Bible stories about perseverance

God’s Word makes it clear that He is pleased when we are determined to obey Him. Choose one or more of these stories about perseverance to share with your children. The accompanying questions will help your child internalize the truths from the passage.

If the Bible passage is too complex for your child, paraphrase the story yourself or use the summary provided under “key concepts.”

life is a like a long race

Read Hebrews 12:1-11.

questions for discussion
1. Have you ever run/biked/swum in a long race? If so, what was it like? How did you feel at the end?
2. Were there spectators?
3. What pushed you to finish, even though you were tired?
4. In Hebrews 12:1-2, what is living the Christian life compared to?
5. What would it be like to run a race wearing a heavy backpack? Or trying to race with your legs tangled in a rope?
6. What could “hinder” us from honouring God with our lives?
7. What do elite athletes do to help them perform their best?
8. What does the Bible suggest that we focus on to help us with our goal of living the Christian life to honour God?
9. Why might God allow difficult things to happen to us in our lives?
10. What kind of discipline do you receive from your parents?
11. When we are disciplined by God, what are we to do?
12. What does God’s discipline produce in our lives?

key concepts
Elite athletes are very disciplined in their training, enduring strenuous practice routines, because they are focused on the goal of succeeding in their chosen sport. The Bible compares living the Christian life to running a race.

Just as running a race wearing a heavy backpack would slow a runner down, so sin gets in the way of our ability to live our lives in a way that honours God. Sin consumes our time and energy and takes our focus off God, slowing us down in our life race.

The Bible tells us that God does allow life to get difficult at times so we can be made holy. Even though God’s discipline is painful, it produces righteousness and peace. Just as elite athletes push themselves to endure pain during a race by focusing on pre-planned thoughts and goals, we are to rely on Jesus for encouragement and strength when we are running our life race.

persevering in following God

questions for discussion
1. When a gardener is tending his/her garden, what do you see him/her doing?
2. What does a gardener do when they find a weed?
3. Have you ever pulled weeds in a garden? Was it hard or easy? Did you keep working, even when you found it hard to pull the weeds?
4. Read Galatians 5:22-23 and Hebrews 6:7-12. What kind of crop do you think God wants to see in our lives?
5. Which “weeds” does God want to remove from our lives? For some ideas, have your children list the opposite of each fruit of the Spirit.
6. In order to persevere in “weeding out” sin, what can we do?

**key concepts**
Just as a gardener works hard to keep their garden free from weeds, God wants us to work hard at weeding the sin out of our lives. The “weeds” God wants to remove from our lives are the negative opposites of the fruit of the Spirit. For example, hate (the opposite of love), complaining and dissatisfaction (versus joy), fighting and quarrelling (versus peace), impatience (v. patience), unkindness (v. kindness), unfaithfulness (v. faithfulness), harsh words and actions (v. gentleness), and temper tantrums and losing control of words, actions and emotions (v. self-control).

To get rid of this sin, we need to ask God to clean it out of us by the power of His Holy Spirit. We can also find encouragement through meeting with other Christians and asking God for strength and wisdom (James 1:4-6, Isaiah 40:29).

God promises eternal life with Him in heaven for His followers. God’s followers are those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God and believe that through His death and resurrection, they have received forgiveness for their sins.

**persevering in prayer**

**questions for discussion**
1. If you really want something from your parents, what do you do?
2. What did the widow do?
3. What was she asking for?
4. Why did the judge grant her request?
5. Is it okay with God if we ask for the same thing over and over again?
6. Do you think God would answer any prayer just because you asked over and over?
7. What kind of prayers do you think God likes to answer?

**key concepts**
Usually when children really want something from their parents, they keep asking and asking over and over again. Similarly, in this story, a widow went to see a judge every day, asking him to grant her justice against someone who had treated her unfairly.

The judge that did not fear God, nor care for men, yet he granted the widow’s request because he did not want her coming back day after day. God does care for His people and He will bring about justice for those who ask. God delights in kindness, justice and righteousness.

**a persistent builder**
Read Genesis 6:5-22.

**questions for discussion**
1. What is the biggest project that you have built out of Lego®, wooden blocks or something else?
2. How long did it take?
3. How long do you think it took Noah to build an ark that was 450 feet long? (*If you have time, visit a soccer or football field. Walk around the perimeter to give your children an idea just how big the ark was.*)
4. What would have happened if Noah had given up and left the ark half built?
5. Has God ever given you a hard job?
key concepts

God gave Noah a pretty big job; God asked him to build a huge boat. Even though he didn’t live near a lake or ocean, Noah persevered in finishing the job that God gave him.

Someday, God might give one of us a hard job to do, too. God might ask you to be friends with a kid who everyone else is choosing to ignore. He might ask you to forgive a brother or sister who teases you every day. God was pleased with Noah’s perseverance, and God will also be pleased with you when you persevere in doing what is right.

persevering despite circumstances


questions for discussion

1. Do you think Daniel was lazy, or a hard worker?
2. When Daniel found out that he would be thrown into a lion’s den if he continued to pray, what did he do?
3. Why do you think Daniel continued to kneel down to pray instead of praying quietly in his head so that others could not see that he was praying?
4. How did God reward Daniel’s perseverance?

key concepts

Daniel was captured, along with many more of God’s people, and taken to live in a foreign country. In this country they had different traditions and customs and it was not acceptable to worship God. But Daniel chose to continue serving God. Even though it meant that he was risking death, Daniel knelt down and honoured God by praying three times a day.

When the king discovered that Daniel was breaking the law by praying to God, he had Daniel thrown into a den of hungry lions. God stood by Daniel and rewarded his unwavering commitment to righteousness by protecting him from being eaten by the lions.

persevering in serving God

Read Acts 5:12-42.

questions for discussion

1. Why were the apostles arrested?
2. What happened to them after they were arrested?
3. What did God do?
4. Why did the apostles start preaching again?
5. How did God protect the men who persevered in preaching?
6. How did Peter and the other apostles respond to the fact that they were punished for preaching the gospel?

key concepts

The Pharisees were jealous of all the attention the people were giving to the apostles. They had them arrested and thrown in prison. Despite rather frightening circumstances, the apostles persevered in preaching the good news of God’s kingdom. They could have run from the potential trouble and justified leaving town by saying, “I will accomplish more for God by preaching in another town. What good is it if I stay in this town and end up dead?”

The apostles knew the safest thing was to do what God had asked them to do – to stay and preach the good news. Although they were in danger of being killed, the apostles stayed and preached, and God protected them. They rejoiced because they had the opportunity to suffer a whipping for the name of Jesus.
persevering in prayer


questions for discussion
1. Have you ever prayed that it would rain? Did God answer?
2. What are some of the other prayers you have prayed that God has answered?
3. What kind of man did the Bible say Elijah was?
4. What was Elijah praying for?
5. How many times did he have to ask?
6. How long had it been since it rained in the land?
7. If you had not seen it rain in your town for a whole summer and there wasn’t a cloud in the sky, would you think it could rain?

key concepts
The Bible says that Elijah was a man, just like us! When he prayed for fire to fall from heaven to burn up a sacrifice, it did! But when Elijah asked God to send rain, he had to ask seven times before God sent the rain. Sometimes God answers prayers right away and sometimes we have to keep asking.

Other times, God may not answer in the ways we expect. We need to be persistent and patient when we pray, waiting for God’s answers and trusting that He knows what is best for us.