

Steadfastness

Week 3 | Day 1 Read 2 Peter 1:3-6

The Greek word for steadfast is a combination of meno, which means to remain or abide (the same word "abide" found in John 15) with the prefix hupo, which means "under." It means to "remain under" a heavy load, to stand firm, or to endure under suffering.

When struggles seem overwhelming, and fear finds its way into our minds and hearts, steadfastness continues to trust in the Lord (Psalm 56:3). When doubt creeps in, we ask God to help our unbelief (Mark 9:24). When worry and anxiety show up, we turn to God in prayer (Philippians 4:6-7).

Steadfastness is not about being able to take everything on our own shoulders, in our own strength. It's about standing firm on Christ, turning to Jesus when things get hard. Leaning on Him when we can't stand on our own. Building our lives on Christ as our foundation so when the rains and the winds come, our house will stand firm (Matthew 7:24-27).

Each time we go through something hard and turn to Jesus, God builds steadfastness in us. Steadfastness = "under" + "remain." The key is to remain in Jesus when we're under pressure..

Reflection Questions:

Looking back on times you struggled and turned to Jesus in the past, how did He come through for you? How did that give you spiritual strength to trust in Him the next time things became difficult? How have you seen Jesus give you strength when you felt weak?

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for the power of your Holy Spirit who gives us the strength to stand firm on Christ in times of struggle, suffering, or pain. Help us to continue to turn to Jesus when we feel worry, doubt, or fear. Show us how we can grow steadfastness in our lives through spiritual disciplines and practices. Thank you for continuing to show up for us every time we turn to you. In Jesus's name, Amen.

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Steadfastness Comes through Suffering

Week 3 | Day 2 Read 2 Peter 1:5–6, James 1:2-4, and Romans 5:3–5

Pain, hurt, and heartache are made bearable when we lift our eyes off of our surroundings and fix them on Jesus. That doesn't mean we ignore grief or sidestep sadness. But it does mean we remember that our God is bigger than our current situation, no matter how difficult it might be.

This hope and faith in our good and loving God can help us endure and remain steadfast as we trust our Heavenly Father. When we allow suffering to draw us closer to the Lord, we see that even though we are hurting, we can rejoice because the Holy Spirit is at work in us, growing the fruit of joy (Galatians 5:22-23).

And so we can welcome whatever suffering may come our way, seeing it as an opportunity to learn, be refined, and grow in faith.

Reflection Questions:

Describe how you have experienced God in times of suffering. How did God give you strength? How did He grow you and mold you through the process?

How have you seen growth in your ability to endure suffering? What experiences helped you grow in steadfastness?

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for the gift of suffering—yes, the gift. Thank you for the ways you use suffering to teach us, mold us, and strengthen us in our faith. Help us to remember to lean on you when we experience suffering. Thank you for the gift of your Spirit of comfort, wisdom, strength, and joy. Keep us steadfast no matter what comes our way. In Jesus's name, Amen.

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Steadfastness Grows Faith and Love

Week 3 | Day 3 Read 2 Peter 1:5-6 and 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

The Thessalonians endured a lot of persecution and suffering, like many of the early churches. And yet they had such steadfastness in their suffering that Paul bragged about them to all the other churches. He was amazed not only by their ability to endure under pressure but by how much their persecution had grown their faith in Jesus and their love for one another.

Faith that is deep and lasting sustains us through our sufferings. And, if we'll allow it to, the suffering we experience can foster compassion and empathy for others who are struggling. Having experienced God's comfort in our own times of suffering, we are then prepared and equipped to comfort others with patience and understanding (2 Corinthians 1:3–5).

Reflection Questions:

How have you experienced God's comfort in times of suffering?

Think of a friend, family member, coworker, or other person you know who is going through a difficult time right now. How can you share the comfort, love, and grace of God with them? How can you pray for them? How else can you help them?

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for comforting us when we are suffering. Thank you for the supernatural gift of growing our faith, wisdom, and love through suffering. Help us to not only remain steadfast through suffering but to use our experience to love and comfort others who are suffering. Give us eyes to see the suffering of those around us and a heart of compassion to care for them. In Jesus's name, Amen.

Steadfastness Leads to Eternal Life

Week 3 | Day 4 Read Hebrews 12:1-2 and James 1:12

When we run a race and exhaustion sets in, it can be tempting to give up. When this happens, experts say one of the best things we can do is focus our gaze on someone running ahead of us. Keeping our eyes focused on them will make our bodies naturally pace themselves to their pace.

Similarly, when life gets hard, we don't have to manufacture our own strength, we just have to look to Jesus. We just have to keep running with Him.

Our race as Christians is loving Christ with faithful perseverance, even when trials come and exhaustion shows up. And when we cross that finish line, we'll receive the greatest prize we could ever imagine, eternal life in heaven.

Reflection Questions:

Describe times your race seemed really hard and you wanted to quit. How did you find the strength to keep running? What would it look like to fix your eyes on Jesus when things get hard? What practical steps can you take to focus on Him?

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for the reward of eternal life. Thank you that the reward is for everyone who finishes the race, not just for the "winners." Thank you for giving us Jesus to fix our eyes on, to pace our race, and to give us the strength to finish. When things get hard and we feel like giving up, give us the strength to hold on to You. In Jesus's name, Amen.

Steadfastness as a Witness

Week 3 | Day 5 Read 2 Peter 1:5-6 and Philippians 1:12-13

When Paul was in prison in Rome, awaiting the death penalty, he told the Philippians that it was this very situation that allowed for the advance of the gospel, throughout the whole imperial guard. With steadfast devotion to Jesus, he continued to proclaim the good news of the gospel wherever he went, even while imprisoned. Paul took advantage of every opportunity to share the gospel, and we can, too.

The difficulties and suffering we experience can be a catalyst for us to show God's love and tell of His mercy and grace to the people who are present in our lives. When we are steadfast through suffering, when we overflow with love, peace, joy, kindness, and generosity even in hard times, we can be a powerful witness to the goodness of God. Reflection Questions: Steadfastness in My Life How can you use your current situation to share the gospel with the people in your life? How can you respond with steadfastness, joy, peace, kindness, generosity and faith to your particular struggles right now?

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for all the ways you can use our suffering for good in this world. Help us to shift the way we think about suffering to align with Your Word and Your purposes. Give us the strength and wisdom to respond to suffering with joy, patience, generosity, kindness, and faith. Show us how you can use us for the gospel in every circumstance in our lives. In Jesus's name, Amen.

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Reflect on those people who are harder to love, even those you might call your enemies. How is God calling you to agape love them? How can you show that love in action?

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for your incredible agape love for us, which you have so graciously shown us through your Son, Jesus. Help us learn to love others the way Jesus loves us. By the power of your Spirit, grow your agape love in us. In Jesus's name, Amen.

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