

## TAKING A CLOSER LOOK

*What does the Bible say?*

Disciples of Jesus are marked by their character. The Bible talks a lot about character, and it's also a common topic in our world today. What is character? If you had to sum up the essence of what God is calling us to, what would character be? Let's start by focusing on one character quality that will make a great difference in our lives: Endurance.

### The Need for Endurance

Look at what the following passages teach about the basics of endurance.

Matthew 10.22 and 24.12-13

- What did Jesus want his disciples to be prepared to endure?
- Why do you think our endurance is important to God?

Romans 5.3-5

- Explain how you see these qualities interacting with one another.
- What is hope? Why is it the final outcome?

Hebrews 6.11-12 and 10.36

- Why are the promises of God important to our character of endurance?

## THINKING IT THROUGH

*What does the Bible mean?*

### Dealing with Failure

Read Proverbs 24.16. If this man fell seven times, why does God call him righteous?

How does this verse motivate you to endure?

- In what ways had Paul “failed” in his lifetime? (see Romans 7.14-20)

Read Philippians 3.12-14

- What was Paul’s attitude towards his own failure and immaturity?
- What were Paul’s actions in response to his past?

### **The Issue of Sexual Purity**

One area where character and endurance often face their greatest test is our struggle for sexual purity. For most, this area of life is a constant battle. It can cause people to settle for less or even turn back from following Christ.

- Do you think God expects us to be perfect? Why or why not?

Read 1 Thessalonians 4.3-7

- What is God’s will for us? What does that mean for us on a practical level?
- What process does God want us committed to?

## **MAKING IT COUNT**

*How do I live what I’ve learned?*

The ultimate challenge is to follow Christ in the area of character! We all fail at times, but how we deal with that failure makes the difference. The decisions we made when facing difficult moral decisions in the past is what has shaped character of endurance in the present. And the choices we make today will be the foundation on which our tenacity in character will be built for tomorrow’s challenges!

- Describe a difficult circumstance you’ve had to endure in your lifetime.
- In what present circumstances is your endurance being formed and challenged?
- Do you foresee any circumstances in the future that you need to be prepared to endure? What are some ways you could prepare for these?
- How do you deal with failure? How can you better follow Paul’s example in Philippians 3.12-14?