

THE 7 STEPS THAT LEAD TO HEAVEN

4 – Perseverance (Other translations: endurance, not giving up in spite of difficulties)

Why is this quality so important? Many people come to church with the misconception that they will live an easy life if they become Christians. Who promised that? It wasn't Jesus! In John 16:33, Jesus affirms, ***“In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”***

We live in a world where, according to Jesus, we will surely have trouble. Some tribulations simply come from living in this fallen world, and are common to all men. Some troubles afflict only God's children, since they live in an unbelieving world. Some of our tribulations are internal because, as we desire to grow in our faith, we're challenged by sin. Whatever struggles we may face, we need a secure hope in order to “hang in there” over a lifetime of growing in faith.

That's when perseverance becomes essential. In Hebrews 11, there's a list of people who became icons of faith because of their perseverance. The job of a witness is to testify. According to Hebrews 12:1-3, their lives testified that perseverance is possible. The question then is, how? To answer this question, let's first read Hebrews 11:6. It says, ***“He is a Rewarder of those who DILIGENTLY seek Him.”***

Therefore, let's take the example of Job:

1. How does verse 1 describe Job? Upright, feared God, hated evil, etc.
2. How many children did Job have? Ten: 7 sons and 3 daughters.
3. How many sheep did he have? Seven thousand: 3,000 camels, 500 pairs of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and a large number of servants
4. How does the Bible summarise Job's social status, wealth and power? He was the greatest of all the men in the East.

Job was a great man. Not only did he fear God, he had great wealth, a big family, and a prosperous business. But things did not stay so great for Job, for the Bible says in Job 1:13-20 that he lost much of what he had. Keep in mind that, this seems to all have happened on the SAME DAY. But, what was his response to that? (Verses 21 and 22)

As we walk through what happened, try to visualise these events:

1. What did Job lose in verses 14 and 15? All his oxen and donkeys and servants.
2. What did Job lose in verse 16? All his sheep and servants.
3. What did Job lose in verse 17? All his camels and more servants.
4. What else did Job lose in verses 18 and 19? All 10 children and more servants.
5. What was Job's response in verses 20 and 21? He worshipped God.
6. How do you think Job had the capacity to worship God at a time like that?

The study continues on Wednesday at 7.30pm (also at 7am, 10am & 3pm)

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Job lost everything—all his livestock, his children—everything! Despite this, and in the midst of great anguish, he bowed low to the ground and worshipped God. What a faith! Verse 22 reveals that in all this, he did not sin or blame God.

In chapter 2, Job was smitten with boils all over his skin. In desperation, his wife urged him to curse God and die. Yet Job did not sin, but said, ***“Shall we accept good from God and not trouble?”***

Here is how we have to persevere: ***“And he said: ‘Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.’ In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong”*** (Job 1:21,22).

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VIRTUE - KNOWLEDGE - SELF-CONTROL - PERSEVERANCE - GODLINESS - BROTHERLY KINDNESS - LOVE