



## MAIN SCRIPTURES

- II Peter 1:5-7
- Genesis 12-21
- Genesis 28-29

## OBJECT LESSON: PERSEVERANCE

- The Basics
- Discarding Perseverance
- Incorporating Perseverance

## FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES:

“...to those who have obtained the same precious **faith** as we have obtained, and obtained it in the same way, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:” 2 Peter 1:1

“**For this very reason you are required to do your part.** Make every effort to add to your faith virtue; add to virtue, knowledge; add to knowledge, self-control; **add to self-control, perseverance;** add to perseverance, godliness; add to godliness, brotherly affection; and add to brotherly affection, love.” 2 Peter 1:5-7

“**If these things are yours** and abound... and...**if you do these things...**” 2 Peter 1:8, 10

“**He who lacks these things** is nearsighted; he is approaching total blindness. It’s as if he has forgotten he’s been completely cleansed from his old sins.” 2 Peter 1:9

“Just as, “**The dog returns to his own vomit,**” and “the pig that has washed returns to wallowing in the mud.”” 2 Peter 2:22

## **INTRODUCTION: Object Lesson: Perseverance**

*Faith is the foundation of the Christian life and it is a gift from God that came to you by way of His grace. And you must practice your faith if you wish to gain continual access to that grace. To do so, add these things to your faith in this precise sequence. First add virtue. That means to seek the Lord's voice for what is right in every matter and don't even attempt to seek new information or take any action before you are confident you're in alignment with God's will.*

*Once you are certain about God's directions, to truly demonstrate wisdom, begin by gathering any missing information before you act. It is only after you have the necessary knowledge to proceed judiciously that you should take any decisive action. It requires excellent self-control to both take wise action and to refrain from acting when God tells you to be still. It is also critical to recognize that challenges and temptations surely await; they will test you, misdirect you, and humble you. Nevertheless, one must stay the course to fulfill God's desires, and that takes perseverance. By the way, unless you humbly come to the conclusion that you made an error that must be corrected before you continue, persist until you succeed; a display of permanent self-control is part of the process. However, if you do discover you've made an error, it is prudent to retrace your steps to find your mistake. Begin by*

*reconsidering if you've misinterpreted God's original instructions and proceed from there.*

*This entire process is meant to be pursued in every area of life. Doing so is the very essence of godliness. No doubt, your imperfections will be exposed as you progress, but godliness is not characterized by perfection. Godliness, instead, is the authentic grace-empowered pursuit of perfection, not the achievement of perfection. It's hallmark is a never-ending desire to pursue God's will in all things, and to make the appropriate corrections along the way.*

*And that is how a disciple of Christ becomes an effective minister of reconciliation—one who readily imparts God's grace. His relentless pursuit of godliness has crafted him into a man whose surrendered life is poured out in sacrifice for the priorities of others. He is a beacon of brotherly affection who exudes kindness, a true disciple of Christ recognized by the love he shares. He imitates the character of Christ, and that is the constant meditation of his heart—to look more and more like Christ by how he loves.*

*God is love; so, to become love is to become like Christ. Thus, to imitate God's love is the only true measure of a perfect man—the full stature of Christ. And that is the goal of discipleship. Therefore, practice diligently if you wish to experience the fullness of God's precious and exceedingly great promises, the greatest of which is the promise to partake in God's Divine Nature.*

## THE BASICS

### 1. Everything Begins with Faith

#### A. Faith Like Mine

(1) Faith: The Foundation of Everything (See: [Faith Like Mine](#))

(a) Two Faiths: From Faith to Faith

1. “I am not ashamed of the Good News of Christ; it is **the power of God for salvation** for everyone who believes, (Jew first also Greek). **In it is revealed God’s righteousness from faith to faith.** As it is written, “But the righteous shall live by faith.”” Romans 1:16-17

a) Righteousness: revealed through the gift of faith.

1) “...to those who have obtained the same precious **faith...**, in the same way, **by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:**” 2 Peter 1:1

b) Righteousness: revealed by the practice of faith!

1) “For this very reason you are required to do your part. **Make every effort to add to your faith...**” 2 Peter 1:5

(b) The gift of faith must become your practice of faith!

1. “Being therefore **justified by faith, we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ; through

whom **we also have our access by faith into this grace** in which we stand..." Romans 5:1-2

a) **Justified by Faith:**

- 1) The gift of faith came by way of God's grace.
- 2) It softened your heart to the Gospel of Salvation.
- 3) The Cross became real (believe-repent-confess).
- 4) All sins instantly forgiven; made right with God.
- 5) No longer in debt to God; now in harmony.

b) **Access by Faith:**

- 1) The practice of faith (you exercise the free gift).
- 2) How you gain continual access to God's grace.
- 3) It empowers you to live as a disciple.
- 4) Leave behind sin of your old life (new creation).
- 5) This distinguishes a disciples from a converts.

B. **Add P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E. Persistent Repetition Accelerates Character Transformation Impacting Christian Ethos.**

(1) The 7 Steps to Practice Faith ([Just Add P.R.A.C.T.I.C.E](#))

(a) Add to your faith: this order is as important as the steps!

1. **"For this very reason you are required to do your part. Make every effort to** add to your faith virtue; add to virtue, knowledge; add to knowledge, self-control; **add to self-control, perseverance;** add to perseverance, godliness; add to godliness, brotherly

affection; and add to brotherly affection, love." 2

Peter 1:5-7

a) **Faith (Ground 0):**

- 1) The foundation of the Christian life
- 2) A Gift from God that came by His grace
- 3) Practice faith to gain continual access to grace
- 4) Add these things to faith in this sequence:

b) **Virtue (Step 1):**

- 1) Moral excellence (1st) or coordinates will be off
- 2) Morality according to world is ever-changing
- 3) Virtue: whatever is morally excellent to God
- 4) To practice your faith consider:
  - a. What is right to God in this situation?
  - b. What does Yahweh think about this?
  - c. What is God's heart on this matter?

c) **Knowledge (Step 2):**

- 1) Additional information needed to act wisely
- 2) To do what is right: fill the knowledge gap
  - a. What am I missing?
  - b. What do I need to know before I act?

d) **Self-control (Step 3):** to act wisely (not by your first impulses and desires).

- 1) Wisdom: godly application of knowledge, instruction and understanding.
- 2) Once you know what God wants you to do and you have filled in the knowledge gap, you must have the self-control to do it.
- 3) Two arms of Self-Control:
  - a. **One:** take action.
  - b. **Two:** to constantly guard that your actions stay in alignment with virtue and knowledge.
- 4) Two components of Self-Control:
  - a. **Do:** once you know what to do and how to do it, you must do it.
  - b. **Do not do:** you must know what not to do and then don't do those things.
- 5) A life of self-control:
  - a. Tell yourself no when yes is so tempting.
  - b. Tell yourself yes when no is more convenient.
- e) **Perseverance (Step 4):** Doing what is right, no matter how hard, how long, or what the cost!
  - 1) **Suffering:** challenges and difficulties are part of the process. (Y'shua suffered, why not you?)
  - 2) No matter how long or what the challenges...
    - a. Persist in what God called you to do.

- b. Abstain from what God called you to abstain.
- 3) Perseverance is PERMANENT SELF-CONTROL.
  - a. You know what is right according to God!
  - b. You know how to do it and you do it!
  - c. You discipline yourself from straying off course, but it is still not working as planned!
  - d. The fruit is elusive; the breakthrough absent; suffering persists; and hope starts to fade...
  - e. Don't ever surrender! Don't give up!
  - f. Perseverance: permanent, relentless, never-ending self control
- f) **Godliness (Step 5):** holistic integrity!
  - 1) Characterized by the desire to be in alignment with God's in all areas, and then their pursuit...
    - a. All components of your spirit, soul and body are longing to be in complete agreement with what they were designed for by your Creator.
    - b. It does not mean you have perfected your quest, but that you perfected your pursuit!
    - c. The authentic grace-empowered pursuit of perfection, not the achievement of perfection.
- g) **Brotherly Affection (Step 6):**



- 1) Be kind to and prefer others and their needs over yourself and your own needs!
  - a. Christian Alert: It's never been about you!
  - b. Christ did everything for us, not for Himself.
  - c. That is the model of how we should live.
  - d. No greater love is there than to lay down our lives for others.

h) **Love (Step 7):**

- 1) God is love.
- 2) No fear in love; perfect love casts out fear.
- 3) Love is the bond of perfection.
- 4) We can experience God in us.
- 5) We can have the mind of God (think like God).
- 6) We can love like God. *"We love Him because He first loved us."*
- 7) Love is the Divine Nature; goal of discipleship.
- 8) To love like God is to become like Christ!

**C. The 1 Thing**

(1) Life-Altering Critical Negligence ([The 1 Thing](#))

(a) One thing can shipwreck everything!

1. **"He who lacks these things** is nearsighted; he is approaching total blindness. It's as if he's forgotten

he's been completely cleansed from his old sins." 2

Peter 1:9

- a) Lacks what? Practice adding to your Faith: Virtue...
- b) Cause of Blindness: living *in the past* prevents you from seeing *in the future*!
  - 1) Forgetting you've ALREADY been cleansed...
    - a. You will not pursue... adding to your faith...  
(You will instead pursue your past sins!)
    - b. Fullness of God's promises becomes elusive.
    - c. Participation in Divine Nature—impossible!
- c) Why is forgetting so devastating?
  - 1) He who holds onto his past is bound to repeat it
    - a. ***"The dog returns to his own vomit,"*** and *"the pig that has washed returns to wallowing in the mud."* 2 Peter 2:22
- d) How then should you live?
  - 1) ***"For we have spent enough of our past time doing the desire of the Gentiles, and having walked in lewdness, lusts, drunken binges, orgies, carousings, and abominable idolatries."***  
1 Peter 4:3
  - 2) *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every*

*weight, and **sin which clings so closely**, and **let us run with endurance the race that is set before us**,*” Hebrews 12:1 ESV

- a. You’ve invested too much into your former pagan life. Don’t invest one more resource!
- b. Don’t even go near your past sins!
- c. Leave the past in the past and pursue becoming more like Christ every day!

(b) That is why YOU are being REMINDED!

1. “Therefore **I will not be negligent to remind you of these things**, though **you know them** and are **established in the present truth**. I think it right, as long as I am in this tent, **to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that the putting off of my tent comes swiftly**, even as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. Yes, **I will make every effort that you may always be able to remember these things** even after my departure.” 2 Peter 1:12-15 WEBUS

- a) What Peter has to say is so important that he uses his last words before his execution to remind his students, and us, of the these truths...
- b) Not new information; already fully established...

## DISCARDING PERSEVERANCE

### 2. When Self-Control fades...

#### A. Object Lesson: Discarding Perseverance

(1) The Backstory: God's plan!

(a) The Initial Promise (Genesis 12:1-9)

1. The Lord said to Abram:

- a) Leave your country, your family, and your father's house. Go to a land that I will show you.
- b) I'll make you a great nation; I'll bless you, make your name great, and you shall be a blessing.
- c) *"I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* Genesis 12:3

2. Abram departed as the Lord directed...

- a) He was 75 years old when he departed Haran.
- b) He took Sarai his wife, Lot his brother's son, all their possessions, and the servants they acquired in Haran, and they departed for the land Canaan.

3. They came to Canaan (filled with Canaanites).

- a) The Lord appeared to Abram and said, *"To your descendants I will give this land."*
- b) Abram built an altar and then moved from there to pitch his tent in Bethel.

c) He built another altar and *“called on the name of Yahweh.”* Genesis 12:8

(b) After Lot separated from him... (Genesis 13:14-18)

1. The Lord said to Abram:

a) Look in every direction; all the land you see I give to you and your descendants forever.

b) I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; if a man could number the dust, then your descendants could also be numbered.

c) Arise, walk in the land through its length and width, for I give it to you.

d) Abram moved his tent and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built another altar there to the Lord.

(c) God’s Covenant with Abram (Genesis 15:1-6)

1. The Lord came to Abram in a vision...

a) Do not be afraid, I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward.

b) Abram said, *“Yahweh, what will You give me, seeing I go childless; You’ve given me no heir of my own, so a servant born in my house is my heir!”*

- c) The Lord corrected him; *“This servant shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.”*
2. Then, Yahweh brought him outside and said...
    - a) *“Look toward heaven and count the stars if you are able to number them. So shall be the number of your descendants.”* Genesis 15:5
    - b) *“Abram believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”* Genesis 15:6
- (2) Discarding perseverance: to give up on the promise! **When you are unwilling to stick with God’s plan when it gets too hard, takes too long, or cost too much.**
- (a) Abram’s wife Sarai had still borne him no children ten years after the promise. (Genesis 16:1-16)
    1. Sarai had **an Egyptian** maidservant named Hagar (Genesis 16:2-5)
      - a) Sarai said to Abram, *“Yahweh has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to Hagar; perhaps I shall obtain children by her.”* Gen. 16:2
      - b) Abram heeded Sarai’s voice.
      - c) Sarai took Hagar, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be another wife to him.

- 1) This was after Abram had dwelt ten years in Canaan (he is now 85 years old).
- d) Abram went in to Hagar and she conceived.
- e) After she conceived, Sarai became despised by her.
6. Sarai said to Abram, *"This wrong is your fault. I gave my servant into your bosom, and when she saw that she conceived, she despised me. May Yahweh judge between me and you."* Genesis 16:5
2. Abram reacted to Sarai's accusation...
  1. Your maid is under your authority; do whatever you please with her.
  2. So, Sarai dealt harshly with Hagar and she fled.
3. Yahweh's Angel finds Hagar and ministers to her...
  - a) Angel: *"Where have you come from and where are you going?"*
  - b) Hagar: *"I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."*
  - c) Angel: *"Return to your mistress and submit yourself under her hand."*
  - d) Angel: *"I will multiply your descendants exceedingly; they shall be too numerous to be countable."*

e) Angel: *“Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son. You shall call his name **Ishmael**, Because the Lord has heard your affliction.”*

1) *“He will be like a wild donkey among men. **His hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him. He will live opposed to all of his brothers.**”* Genesis 16:12 WEBUS

4. Hagar called Yahweh who spoke to her...

a) *“You are God Who Sees”;* for she said, *“Have I not even here [in the wilderness] remained alive after seeing Him [who sees me with understanding and compassion]?”*” Genesis 16:13 AMP

b) *“Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi (Well of the Living One Who Sees Me)...”* Genesis 16:14

5. Ishmael is Born!

a) Hagar bore Abram a son.

b) Abram named him Ishmael.

c) Abram was 86 years old (11 years post promise)!

(3) The Rest of the Story (13 years later!)

(a) The Sign of the Covenant (Genesis 17:1-27)

1. Abram was 99 years old; Yahweh appeared to him...

a) Walk before Me and be blameless.

b) I will make My covenant between Me and you.



- c) I will multiply you exceedingly.
  - d) You shall be a father of many nations.
  - e) Your name is no longer Abram; **now your name is Abraham** (father of many nations).
  - f) You will be exceedingly fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.
  - g) I will establish My everlasting covenant between Me, you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, to be your God and their God!
  - h) Also, I give to you and your descendants the land in which you are now a stranger (the land of Canaan) as an everlasting possession.
  - i) You shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants throughout their generations.
2. This is My covenant which you shall keep:
- a) **Every male child shall be circumcised**; it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.
  - b) He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child who is born in your house or bought with money must be circumcised.
  - c) My covenant shall be an everlasting covenant.
  - d) The male child who is not circumcised shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.

3. Then God said to Abraham...
  - a) **Sarai your wife shall now be named Sarah.**
  - b) I will bless her and also give you a son by her.
  - c) She shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.
4. Abraham laughed...
  - a) Shall a child be born to a man 100 years old?
  - b) Shall Sarah, who is 90 years old, bear a child?
5. Abraham said to God...
  - a) **“I wish Ishmael, my firstborn, could be Your chosen one!”**
6. Yahweh said...
  - a) **“Ishmael is not the chosen one; Sarah shall bear a son to you and you’ll call him Isaac; I’ll establish My everlasting covenant with him and his descendants.”**
  - b) As for Ishmael, I’ve heard you. I’ve blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly.
  - c) He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.
  - d) But My covenant will be with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at **this set time next year.**

7. That same day Abraham circumcised his household...
  - a) Ishmael his son (13 years old).
  - b) All who were born in his house.
  - c) All who were bought with his money.
  - d) Abraham (himself) at 99 years old.
- (b) Reminded of the Promise of Isaac (Genesis 18:1-19)
  1. Then the Lord appeared to Abraham...
    - a) Three men were standing there.
    - b) He ran to meet them and bowed.
      - 1) *“My Lord, if I have found favor in Your sight, do not pass without staying with Your servant.”*
      - 2) Please wash your feet and rest yourselves.
      - 3) I will bring bread to refresh you.
      - 4) After that you may continue on.
      - 5) I just want to be of service to you.
  2. They said... *“Do as you have said.”*
    - a) Abraham hurried to Sarah and said, *“Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes.”*
    - b) Abraham took a choice and tender calf and gave it to a servant who hastened to prepare it.
    - c) He took butter, milk, and the prepared calf and set it before them. (Abraham stood by as they ate.)

3. They asked Abraham about Sarah's whereabouts...
  - a) She is, "Here, in the tent."
  - b) And **He** said, "*I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son.*" (Sarah was listening.)
4. Abraham and Sarah were well advanced in age; (Sarah well passed childbearing years.)
  - a) Sarah laughed to herself about bearing a child at such an old age.
  - b) The Lord said to Abraham...
    - 1) "*Why did Sarah laugh about bearing a child in her old age? **Is anything too hard for the Lord?***"
    - 2) "***At the appointed time** I will return **according to the time of life**, and Sarah shall have a son.*"
5. Sarah denied laughing (she was afraid).
  - a) Yahweh said, "No, but you did laugh!"
6. Abraham sent them on their way, and the Lord said...
  - a) "***Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing**, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?*
  - b) "*I chose Abraham to teach and command his children and his household after him, that they*

*keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has promised him."*

(c) Issac is Born (Genesis 21:1-7)

1. Yahweh graciously remembered Sarah and visited her **as He promised.**

a) *Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time that God had established.*

Genesis 21:1 (Abraham called his son Isaac.)

b) Abraham circumcised Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.

c) Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born. (25 years after God's initial promise!)

2. Sarah said...

a) *"God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me."*

b) *"Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age."*

(d) Ishmael will one day become a problem (Genesis 21:8-21)

1. Isaac grew and was weaned.

- a) Abraham made a great feast on the day Isaac was weaned.
  - 1) Sarah saw Ishmael, the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing.
  - 2) She told Abraham to... *“Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son Isaac.”* Genesis 21:10
  - 3) That was very displeasing to Abraham because Ishmael was also his son.
2. God assured Abraham...
  - a) Do not let the situation with Ishmael or his mother Hagar your bondwoman displease you.
  - b) ***Do whatever Sarah suggests; listen to her, for in Isaac your seed shall be called.*** Genesis 21:12
    - 1) I will also make a nation of Ishmael because he too is your seed.
    - 2) Ironically: doing what Sarah originally suggested with Hagar was a clear error!
3. Abraham rose early in the morning...
  - a) Took bread and a skin of water.
  - b) Put it on Hagar’s shoulder.

- c) Gave Ishmael to Hagar and sent her away.
4. Hagar departed and wandered in the Wilderness.
- a) When the skin of water was empty she placed Ishmael under a shrub.
  - b) She sat at a distance from him because she did not want to watch him die from thirst.
  - c) She wept aloud and God heard Ishmael's voice.
5. The angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, *"What ails you, Hagar?"* Genesis 21:17
- a) Fear not; God has heard Ishmael's voice.
  - b) Arise, lift up Ishmael and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation.
  - c) Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well.
  - d) She filled the skin with water and gave Ishmael a drink.
6. God was with Ishmael...
- a) He grew and dwelt in the wilderness of Paran.
  - b) He became an archer.
  - c) **Hagar took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.**
  - d) Another unholy union!
    - 1) Hagar was Egyptian and now her son Ishmael had married an Egyptian woman!

## INCORPORATING PERSEVERANCE

### 3. Adding perseverance to self-control

#### A. What does it mean to add perseverance to self-control?

(1) Permanent Self-Control: to do what is right, no matter how hard, how long, or what the cost!

(a) Add to your faith:

1. “For this very reason you are required to **do your part. Make every effort to** add to your faith virtue; add to virtue, knowledge; add to knowledge, self-control; **add to self-control, perseverance;** add to perseverance, godliness; add to godliness, brotherly affection; and add to brotherly affection, love.” 2

Peter 1:5-7

2. The order is as important as the steps: **add to self-control, perseverance...**

a) **Self-control (Step 3):** to act wisely (not by your first impulses and desires).

1) Wisdom: godly application of knowledge, instruction and understanding.

2) Once you know what God wants you to do and how, have the self-control to do it.

3) Guard that your actions to stay in alignment with virtue and knowledge.



- 4) Know when self-control means don't.
- b) **Perseverance (Step 4):** Doing what is right, no matter how hard, how long, or the cost!
  - 1) **Suffering:** challenges and difficulties are part of the process. Y'shua suffered...
    - 2) No matter how long or what the challenges...
      - a. Persist in what God called you to do.
      - b. Abstain from what God called you to abstain.
    - 3) PERMANENT SELF-CONTROL.
      - a. You've followed the steps, but not working as planned! Suffering persists; hope fades...
      - b. It's a test; don't give up! Relentless, never-ending self-control.
      - c. Be humble enough to **check your work!**
    - 4) **From our Introduction:** *It is also critical to recognize that challenges and temptations surely await; they will test you, misdirect you, and humble you. Nevertheless, one must stay the course to fulfill God's desires, and that takes perseverance. By the way, unless you humbly come to the conclusion that you made an error that must be corrected before you continue, persist until you succeed; a display of*

*permanent self-control is part of the process. However, if you do discover you've made an error, it is prudent to retrace your steps to find your mistake. Begin by reconsidering if you've misinterpreted God's original instructions and proceed from there. Ask...*

- a. Is this God's timing?
- b. Am I being tested?
- c. Have I made an error?

(2) Disciple-ship is Discipline-ship

(a) Whom the Lord loves, He disciplines!

1. "You have forgotten the exhortation which reasons with you as with children, **"My son, don't take lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by him; for whom the Lord loves, he disciplines, and chastises every son whom he receives."** It is for discipline that you endure [persevere]. God deals with you as with children, for what son is there whom his father doesn't discipline? **But if you are without discipline, of which all have been made partakers, then you are illegitimate, and not children.** Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we paid them respect. Shall

we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? **For they indeed for a few days disciplined us as seemed good to them, but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.**

All chastening seems for the present to be not joyous but grievous; **yet afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.**" Hebrews 12:5-11 WEBUS

(b) Recognize that testing, difficulties, and challenges are necessary in the discipleship process.

1. "Not only this, but we also **rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces perseverance; and perseverance, proven character;** and proven character, hope; and hope doesn't disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." Romans 5:3-5 WEBUS

(c) Not even the Lord of Glory was made perfect—except by persevering through suffering!

1. "For it became him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in bringing many children to glory, **to make the author of their**

**salvation perfect through sufferings.” Hebrews 2:10**

WEBUS

2. “though he was a Son, **yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered. Having been made perfect,** he became to all of those who obey him the author of eternal salvation,” Hebrews 5:8-9 WEBUS

## **B. Object Lesson: Perseverance**

- (1) The Backstory: Isaac instructs and then sends Jacob to find his wife. (Genesis 28:1-22)
  - (a) Don’t take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. (Genesis 28:1-5)
    1. Go to your grandfather’s house (Bethuel the Syrian) (your mother Rebekah’s father); and take as a wife one of the daughters of your uncle Laban (your mother’s brother).
    2. Do so and God will...
      - a) Bless you and make you fruitful and multiply.
      - b) Give the blessing of Abraham to you and your descendants.
      - c) Let you inherit the land which He promised to Abraham.
  - (b) Meanwhile Esau, Jacob’s twin brother, marries Mahalath. (Genesis 28:6-9)

1. Esau witnessed that...
  - a) The daughters of Canaan did not please his father.
  - b) His father Isaac blessed his brother Jacob and sent him away from Canaan to find a wife.
  - c) Jacob had departed to obey his father and mother.
2. So Esau attempted to also satisfy his father's desire...
  - a) He went to his uncle Ishmael (Isaac's brother and Abraham's first son) and took his daughter Mahalath as his wife (adding to his current wives).
  - b) The Unholy Alliance:
    - 1) Esau, who lost his firstborn status to his brother Jacob, married Ishmael's daughter.
    - 2) Ishmael was his uncle who lost his firstborn status to his brother Isaac.
    - 3) Even though Mahalath (the daughter of Ishmael) was "not from Canaan," Hagar had previously taken a wife for Ishmael from Egypt.
    - 4) So, it is likely that Mahalath's mother was Egyptian, and we know that her father Ishmael also had an Egyptian mother!
  - (c) Jacob's Vow (Genesis 28:10-22)

1. On his journey to find a wife, Jacob stops at night to rest. He lay down to sleep with his head on a stone and had a famous dream...
  - a) A ladder extended from the earth and reached to heaven; on it the angels of God were ascending and descending.
  - b) The Lord stood above it and said: *"I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac..."*
    - 1) The land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.
    - 2) *"Your descendants shall be as numerous as the dust of the earth and shall spread abroad in every direction."* Genesis 28:14a
    - 3) *"In you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* Genesis 28:14b
    - 4) I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and then I will bring you back to this land.
    - 5) **I will not leave you until I have done all that I have spoken to you.**
2. Jacob awoke and said with reverence...
  - a) "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it."

b) “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”

3. Early that morning...

a) He took the stone on which he had laid his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on it.

b) He called that place (previously the city of Luz) **Bethel** (the House of God).

4. Then **Jacob made a vow to God...** Genesis 28:20-22

a) *“If You will be with me and **give me what I am seeking at my destination**, provide for all my needs, and bring me back to my father’s house in peace, then Yahweh shall be my God.”*

b) *“And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be symbolic of God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”*

(2) The Story: persevere no matter how hard, how long, or what the cost! (Genesis 29:1-30)

(a) Jacob meets Rachel (Genesis 29:1-14)

1. Jacob went on the journey to find his wife as instructed by his Father Isaac.

a) He came to a well used to water the flocks; it was covered with a large stone.

- b) When the flocks gathered, they would roll the stone away, water the sheep, and then replace it over the mouth of the well.
  - c) Jacob interacts with those at the well: He discovers they are from Haran, they indeed know his uncle Laban, and that he is doing well.
2. At that moment his cousin Rachel, Laban's daughter, is making her way from a distance with their sheep.
- a) It was the middle of the day, not yet time to water the cattle.
  - b) Jacob tells them to water and then feed the sheep.
  - c) However, they must wait until all the sheep are gathered and someone moves the stone.
  - d) While Jacob was still speaking, Rachel arrives with her father's sheep.
  - e) The moment Jacob saw Rachel he rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of his uncle Laban.
  - f) **Jacob boldly kissed Rachel, lifted his voice in praise, and wept with joy.**
    - 1) *"If You will be with me and give me what I am seeking at my destination..."*



- g) He told Rachel that he was her cousin, her aunt Rebekah's son.
3. Rachel immediately ran and told her father.
- a) When Laban heard about his nephew Jacob, he ran to meet him, embraced him, kissed him, and brought him to his house.
  - b) Jacob told Laban everything—exactly why his father Isaac sent him.
  - c) Laban affirmed: *“Surely you are my bone and my flesh.”* (Jacob stayed with Laban for a month.)
- (b) Perseverance: Jacob Marries Leah and then Rachel (Genesis 29:15-30)
1. Jacob was a huge help with the flocks, so in time Laban approached him with a question...
- a) You're my nephew and you should be paid for serving me. What should your wages be?
  - b) Laban had two daughters: the elder was Leah and the younger was Rachel.
  - c) Leah's eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance.
2. Jacob was already in love with Rachel, so he made this offer:

- a) *“I will serve you seven years for the privilege of marrying your younger daughter Rachel.”* Genesis 29:18
- b) Laban agreed: it would be better to give her to Jacob than another man; he invited Jacob to stay.
3. Jacob served Laban 7 years to earn Rachel’s hand.
  - a) Those years **seemed like only a few days to him** because of his love for her. Gen. 29:20
  - b) Then Jacob said to Laban, *“Give me Rachel as my wife, for my seven years are complete. I want to consummate my marriage with her.”* Gen. 29:21
4. Laban’s Deception
  - a) Laban organized a wedding feast.
  - b) That evening Laban took his **elder daughter** Leah and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to *“consummate the marriage.”*
  - c) Laban gave his maid Zilpah to Leah as her maid.
  - d) In the morning Jacob realized it was Leah, not Rachel. *(Consummation obviously doesn’t include seeing one another, nor speaking).* Genesis 29:25
5. Jacob is not happy with Laban. (Genesis 29:25-27)

- a) *“What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?”*
  - b) Laban explains that the customs of his country require that the firstborn daughter be given in marriage before the younger ones.
    - 1) More Irony: Jacob had stolen the firstborn status of his brother Esau! (See: Genesis 25:29-34)
  - c) He offers for Jacob to serve him **for an additional seven years** and at that time he can have Rachel as a wife!
6. Jacob loved Rachel so much that he was **willing to persevere** and agreed to work for seven additional years. (Genesis 29:28-30)
- a) Laban then gives his daughter Rachel to Jacob as his wife.
  - b) He also gave his maid Bilhah to Rachel as a maid.
  - c) Jacob consummates his marriage with Rachel, and he loved her more than Leah.
7. After that he served with Laban still another 7 years.
- a) (Genesis 29:31-35) Leah bore four sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah.

### **C. Conclusion:**

(1) Discard or Incorporate Perseverance

(a) **Discarding Perseverance: (when Self-Control fades)** not willing to stick with God's plan when it gets too hard, takes too long, or cost too much

1. Abram was promised an heir through his wife Sarai when he was 75 years old.
2. Ishmael was born to Hagar and Abraham 11 years later when he was 86 years old.
3. Self-Control faded 14 years before Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 years old.

(b) **Perseverance incorporated with Self-Control:** Jacob endured because of his love for Rachel. It was hard, took too long and cost him 7 additional years of his life!

1. Jacob worked for Laban for 7 years and got Leah instead of Rachel as his wife.
2. Jacob worked for Laban for an additional 7 years and got Rachel as his wife.

(2) Outcome of discarding Perseverance...

(a) *"Ishmael will be like a wild donkey among men. **His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him. He will live opposed to all of his brothers.**"* Genesis 16:12

1. Ishmael was the son of an Egyptian mother Hagar.

2. Hagar took a wife for Ishmael from the land of Egypt.
3. Jacob's brother Esau went to his uncle Ishmael (Isaac's brother/Abraham's firstborn) and took his daughter Mahalath as his wife.
  - a) Mahalath was the daughter of Ishmael (a half Egyptian father) and an Egyptian mother!
4. The Unholy Alliance:
  - a) Esau who lost his firstborn status to his brother Jacob (Genesis 25:29-34), married his uncle Ishmael's daughter. Esau lost his firstborn status to his brother Isaac (Genesis 28:8-9).
  - b) This marriage is significant as it represents Esau's continued departure from the covenantal line.
5. Esau's Descendants are the Edomites
  - a) Some Jewish traditions stemming from the Talmud suggest that the descendants of Esau are the Romans.
  - b) Other interpretations suggest that the Arabs inhabiting the region of ancient Edom, modern-day Jordan, are the descendants of the Edomites.
  - c) King Herod, a ruler of Judea, was an Edomite who converted to Judaism. His father, Antipater, was a

Roman-appointed Judean official of Edomite descent.

6. The Edomites and Israelites were/are in constant conflict!
  - a) *“Ishmael will be like a wild donkey among men. **His hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him. He will live opposed to all of his brothers.**”*

## QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

### 1. Read the introduction three times.

- A. Define Perseverance.
- B. Why must perseverance be the next step after self-control in the practice of your faith?

### 2. Personal Object Lesson:

- A. Describe a time in your life when you persevered to do what was right, no matter how hard, how long, or what the cost? What was the outcome?
- B. Describe a time in your life when you quit and disregarded persevering when you should have stayed the course? What was the outcome?

- C. Describe a time in your life when you re-evaluated the situation, recognized you made a mistake, and then changed course? What was the outcome?
- D. Describe a time in your life when you should have re-evaluated the situation, recognized you made a mistake, and changed course, but did not? What was the outcome?

**3. Transformation:**

- A. What did you or will you do to correct your errors in discussion points 2B and 2D?
- B. What will you do in the future to ensure you do not repeat the same mistakes?