

## **Suffering for Christ**

We live in a world today that wants everything to come easy. We want marriage to be easy. We want faith to be easy. We want life to be easy. If marriage gets hard, we think we must have married the wrong person. If faith gets hard, we think God must not care. If life gets hard, we are tempted to give up. Paul gives Timothy a different perspective/theology on suffering.

Suffering is a \_\_\_\_\_ part of our walk with  
Jesus Christ.

## **The Call to Persevere**

What do we do when we suffer? Do we give up? Do we pretend to be happy or that everything is ok? Do we persevere? The Apostle Paul gives three analogies in this passage that show us what needs to be present in our lives if we are going to persevere through the difficulty that we face in our lives.

### **We must persevere with....**

The \_\_\_\_\_ of a Soldier.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of an Athlete.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of a Farmer.

## **The Reward of Perseverance**

The reward for a soldier is victory. The reward for an athlete is winning. The reward for a farmer is the harvest. What is the reward for a Christian? Paul gives the answer in verse 12.

If we endure \_\_\_\_\_, we will \_\_\_\_\_ with  
Christ.

# Discussion Questions

## Getting Started

1. We all want life to be easy, but the apostle Paul teaches clearly that suffering is a part of being a follower of Christ. In your own words, why do you think that suffering is a part of being a Christian?

## Digging Deeper

2. Paul counted it a privilege to be able to share the truth of the Gospel with others and was willing to suffer for it. He knew that God would bring good out of the hard times. What are some of the benefits of suffering for Christ mentioned in the following Scriptures? Romans 5:3-10, II Corinthians 1:3-7, I Peter 4:12-19, James 1:2-4, and II Corinthians 4:17-18.
3. Read I Corinthians 9:24-27. In what ways does an athlete resemble our walk with Christ? Are there areas in your life where you are not running to win the prize? What changes need to be made so that you are making those areas of your life obedient to Christ?
4. Suffering is never without purpose. God sovereignly uses circumstances to teach powerful lessons or accomplish his will. What are some stories in the Bible that prove this statement to be true?

## Applying the Word to Life

5. Who is someone in your life that you need to share the gospel with regardless of their response? Make it a point to have a conversation with them in the next couple of weeks.
6. II Timothy 2:12 says that if we endure hardship, we will reign with Christ. So often the problems of this life keep our focus off the eternal prize. Spend some time praying in the presence of Jesus, remembering the prize we are running for. Ask God that he would give you dedication, discipline, and diligence to persevere through any suffering you may be going through!