perspective. A person may be tempted to withdraw from critical relationships, church involvement, and serving opportunities, because for one reason or another, things got hard. The hardship may be something heavy, like suffering and conflict, or it may be something common, like the hardship of boredom. Regardless, withdrawing from God and people due to suffering and pain, or wander and boredom, leads to shallow living that misses the richness of perseverance.

Over and over in Scripture we hear exhortations akin to, *“Be strong, and take heart, and wait for the Lord”* (Psalm 27:14). If we are perpetually trying to “fix” things ourselves rather than maintaining a steady and persevering spirit, we will miss the depth and richness God has for us through the commitment to one long pull in the same direction.

Evidence of this Spiritual Outcome in a Person's Life:

- Consistently maintains one's spiritual disciplines year after year.
- Remains committed and involved in one church for a significant period of time.
- Can describe a time where one persevered through hardship resulting in a weathered and deepened faith rather than a withered and weakened faith.
- Has a centered faith that is not daily thrown off by circumstantial frustrations and difficulties.

Guidance

Read each passage multiple times. Then write your observations about the passage and any thoughts you have from the discernment question. What do you notice in the passage, and what does this reveal about your life?

Psalm 27:13-14

Observations:

Discernment Question: What unfulfilled longings do you carry in life?



Romans 5:1-5

Observations:

Discernment Question: Does hardship tend to repel you from God or draw you toward God? Why?

Romans 8:28-39

Observations:

Discernment Question: Do you view yourself as one who overcomes and conquers hardship by Christ or as one who is defeated? Why?



Romans 12:12

Observations:

Discernment Question: What role does prayer play in your ability to persevere?

1 Corinthians 15:58

Observations:

Discernment Question: Which is most descriptive of your engagement in the work of the Lord: never engaged, formerly engaged, partially engaged, very engaged? Why this descriptor?



Galatians 6:9-10

Observations:

Discernment Question: Are you weary or energized for doing good? What inspires you?

1 Thessalonians 1:3

Observations:

Discernment Question: How vibrant is your hope in Christ? Do you think much with an eternal perspective of life?



1 Timothy 4:16

Observations:

Discernment Question: What are the dials on your dashboard that you need to watch?
How do they currently read?

Hebrews 10:19-25

Observations:

Discernment Question: What are you doing to draw close to God for encouragement?
What are you doing to draw close to others for encouragement?



Hebrews 12:1-3

Observations:

Discernment Question: What entangles you and weighs you down?

James 1:2-4, 12

Observations:

Discernment Question: Scripture repeatedly affirms that hardship serves a purpose. Do you genuinely embrace this? Why or why not?



Next Steps

What are practical next steps you will do from what you have discovered in this survey of Scripture on steadiness and perseverance? Include insights offered from others in your group that could be applied in your own life as well.



Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

