

# forLIFE

## DAY 1 - READ Matthew 13:3-6.

In the parable of the seed which fell on the rocky places, it sprang up quickly. But when difficulty came, it withered and died. How is this parable comparable to someone whose life of faith withers and dies when difficulty or disappointment comes? **DESCRIBE** why the opposite seems to be true in our lives - when things go well, faith is an afterthought. Yet when tragedy strikes, we swing back toward faith and God.

**READ** Matthew 13:8-9. The wind and the rain AND the harsh sun impacted the seed on the good soil, too. What made the difference? In farming terms, the seed which landed on the good soil spent more time underneath that soil, buried and seemingly dormant. How might that metaphor (*the realization that as we trust during the dark times, what we need to flourish is being formed in us*) relate to persevering in the midst of difficulty? If we choose to walk with God for a lifetime and not simply spring up for a season or two, we must learn to endure hardship.

*If we desire to walk with God for a lifetime,  
we must learn to endure hardship.*

*Difficulty isn't the exception for the Christian journey;  
it's our normal training ground.*

*The fact that we can actually experience life in  
the midst of hardship is the great surprise which awaits us.*

## DAY 2 - READ Psalm 73:12-17 and Jeremiah 11:18-23.

Jeremiah (*One who lived for justice, who stood for what was right and obediently followed God*) complained to God, "Everyone's against me! The wicked are unpunished and are prospering!" Can you relate to Jeremiah's complaint? **DESCRIBE** a time you felt alone - like everyone was against you and rebellious/ungodly people kept prospering.

## RE-READ Psalm 96:13, Hebrews 10:29-31, and Psalm 73:16-17.

These verses assure us that evil will indeed be dealt with by the One who has the right to do so. We also recognize this sobering reality:

**These human souls need a Savior!** What if we realized how dreadful the Lord's judgment day will be for those who rebel against God? Would it move us from wishing God's wrath on them to praying for their salvation and restoration?

*But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.  
Matthew 5:44*

How can you find LIFE in the midst of this?  
What does perseverance look like for you?

## DAY 3 - READ Jeremiah 12:1-5.

Jeremiah complained, "It's not fair!" because he was righteous, but the unrighteous rebels prospered. In verse 5, God responded to Jeremiah by asking him a rhetorical question... "If you can't survive during the easy

days, how will you ever make it when it gets tough? I'm strengthening you so you can LIVE even when it gets rough." (paraphrased). Because God has called Jeremiah, He's determined to increase Jeremiah's capacity so he grows to become everything he needs to be for that calling. Do you find yourself saying that life isn't fair? Do you feel like you have it harder than everyone else? How might seeing things from God's perspective change your viewpoint? What things can be built in you through the struggle and difficulty? Faith can mature when we choose to trust God in spite of unfair circumstances and even pain. **CHOOSE** to hold on to the truth that God is good and He knows exactly what He's doing.

## DAY 4 - READ Jeremiah 15:15-20.

Jeremiah complained to God, saying that even God has abandoned him! Have you ever felt that way? If so, **DESCRIBE** what that was like. Job felt like that. **READ** Job 23:8-10a. Job felt like God had abandoned him. No matter where he looked, he couldn't find God. But what does he say in the beginning of vs 10? Even when you feel like God is nowhere to be found, He knows exactly where you are.

**READ** the lyrics of the song **You Never Let Go** by Matt Redman. **MAKE** this your prayer.

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death  
Your perfect love is casting out fear  
And even when I'm caught in the middle of the storms of this life  
I won't turn back, I know You are near  
And I will fear no evil, For my God is with me, And if my God is with me  
Whom then shall I fear? Whom then shall I fear?  
Oh no, You never let go, Through the calm and through the storm  
Oh no, You never let go, In every high and every low  
Oh no, You never let go, Lord, You never let go of me  
And I can see a light that is coming for the heart that holds on  
A glorious light beyond all compare  
And there will be an end to these troubles  
But until that day comes, still I will praise you, still I will praise you.*

## DAY 5 - READ Jeremiah 36:1-6, Jeremiah 36:21-23.

Jeremiah is being ignored... shunned. Can you relate? The king not only burns the scroll once, but after Jeremiah inscribed another scroll, the king burned it as well. How hard is it to stay on the path when it seems your mission is being sabotaged every step of the way? Have you ever experienced that? If so, **DESCRIBE** it. Did you give up? Did you press on? Often we underestimate God and overestimate evil. When we don't see what God's doing, we assume He's doing nothing. **READ** Isaiah 55:10-12. **CELEBRATE** the truth of the power and purpose of our God. **PRESS ON** with the calling He has for you.

*Let us not become weary in doing good,  
for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

*Galatians 6:9*

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