

Lesson 103

TEXT 2 Timothy 4:1-8; Revelation 3:11

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES 1 Timothy 6:12; Hebrews 10:31-39; 11:31-35

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that victory comes by standing true and enduring to the end.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. — Mark 13:13

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. — Mark 13:13

**ANSWER
TITLE:**

Reaching the Goal

**SEARCH
TITLE:**

Spiritual Endurance

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The book of 2 Timothy was written from Rome between 65 and 67 A.D. by Paul. He knew that the day of his execution was near, so he took one last opportunity to write Timothy another letter. He charged him to go on declaring God's message, come what may, even though the message may not have been what men wanted to hear.

According to the dictionary, to endure has more than one application. We may *endure* pain which means we "bear it." We may *endure* persecution, meaning we "undergo it." In the memory verse we are thinking of remaining or holding out to the end. More than likely

this will include bearing pain and undergoing persecution.

The Apostle Paul is a very good example of enduring to the end. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 he lists many of the trials and persecutions that befell him after he gave his life to the Lord. In his letter to Timothy, he could say with assurance that he had fought a good fight and had finished his course—he had won! And though he is a prisoner in Rome awaiting execution, he charged Timothy to preach the Gospel and do the work of an evangelist. In no way was he suggesting that Timothy ease up so that he might have less persecution.

YOUR OPENER

Spiritual Endurance

TEXT: 2 Timothy 4:1-8; Revelation 3:11

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: 1 Timothy 6:12; Hebrews 10:31-39; 11:31-35

KEY VERSE: Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. —Mark 13:13

Down through the centuries battles have been won and battles have been lost. Yet, in every conflict there is a common goal—VICTORY! That victory may have been conquering a hill, a city, a country, or it may just be achieving a personal goal. To the Christian engaged in spiritual conflict with the "enemy" of his soul, victory means "enduring unto the end" and spending eternity with Jesus.

RESPONSES

1. The only way to be "instant in season, out of season" is to be prepared. Take this opportunity to touch back on some of the important points of last week's lesson. Help your group to review the need for putting on the "full armour." See 2 Corinthians 6:7; Ephesians 6:11-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

2. Allow time for students to share ways one might be able to identify the "enemy." Ideas suggested may include: through Scripture, the leading of the Holy Spirit when in prayer, the counsel of the ministry, words of a sermon, thoughts from a religious book or magazine. Stress the idea that anything which causes us to take our eyes off Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, should be identified as the enemy.

3. Your students should conclude that Satan is like a roaring lion, and that he would like nothing more than to "devour" their souls. Point out that Peter was instructing them in this verse to be aware of this and to be watchful. Ask your students to give particular ways they can do this, bringing out ideas such as Bible study, prayer, regular church attendance, fellowship with Christian friends.

4. Encourage your students to offer specific ways to meet the challenge of each of these special circumstances. Some things such as prayer, talking over the problem with others of a spiritual mind, asking the advice of the ministry, and looking to the Word of God for direction will be suggestions that could work for all the situations described. Help them to add other thoughts to these for each area.

1. Paul commanded Timothy to be "instant in season, out of season." How can we as Christians do this?

2. Before a person can go to battle he must identify the enemy. List ways that you think might help one to be able to identify his spiritual enemy.

3. Timothy was told, "watch thou in all things." Why is it necessary that we watch? See 1 Peter 5:8.

4. The enemy challenges Christians in every phase of life: in school, at home, on the job, wherever they are. How will one who has determined to endure to the end respond when he encounters:

Temptations

Physical affliction

Pressure from acquaintances

Financial burdens

Depression

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ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. Verse 5 of our text lists three other things that the Christian is instructed to do in addition to enduring affliction, the subject of our lesson. What are these three things, and what connection can you see between each of them and the command to "endure afflictions"?

6. Everyone, Christians and non-Christians alike, have things in their lives that they must endure. Afflictions come to Christians for various reasons. Explain. See 1 Peter 2:19,20.

7. How would you relate the word *motivation* to the Christian walk? What is our motivation to endure for Christ's sake? What are some ways we might be able to increase our motivation?

8. Every Christian will not face the same set of circumstances or trials. What are some specific things a Christian may endure for Christ? Consider Biblical examples as well as examples from your own knowledge or experience.

9. In verses 7 and 8 of our text, Paul speaks of having finished his course, and goes on to tell about the reward he expects to receive. Those that "love his appearing" are eligible for the same reward. In Revelation 3:11, we find the key to Christian endurance. State it in your own words.

5. Your students will mention that we must also watch in all things, do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of our ministry. Allow time for your students to respond to the second part of the question. It could be brought out that if one is watching in all things, it might help him to not be surprised if the enemy attacks with afflictions to bear. Doing the work of an evangelist can bring strength to endure, for we know that we overcome through the Blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. Certainly included in the command to make full proof of our ministry would be the necessity to endure whatever trials may come our way, for there is no glory gained by falling.

6. There are things a person must endure because of one's own shortcomings. But according to 1 Peter 2:19,20, benefits come when a person "endures grief" or suffers wrongfully for God. Discuss with your class some of the benefits that might arise from situations such as a deeper prayer life, development of sympathy for others, and patience.

7. Discuss the word *motivation* and its importance. The object of this question is to pinpoint what it is that makes us determined to keep our eyes on the Goal—the thought of eternal life in Heaven. As your students talk about ways motivation can be increased, some things that might be mentioned are: thinking about Heaven and the rewards of the faithful, comparing the death of a saint of God to the death of one who has not lived for Christ, asking the Lord to increase a hunger for the things of God.

8. Allow students to cite specific examples. Biblical examples could include Job who suffered financial, mental, physical and emotional affliction. Paul suffered shipwreck, imprisonment and physical abuse. What did Christ suffer? Surely we must strive to endure—to follow "in His steps." Stress the thought that everyone does not necessarily face the same circumstances, but through enduring for Christ, they will receive victory.

9. The key is to hold fast, for Jesus is coming soon. You may want to devote any remaining class time to discuss the soon return of the Lord. See Matthew 24:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1-9; Revelation 22:20.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What is our goal? Why is it important to finish the "race" we are running as Christians?

What will we have to do in order to finish the race?

Who can be a winner in this race? Can there be more than one?

In our ANSWER story, who won the race? Did they both try?

What does it mean to "endure"?

What does it mean to "do the work of an evangelist"?

Have you ever been in a race? Did you win or did you lose? How did you feel about the results?

What do you think it means to "be instant in season, out of season"?

What do you think "fight the good fight" means?

Why is it important to hold fast to what the Lord has given you?

What are some of the things that we have to fight against?

Will we make it to Heaven if we don't hold on to what God has given us?

How can we stand true to the Lord?

What did the Apostle Paul mean when he said, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness"? Who else can receive this crown? What kind of crown? Why is this crown important?

Which is the most important thing in a race, the start or the finish? Why?

What are some things that help a person endure in a race? What are some things that help us endure in the Christian race?

When we talk about our "Christian race," what are we talking about?

THINGS TO DO

Bring pictures of, or objects to represent, a trophy or blue ribbon, torch, angel, Bible, Heaven. Explain that a Christian life is somewhat like the Olympic games. We are running a continuous race and our torch is the warmth of

God's love that we are to show throughout the world. Jesus is our forerunner. Every athlete has a goal for which he is striving. Our goal as Christians is to reach our eternal home to live with Jesus. An athlete has strenuous training. He can't look back over his shoulder, but must maintain his speed and endure to the end or he will lose. He must follow the rules. A Christian must not look back, but focus his eyes continuously on Jesus. Our training is also strenuous. To keep our eyes on Jesus we must train by learning His rules. Our course is exactly marked out. At the Olympics, spectators by the thousands watch the events. Others watch us too, friends, neighbors, relatives, associates, . . . and Satan. Last of all, the Olympic champion will receive his prize, a medal of gold, silver, or bronze. Only a few win, but in the Christian race all who enter will receive pardon, grace, and eternal life, and all can win if they endure to the end.

Cut an article out of the newspaper about a winner in some sports event, and also a loser. Have a picture or two of runners. Explain that in the Christian race the only losers are those who do not finish.

Have a motto written on construction paper for each child to take home: "Winners never quit and quitters never win."

Answers for ANSWER

