

ANNIE F. DOWNS

LOOKING
FOR
LOVELY



COLLECTING THE MOMENTS
THAT MATTER

BIBLE STUDY

Published by LifeWay Press®

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ISBN 9781430051527 • Item 005772637

Dewey decimal classification: 234.2

Subject headings: CHRISTIAN LIFE / FAITH / GOD

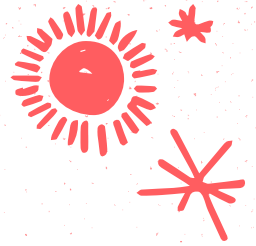
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Printed in the United States of America

Cover design: Matt Lehman

Adult Ministry Publishing
LifeWay Church Resources • One LifeWay Plaza • Nashville, TN 37234-0152



CONTENTS

4	About the Author
5	A Letter from Annie
6	Week 1: Introduction
30	Week 2: Farmers
52	Week 3: Musicians
76	Week 4: Fishing
100	Week 5: Women of Influence
124	Week 6: Jesus
150	Week 7: Now What?





ABOUT *the* AUTHOR

ANNIE F. DOWNS is an author, speaker, and blogger based in Nashville, Tennessee. Flawed but funny, she uses her writing to highlight the everyday goodness of a real and present God.

While she loves writing—books, blogs, articles, thank you notes—Annie also enjoys traveling around the world speaking to young women, college students, and adults. Annie is a huge fan of bands with banjos, glitter, her community of friends, boiled peanuts, and football games. Read more at anniefdowns.com and follow her on Twitter [@anniefdowns](https://twitter.com/anniefdowns).

DEAR FRIEND,

One of my favorite things to do is get coffee with my people. Near my house in Nashville is a coffee shop called Portland Brew. There is a dark side where there is no natural light and a full brick wall, and there is the light side full of windows. You can almost always find me sitting on the light side, with an almond milk chai in hand, and a friend across the table from me.

That's where I wrote a lot of this study, and you're the friend I pictured across the way. Sitting around and talking with my friends about the Bible is a real joy for me because I genuinely find the Bible so very interesting. The stories we know, the stories we don't, the humans acting like humans, and the God who loves us like crazy and looks past the sins of our humanness because of Jesus' sacrifice.

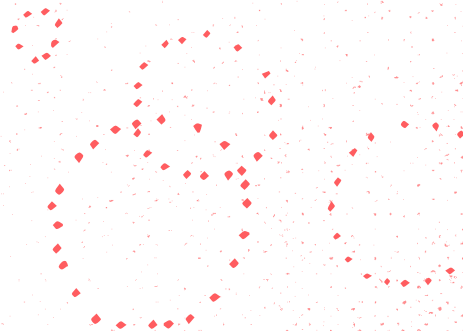
I hope you feel that way too. Whether you are going through this study alone (you aren't alone—I'm here too!), or if you are with a group, my prayer is that these few weeks will help you fall more in love with the Word of God and with Jesus, and that you will grow a heart that perseveres in ways you never have before.

I've been a Christian for a few decades now, but I'm telling you everything changed for me when Romans 5 came to life in my heart and spilled out in my thoughts and actions. I'm praying the same for you. As we take an unconventional journey—through the eyes of career-minded folks—my hope and prayer is that you will see yourself in new ways too. And that you will begin to choose, in new and deeper ways, to rejoice in your sufferings and persevere, so that your character may grow, so that hope is birthed in your life and overflows onto those around you. And that you begin to look for and find the lovely in the midst of it all.

I'm right here with you, and I can't wait to study with you.

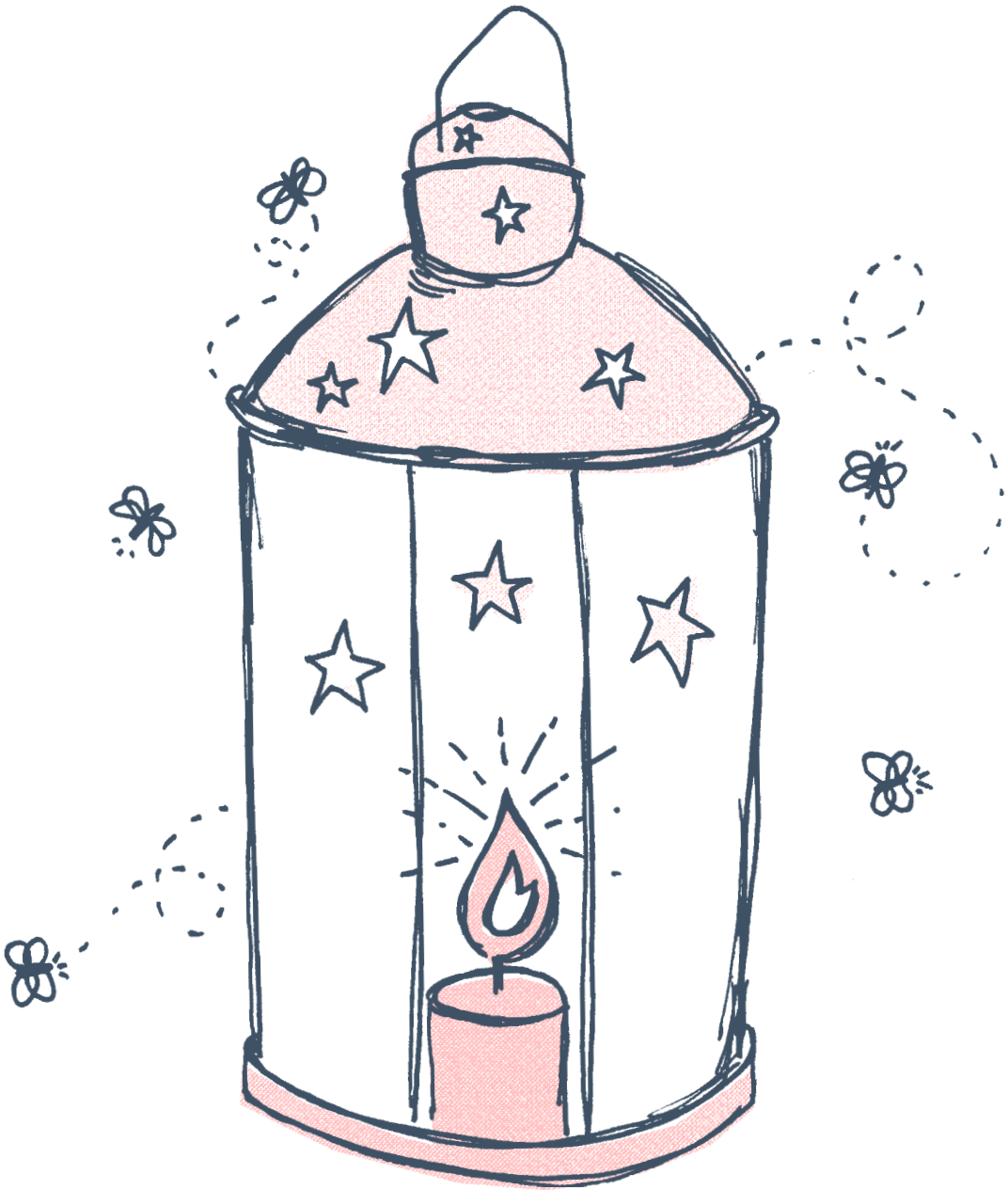
Sincerely,

Annie



Week 1

INTRODUCTION





From soccer as a kid to relationships as an adult, when things get difficult, I tend to run away. Maybe I've always been a quitter. All of this led to a point in my life I now refer to as "the broken crazy." I decided to change; I *needed* to change. I had to stop quitting. I *needed* to learn to persevere. Once I began the road to not quitting, the road away from the broken crazy, I realized it was going to take a lot of looking for lovely. I needed to find a reason to show up and not give up. As I thought back over my own life, the beautiful things, though few and far between at times, were the knots on the rope that helped me keep climbing.

There's a correlation, I'm finding, between beauty and perseverance, between looking for lovely and not giving up. And beauty is in the eye of the beholder, isn't it? It's not just in the things that everyone sees, but it's what *you* see, what sticks out to you, the unique moments that God gives you to collect and hold and draw strength from during the difficult times.

I needed to find lovely if I was going to hang in there. I need it in my life. I need it in my heart. I need it in the bank of my soul to withdraw from when things feel hard. So I decided to start looking.

I've spent significant time over the last few years looking for lovely, actively pursuing it, trying to find it around every corner and ever hoping it's just right there, because I do love beautiful things. But mostly I just don't want to quit anymore. I pulled out old photo albums of trips and memories and I opened my eyes wider (if that's possible, since I already have froggy-wide eyes) to the world around me. In the process, I found Romans 5:3-5. Take a moment to read those verses now. We'll be discussing them in the next few weeks and how they show us not to quit.

Romans 5:3-5 teaches us that there are four stages on the path to finding lovely. I've charted them out below.



GROUP GUIDE

WELCOME!

If you haven't already, go ahead and read the session introduction on the previous page together as a group.

AS WE BEGIN, DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WITH YOUR GROUP

What drew you to this study?

What do you think it means to "look for lovely"?

What do you hope to gain from this study?

WATCH THE VIDEO

To hear more from Annie, download the optional video bundle to view Week 1 at lifeway.com/lookingforlovely

NOW, LET'S TALK

How does God remind you of His faithfulness (friends, things you read, nature, etc.)?

Read Romans 5:3-5. What does this verse tell us about perseverance?

When have you struggled not to quit? Did you give up? Why or why not?

How do you think looking for lovely helps us to persevere?

PRAY

Pray together as a group that you will all learn to look for lovely during the next few weeks. End the time together by praising God for His faithfulness.

DAY 1



BUT FIRST, PEACE

I like to make a smoothie every morning for breakfast. I stumble into the kitchen and pull half a banana and a chopped up peach from The Peach Truck out of the freezer and orange juice, almond milk, and spinach out of the fridge. The goal is to stuff my smoothie with more spinach than I would eat in a salad.

Here's something you should know about me—I don't love salad. I like it fine, but as a girl who has an adult onset allergy to dairy, a salad without ranch and cheese is just sadness. So I don't love eating them. Yet my brain responds really well to green things (yours does too, by the way), and so I try to give it the leaves it wants.

I whirl all the ingredients together, add a few chia seeds and some protein powder, and that's my breakfast.

The first time I made a smoothie, I didn't feel all that different. But I did notice as the fruits and vegetables blended together that the colors were beautiful. It was almost mesmerizing to watch. Two years later, my body is healthier, my brain is healthier, my energy level is way up, and my vegetable intake is way up.

Something about the white-noise whirl of that blender and the colors mixing make it a good morning, over and over again. I needed the beautiful of it, the peace of it, even if it took some time for my body to appreciate the change on the breakfast menu.

Isn't that the truth of perseverance sometimes? Isn't it true in your life also—sometimes it takes seeing the moments of lovely for you to keep going?

What are some ways you look for lovely in your everyday life, like how I love the sight of the colorful fruits mixing in the blender in the morning?

What does the word perseverance mean to you? How do you define it?

Why does perseverance matter?

What's one situation you're in right now requiring you to persevere?

What's the role of beauty in perseverance? Spoiler alert: It's a big one. If you're going to finish the brave/challenging/hard thing God has called you to do, you have to look for the lovely moments. But you also have to decide persevering and finishing are worth it.

That's it. That's kind of the "thing" here. It's the jar that holds the lovely—your belief that persevering matters. That if you finish—versus quit—you'll be glad you did.

**Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be
mature and complete, not lacking anything.**

JAMES 1:4

What's the benefit of letting perseverance "finish its work" in your life?

Write that verse on a note card or in your journal. We're going to come back to it again this week, and I want you to have it in front of you as a good reminder of why we persevere.

This study, this topic, it's in the center of my heart—it's where I'm living right now, and it's what I've seen God do in my life recently. It has changed me.

Will you pray with me before we really kick in? Maybe grab a smoothie and head to a quiet spot in your house or pump up the music in your headphones while you're sitting on a New York subway, but let's get in a place where Jesus can really move in.

*God,
We are asking You to change us. Really. From the inside out. Give us hearts of endurance—hearts that believe in the marathon opportunities you put in front of us—and eyes that can spot the lovely things, hold on to them, and remember them as we continue on our journey. Father, would we see You on the path, around every turn, in our normal, everyday lives. Give us the wisdom and time to connect with You in this study. Here. Now. Amen.*

READ ROMANS 5:1-5.

What's the first thing Paul says we have after faith?

Why is that important?

Without peace, we cannot persevere. We will run out of energy and stamina and an ability to look around us for the beautiful.

A lot of people look for beautiful things in the world; they try to see lovely when they look around. And I think that's great. But this is different. This is deeper. We are looking for lovely because we are looking for God. We want to see where He is moving, what He has created, and take in that beauty, treating it like the gift from Him that it is.

But before that, we must have peace. And this peace, the one particularly mentioned here in verse 1, is the peace that comes from salvation through Jesus Christ. It's like the baseline peace we can carry with us at all times—because of Jesus, we have peace with God, and we can have peace in God, too.

This peace means two different things to me.

Peace *with* God is a gift given to us when we accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord. He died so that we may be made righteous before God. We can be with God because we are forgiven. That is peace with God.

Peace *in* God is a choice we make again and again—something we can choose to grab onto and wrap ourselves in. We need them both. Peace with God gives us permission to ask and to pursue peace in God.

You probably know what peace feels like.

Last summer, some friends and I loaded up picnic baskets and hopped into my friend Matt's antique truck and drove down to Leiper's Fork, Tennessee. It's a little country town that doesn't mind when you visit. We drove out into a field and unpacked our dinner—meats, cheeses, watermelon, chocolate chip cookies, and a pasta salad. We passed them around and each stabbed our preferred pieces with our forks. We sat there for hours, talking some of the time but also spending time sitting in silence. As the sun set, I leaned back and watched the sky turn July navy and listened as my friends talked. Right there I felt peace. I felt the feeling of no matter what was going on in my life, in my home, in my work, right here in the back of this pickup truck, all was well. God was near. I recognized it in the way you recognize the smell of your grandmother's house.

Dinner that night didn't change any of the tumultuous situations I was living in or lighten my professional load, but it was a peace-filled experience I collected in my heart, and it gave me the strength and emotional energy to drive back to town and re-enter my real life. The peace stayed with me once I found it, spilling over into the next day.

When have you felt peace before?

What would it look like for you to have peace in your life every day?

How does finding and living in peace affect the rest of your day?

For me, finding peace in God feels like stopping. It's quiet. It's listening. It's asking God to calm the waves that are crashing in every corner of me. I take a few long, deep breaths, and I ask Him to be my peace. It's a daily thing for me.

Peace matters. We have to stop there and camp there and be there today. I don't know what you need to do, whether it's just pause and breathe for a minute with your eyes closed or have a full out lay-on-your-face moment with God. But I know that the need for peace is real.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.
JOHN 14:27

Jesus left peace for us. And according to this verse, peace fights against two things.

What are the two things?

- 1.
- 2.

Is there a situation in your life where your heart is troubled? Describe it.

What are you afraid of right now?

During this whole study, you're going to need to come back here, to a place of peace. It's not about your outside circumstances, though maybe you do need a picnic at sunset. It's actually about your heart. It's about being in a trusting position, a restful position, even when your world seems to be spinning. We will get to everything else—the beauty, the perseverance, the road to the hope that is an anchor—but first, peace.

Write out a prayer asking God to be your peace, to bring you peace, and thank Him that, as it says in Romans 5, we can have peace with God through Jesus Christ.

DAY 2



REJOICE

Let's start where we left off: peace. Ask God to be your peace today and to give your mind peace as you study.

I get lost a lot. My friends know that about me. Pretty much everybody knows that about me. Give me verbal directions and you might as well be speaking a foreign language. I'm just not going to get where you want me to go. I'm really sorry.

Write the directions down? Now we're on the right track. Now we're getting somewhere. (Now I can't come up with a sentence that isn't a bit travel punny.)

As a result, I'm always thinking about how to give directions. I notice lots of landmarks and restaurants, so that when you want me to tell you how to get somewhere, I can give you far more information than you actually want. Because I think you can't over-share when it comes to helping someone get where they want to go.

That's us this session. We are on a road to hope, a path to find the lovely, a journey to believe that the marathon of life is always worth it. And I'm probably giving you way more directions than you want. But it's because I believe in the destination, and even more than that, I believe in the opportunity to get there. The twists and turns and dips in the road are just as important as the finish line.

Let's pop back to Romans 5, where we left off yesterday.

READ ROMANS 5:1-5.

Verse 2 says we rejoice or boast in something. What?

Look in Romans 4 for the faith of Abraham. How did Abraham rejoice in hope?

Why does hope matter?

(We're going to come back to hope later. But the path to hope is a little different than we may realize.)

ROMANS 5:3 mentions a totally different reason to rejoice. Fill in the blank:

"Not only so, but we also rejoice in our _____ ..." (ESV).

I'm not great at rejoicing in my sufferings. I'm not great at looking at a hard or painful situation, whether it was in my control or not, and being grateful for the pain. I don't like pain. I actually tend to run from it.

I'm a quitter. It's a bit in my nature that when things get hard or confusing or smell anything like suffering, I want out. Whether it's a relationship that has tension or a season of hurt or just a hard time that I want to quit or check out of, it often feels easier to do that than to rejoice or glory in my sufferings.

Write a few sentences describing the ways you are suffering right now.

Let's discuss the word used to describe how we are supposed to handle the sufferings we face. It isn't *rejoice*, like throw a party about it and just smile your way through. Both here in verse 3 and back in verse 2, where we're told to rejoice in hope, use the same original Greek word. Looking at the definition of the transliteration below, underline the parts that stand out to you.

kauchaomai (verb) — to glory, boast, or rejoice;¹ properly, living with "head up high," i.e. *boasting* from a particular *vantage point* by having the *right base of operation* to deal *successfully* with a matter; likely comes from the root, *auχēn* ("neck"), i.e. what holds the head up high (upright); figuratively, it refers to living with *God-given confidence*.²

So how are we to respond when there is suffering in our lives?

Every situation looks different depending on your viewpoint. You know that. You know that you have to look closely at grilled chicken to make sure it is done; you don't make that call from across the kitchen. You know that a finish line looks tiny and far away until you're standing on it. You know that a dress looks different in your own mirror than it does when you're seeing it under dressing room lights. Your view matters.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

JOHN 10:10

Take a minute and remember that you have an Enemy and he is always creeping around trying to distort your view, trying to have you see your hurts and pains and sufferings through a lens of disappointment and frustration with God. He is always (Do you hear me? *always*) trying to steal, kill, and destroy your view.

The last thing he wants you to do on this journey is lift your head and look ahead. He wants you looking at your feet, weighed down and discouraged, lost and alone. Whether any of that is true or not, he wants you to feel it.

That's different from what God tells us to do. What the Bible is saying here is that we hold our heads up high in suffering. Not that we aren't allowed to feel or hurt, but that through it, we stand tall.

I was at a campground in Middle Tennessee. Looking for a little escape for my mind and a little exercise for my body, I asked one of the counselors to suggest a good walk. He pointed me to the road. "There's a major hill, and when you think you've reached the top, it curves left and the hill actually keeps going."

Sounds miserable, I thought.

"Sounds great!" I said.

I headed out on the walk and sure enough, the curving hill was legit and I was struggling. I was looking at my feet, resting my hands on my knees as I tried to push myself

up the hill. My back was killing me and my thighs were throbbing in that way that isn't like "we're getting stronger" but more like "we're breaking." I stopped for a minute, stood up straight, and stretched. I looked around, maybe for the first time in the thirty minutes I had been on the road.

The green in the trees was incredible. The flowers were just starting to bloom and right there, on the edge of the road, were petals in every shade of pink. I looked up the hill and all the way there were patches of flowers.

I decided to finish the hill differently. I didn't quit. I didn't run from the suffering back down the hill to camp. I just stood up as I continued to walk. It might not have been as fast and determined, but the view was way better. I stood tall, back straight, and I looked straight ahead as I memorized the flowers and took notice of the variety of greens, because colors blow my mind. (Like seriously. The amount of greens in the woods is unreal to me.)

Every bit of the pain changed when my view changed. It didn't go away; it just wasn't my focus anymore. Instead of focusing on my suffering, I began to focus on the beautiful things God had put in my path.

READ EPHESIANS 6:10-19.

Verses 13-14 say that after you have done everything to prepare, what do you do next?

Right. You "stand firm" (v. 14). I picture this as the same type of head-held-high posture, the one that can see the flowers and see the greens even when the hill is still only halfway climbed. But I also picture someone like my friend, Bianca.

When Bianca walks into a room, she carries herself with confidence, not because she thinks she's the bee's knees (spoiler alert: she is), but because she knows God made her on purpose. As a result, no matter what life throws her—and it has thrown her some curve balls—she's surefooted on the gospel. You can hear it in Bianca's conversations; even if it's through tears, you can hear that she doesn't give up on God. She sees things differently than I do, I think, because of this. She's quick to see the good in the situation because her head doesn't hang down and stare at the dirt (not literally,

but also literally). Bianca is an example to me of what it means, even in suffering, to continue to stand.

When is it difficult for you to stand boldly?

How would your life be different today if you stood with your head high in your suffering?

What loveliness might you see if you stood up tall and confident in God?

There's another reason we glory in our sufferings—because of what it produces.

READ ROMANS 5:3-5 AGAIN.

Fill in the chart below. If you get stuck, check the intro to this session.



You're probably not going to like me saying this, but I have to tell you the truth. Suffering matters. Suffering has a purpose. Whether it's suffering in relationships, in health, in your profession, or in your spiritual walk, it all has a purpose. It's all shaping who you are and who you become. You need to hold your head high and look around when you're feeling weighed down—because what comes next is so worth it.

Perseverance. Character. Hope. And a way better view.

1. "Kauchaomai," Blue Letter Bible, Strong's 2744. Available online at blueletterbible.org.

2. "Kauxdomai," Helps Word Studies, copyright © 1987, 2011 by Helps Ministries, Inc. Available online from Bible Hub at biblehub.com.

DAY 3



DO NOT QUIT

I believe in perseverance. Don't hear me wrong, it's not because I am good at it. I just believe in it because I see it working in my life.

I went to Ecuador in January with Compassion International. I loved every minute of the trip except for the part where all my high school Spanish—from, you know, twenty years ago—was gone from my mind. Words I *know* I used to know could not be recalled and phrases I was supposed to understand quickly took time as I dissected them in my brain.

When I arrived home, I immediately downloaded an app that helps you learn other languages for free. Spanish was going to return to my life, and the front of my mind, so as I wrote letters to my sponsor kids and they wrote me back, it would all make sense. And, if I'm ever lucky enough to return to Ecuador, I wanted to be ready to communicate. (Also, I will bring altitude medicine because good gravy that country is high in the sky.)

I was committed to that app for a month. I practiced every night before going to bed. And then, in typical Annie fashion, I quit. I don't know the day I quit. I don't know exactly what knocked me off the learning Spanish wagon, but I fell off and I fell off hard.

I wish I would not have quit. Months later, I would be way closer to speaking the language and I wouldn't feel the guilt and shame I feel right now telling you the story. (I'm going to pick back up with the app tonight, I promise.) Quitting very rarely pans out for me—it always seems to be the easy way out that costs me more in the long run.

I'm no lawyer, and I'm certainly no expert on it, but I want to build a case for you this week, a case for not quitting. You know you need peace. You saw yesterday the posture we're to take in our sufferings—like Abraham, believing beyond hope, standing tall in our hearts, standing on the truth of the gospel, and not giving up.

How different would your life be if you made a commitment to persevere—to not quit?

From Romans 5:3-5, fill out these blanks again ...



Suffering produces perseverance, and perseverance produces character, and there, after your character is built? Hope.

Why do you think that is? What about suffering gives you the ability to persevere—to hold on and keep going?

There isn't enough space or a font big enough to tell you how much I think of perseverance and all the reasons we have to make it a solid pillar of our life. The longer I live this life of faith in Christ, the more I realize perseverance—choosing it, living in it, trusting what it does in your life—is a game-changer.

Next to kindness, courage, and generosity—add perseverance.

²Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

JAMES 1:2-4

According to James, what's the first thing we are to consider joy?

Trials. Gross. Not fun. Blech. Why does the Bible always seem to start with “get pumped about the hard stuff”? It's the pits, huh? Not exactly a fun truth to deal with.

According to verse 3, what does the testing of your faith develop?

Write James 1:4 here.

What do you gain when perseverance finishes its work?

- 1.
- 2.

This verse also says that when perseverance finishes its work, you'll lack _____ . Do you think your view of lacking nothing and God's view of you lacking nothing are the same? Explain.

How do you think perseverance is able to accomplish all of this? Why does it make that big a difference in your life?

What do you think it means that you will lack nothing, and what does that look like in real life?

Describe a time when your faith was tested, and after it was over you knew your relationship with God was deeper—when you knew you were more mature as a result of the testing.

And it's this perseverance that produces character in you.

Character.

Proven. Tried. The human that you are and that you become every day. The part of you that you hope kicks in when decisions need to be made.

It's important to draw a distinction between character and personality. Your personality is who you are, for sure—it's a combination of your likes and dislikes and strengths and weaknesses and experiences. It's the *you* the world sees. Where you are on the introvert/extrovert scale is a great example of your personality.

Your character, on the other hand, is deeper than that—it's the part of you that makes the decision. Your personality is the part that decides how to act out the decision. It's your character that can grow or shrink, be full of light or dark, strengthen or weaken—whereas your personality just displays what has happened in your character.

The word *character* is only used seven times in the Bible, in six passages—all in the New Testament. In the original Greek, *character* is translated *dokimē*.

dokimē (noun) — experience; tried character; proof;¹
(1) in an active sense, a proving, trial: through affliction (see 2 Cor. 8:2)
(2) approvedness, tried character (see Rom. 5:4; 2 Cor. 2:9; Phil. 2:22);
exhibited in the contribution (see 2 Cor. 9:13)²

Let's look at each of the passages mentioning *dokimē* and see what we can learn about what it means to let perseverance grow character in us.

Look up the following verses and fill in the blanks. (I used the NIV translation to look these up, so using that version will make your life a lot easier as far as getting the exact words.)

ROMANS 5:4

"... perseverance, _____; and _____, hope."

2 CORINTHIANS 2:9

"Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would _____
_____ and be obedient in everything."

2 CORINTHIANS 8:2

"In the midst of a very severe _____, their overflowing joy
and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity."

2 CORINTHIANS 9:13

"Because of the service by which you have _____ yourselves,
others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your
confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing
with them and with everyone else."

2 CORINTHIANS 13:3

"... since you are demanding _____ that Christ is speaking through
me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you."

PHILIPPIANS 2:22

“But you know that Timothy has _____ himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.”

What are your observations after looking at the uses of the word and at the original Greek for character in Romans 5? How else is it used?

*Why do you think versions of the word prove are used repeatedly?
How does our suffering prove who we really are?*

So what does that say to you about the need for suffering?

It’s why we can’t quit. Because it proves something every time we hold on. It shows the world something beautiful—they see it in you, in your character, in the kind of human you are.

And then? When your sufferings have produced perseverance and that has produced character? You’re on the road to hope.

1. “*Dokimē*,” Blue Letter Bible, Strong’s 1382. Available online at blueletterbible.org.
2. “*Dokimos*,” *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*, Strong’s NT 1382. Copyright © 2002, 2003, 2006, 2011 by Biblesoft, Inc. Available from Bible Hub online at biblehub.com.

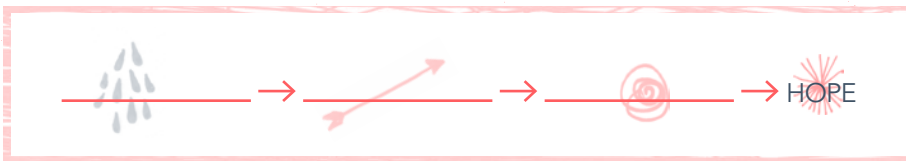
DAY 4



ALL FOR HOPE

I think we all want to have hope. I mean, we hang the word in our homes and write it in permanent ink on our skin. We tell other people to have it, we want it, but what you and I have both learned in the last few days is that hope isn't a cheap word.

What builds hope according to Romans 5:3-5?



So hope is the prize. Hope is the end goal. Hope is what grows when the garden of grief and suffering is tended.

That changes the meaning of the word *hope* to me. That takes hope from this average word that people say all the time to a thing I want to treasure in my heart—something that when I feel it, I want to notice it. Because hope means that I survived, I persevered, and my character is stronger because of it.

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.
HEBREWS 6:19a

What is hope, according to this verse?

Describe what an anchor does.

This word *anchor* (*agkyra*) is only used in the Bible in one other story.

READ ACTS 27:27-42.

In my NIV Bible, this section of Scripture is labeled “Paul’s Shipwreck.”

What words come to mind when you think of a shipwreck?

The word anchor (or anchors) is used three times in Acts 27.

Which verses?

1.

2.

3.

What this story and these three mentions show us is that an anchor is needed when the storms seem too rough and when the ship needs to stay in place. I like this story (in a I-never-want-to-be-in-that-situation kind of way), because I like how much detail we receive from the author, Luke. I like how strategically the anchors are dropped. And I like how Paul reassured them that they would all be safe. Without the anchors, I’m not sure that would have been true.

The actual definition of *anchor*, from *Merriam-Webster*, is “a device usually of metal attached to a ship or boat by a cable and cast overboard to hold it in a particular place; something that serves to hold an object firmly.”¹

When does a boat use its anchor?

So if hope is an anchor, it’s what we use in our lives to stay put, to be secured, even when the waters of life are rolling around us. One thing we have to remember is to place our hope in the right things. We drop metaphorical anchors all the time, right? But only when we drop our anchors or place our hope in God and His promises, are we truly secure when life gets crazy.

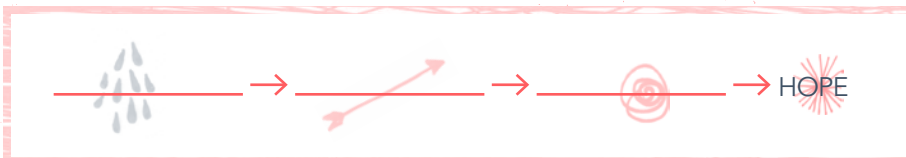
How have you seen that to be true in your life?

Where in your life do you need an anchor right now?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 13:13.

What three things remain?

If hope remains, what other three building blocks of hope must remain as well? This fill-in-the-blank should help.



Hope is all over the Bible. It's a theme for David all through the Psalms to Paul's writings in the New Testament. Pull out your Bible and flip to the concordance or use an online Bible or other online Bible sources to search the word "hope."

Write two verses you find that use the word "hope," maybe one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament.

Verse 1:

Verse 2:

Why did you pick those two?

How do these verses also remind you of hope as an anchor for your life? How do these verses apply to your life or current situation?

Back to our original question: What's the role of beauty in perseverance? If we live Romans 5, then we have hearts that rejoice, even on the tough days. And as we rejoice, we learn to keep going, to fight against the urge to give up when it feels too hard. And that builds something in us—an ability to hold our heads high as we're persevering. It grows our character. And then as we stand tall, our eyes are looking outward, able to see the lovely things, able to hope.

List five lovely things about your day so far.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

In what areas of your life do you need hope? Write a prayer below asking God to give you eyes to see light and joy around you.



1. "Anchor," *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2005), 46.