

DEVOTIONAL

Hollywood Prayer Network

PERSEVERANCE

Life is hard and we need strength, wisdom, character, and hope to make it through and to end well. That takes perseverance. God talks a lot about perseverance and tells us how important it is and how to get it. This week, focus on strengthening your faith through building perseverance, so that you can run a good race and not grow weary or faint, keeping your eyes on the goal!

DAY 1

REMAIN IN THE VINE TO BEAR FRUIT

“BECOMING LIKE CHRIST IS A LONG, SLOW
PROCESS OF GROWTH.”

-RICK WARREN, PASTOR, AUTHOR

New International Version

John 15:4

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

DAY 1

PRAY: Lord, I start this week focusing on perseverance by asking You to remain in me always and forever. And I want to commit right now to remain in You, always and forever. I understand that no branch can bear fruit by itself, so I need to persevere in my relationship with You and remain in the vine! Lord, I want to bear fruit, I want to become Christ-like, and I want to remain in You always. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

REFLECT: Did you know that some synonyms for REMAIN are: exist, endure, last, abide, carry on, persist, stay, stay around, prevail, survive, live on. And synonyms for PERSEVERE are: persist, continue, carry on, go on, keep on, keep going, struggle on, hammer away, be persistent, be determined, see/follow something through, keep at it, press on/ahead, not take no for an answer, be tenacious, stand one's ground, stand fast/firm, hold on, go the distance, stay the course, plod on, stop at nothing, leave no stone unturned. They are practically the same! Do you see why Jesus tells us to remain in Him, as He also remains in us?! We must persevere in order to bear fruit. How do you remain in Jesus?

DAY 1

ACT: Choose one relationship or one circumstance where you want to flee, end it, or walk away. Have you prayed about what God would want you to do in that relationship or that circumstance? Why don't you remain in that situation and persevere until you get a clear understanding from God that it's time to leave, change, or shut that door? Right now, commit to "struggle on" or "hold on" and work that perseverance muscle until you know without a doubt what the next step is. Don't give up or walk away. Wait and persevere until the Lord guides your next step!

DAY 2

THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH PRODUCES PERSEVERANCE

"WHEN YOU GET INTO A TIGHT PLACE AND EVERYTHING GOES AGAINST YOU, TILL IT SEEMS AS THOUGH YOU COULD NOT HANG ON A MINUTE LONGER, NEVER GIVE UP THEN, FOR THAT IS JUST THE PLACE AND TIME THAT THE TIDE WILL TURN."

-HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

New International Version

James 1:2-4 & 12

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything... Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

DAY 2

PRAY: Dear Jesus, I want to consider it pure joy to face trials, knowing that they are making me a better, stronger, more Christ-like person. I want perseverance to finish its work so that I can be more mature and complete, not lacking anything. I want to be blessed and You say that comes from persevering under trial. So, please help me to stand the test and receive the crown of life that You have promised. Amen and Amen.

REFLECT: Don't you love this verse? It's powerful, visual and empowering. And it promises more than we could actually even hope for or imagine. It's full of God's promises and it's life changing, if we can just do it. Who would have thought that we are supposed to consider it pure joy whenever we face trials? In our culture, we're encouraged to avoid trials! We need to take time to contemplate this counter-cultural concept, embrace it, and live it out. As you ponder it's full meaning, remember that those who persevere under trial will be blessed!

ACT: If you want to be joyful, mature, and complete and not lacking anything, you **MUST** learn to persevere. And the first step in persevering is to be joyful. You can't be joyful until you stop complaining. Commit right now to stop complaining about any difficult situation, relationship, or obstacle that you're going through. That will be a start to finding joy and persevering through any trials. You will be blessed And receive the crown of life!

DAY 3

WATCH YOUR LIFE AND PERSEVERE

"OUR MOTTO MUST CONTINUE TO BE
PERSEVERANCE. AND ULTIMATELY I TRUST
THE ALMIGHTY WILL CROWN OUR EFFORTS
WITH SUCCESS."

-WILLIAM WILBERFORCE

New International Version

1 Timothy 4:16

Watch your life and doctrine closely.
Persevere in them, because if you do,
you will save both yourself and your
hearers.

DAY 3

PRAY: Dear Jesus, I need Your help to both watch my life and watch what I believe and say. I need to persevere in both living a Christ-like life and in believing only what is from You, not what the Christian culture or the American culture tells me is true-- because they are not always right. I also don't want to teach others wrong doctrine. So, would You help me to persevere in pursuing truth, both in action and in Your word? Thank You, Jesus. Amen.

REFLECT: It's easy to get comfortable in our faith and our Christian walk and not stay sharp and clear with our choices, our beliefs, or our words. Paul warns us to watch our life and our doctrine closely, to persevere, and not get lazy about our faith, because if we don't keep persevering in our walk with the Lord, we will get off track and harm both others and ourselves. It's impossible to stay stagnant. We are either growing closer to the Lord or going farther from Him. Choose to keep your eyes on Jesus and never give up or surrender when it comes to walking and talking in the way you should go.

DAY 3

ACT: Watch your life and doctrine closely." Now is the best time to evaluate how you're doing: Are you happy, satisfied, and proud of every part of your life? What might you want to change? Define the area and then ask God to help you to change. Then commit to persevere in doing everything you can to conquer that weak area. Remember you'll need the whole Trinity to overcome your defined area of weakness, and yet when you do, you will save yourself AND your "hearers"; everyone else you influence in your daily life. That's worth persevering.

DAY 4

LOVE PERSEVERES

“PERSEVERANCE IS FAILING 19 TIMES AND
SUCCEEDING THE 20TH.”

-JULIE ANDREWS

New International Version

1 Corinthians 13:6-7

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices
with the truth. It always protects, always
trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

DAY 4

PRAY: Lord, I thank You for reminding me that Love is the most powerful emotion and greatest gift of all and we are to delight in it – not in evil. We are to rejoice with the truth! Help me to remember to love all people, even those people I don't agree with or whom I feel are hurting others. Lord I ask to love the people in Hollywood who are creating all of our country's TV shows, films, music, video games and news. I want to delight in loving them and rejoicing in the truth that You love them as well. Lord, would You protect them, and may they trust You, find hope in You, and persevere. And please help me to do that so that I can love others more powerfully and more deeply. Amen.

REFLECT: Did you ever think that when you choose love and persevere in your choice, that both parties benefit. When you pray for the people in Hollywood, you will delight in the truth and so will they. You will be protected and so will they. You will trust God more deeply, experience a hope that will not disappoint you, and be able to persevere in all you do. And so will they. And it all starts from choosing to love people you don't understand, don't agree with, or just don't like. You will be a transformed, more Christ-like person by persevering in your love for others.

DAY 4

ACT: Choose two people from Hollywood whom you don't really like and choose right now to love them. You don't have to like what they do or how they act, just choose to love them as fellow human beings whom God has specifically created because He loves them so much. Then persevere in that love; keep praying for them, only say nice things about them, protect their reputation in conversations, pray to trust what they say and bless them. You watch, for not only are you changing them, but also you will change. And you know if you pray for someone, you can't hate them!

DAY 5

SUFFERING PRODUCES PERSEVERANCE

“PERMANENCE, PERSEVERANCE, AND
PERSISTENCE IN SPITE OF ALL OBSTACLES,
DISCOURAGEMENTS, AND IMPOSSIBILITIES: IT
IS THIS, THAT IN ALL THINGS DISTINGUISHES
THE STRONG SOUL FROM THE WEAK.”

-THOMAS CARLYLE

New International Version

Romans 5:3-5

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

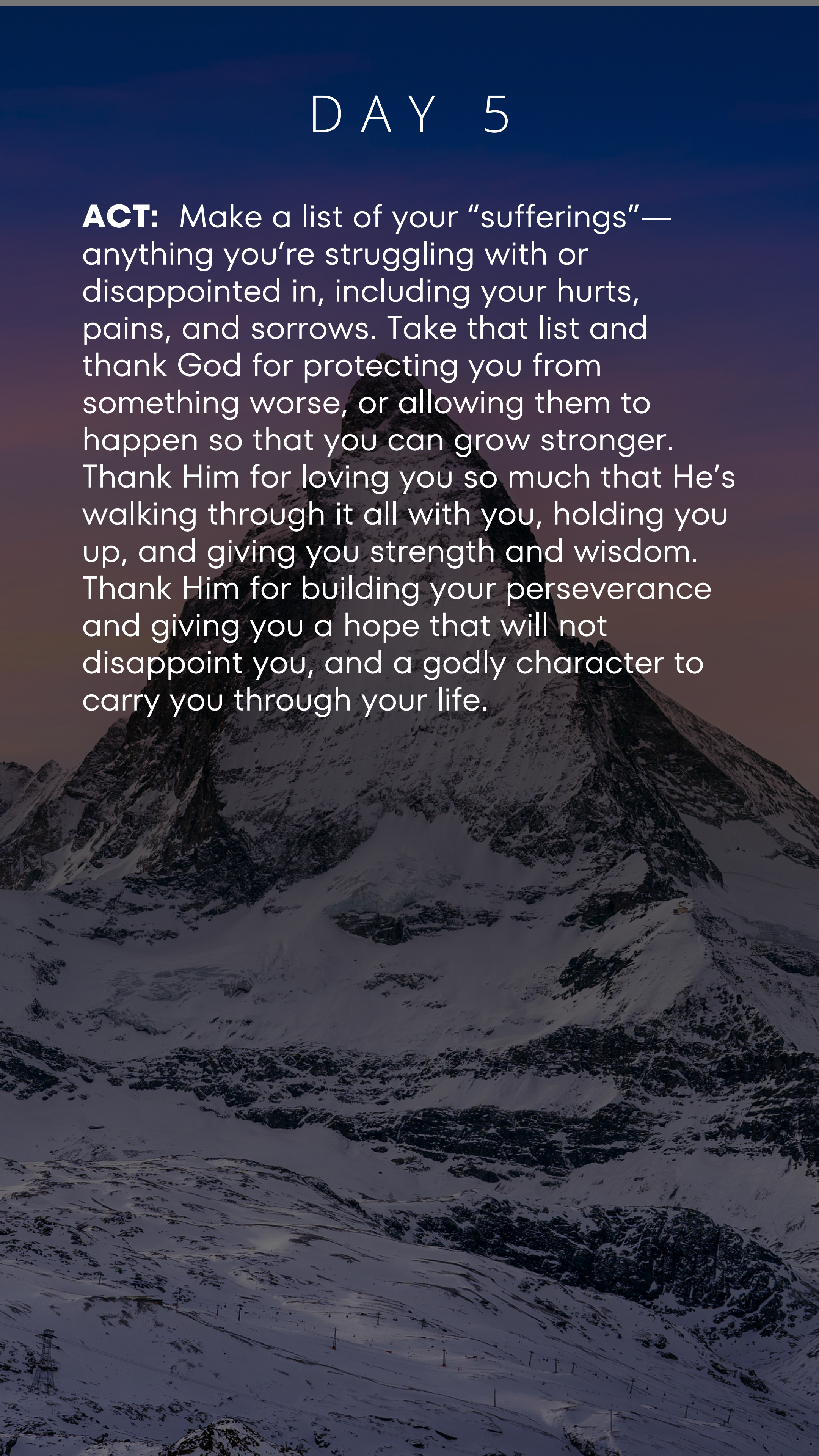
DAY 5

PRAY: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I turn to the Trinity today to seek the strength and wisdom to understand that I can find joy, and experience glory, in my sufferings. Paul says that I must embrace my sufferings because they produce perseverance, which produces character, which gives me hope and that hope I get through suffering will not disappoint me. I know it's true, but I can't do it on my own. Change me and help me embrace my sufferings, so that I may persevere, gain character, and be full of hope. Amen and Amen.

REFLECT: How do you handle your sufferings? Do you complain, feel hopeless, afraid, or angry? I learned years ago to thank God in my sufferings, my heartbreaks, and even the jobs I lost! We can thank Him because we don't know how He's protecting us, strengthening us, or guiding us to something better that wouldn't have happened without suffering. And through that, you will start to see that you have gained perseverance, you'll have a stronger Christ-like character and He will give you hope in your future. God is in control and working out your circumstances for your benefit. This truth, when lived out, will NOT disappoint you.

DAY 5

ACT: Make a list of your “sufferings”—anything you’re struggling with or disappointed in, including your hurts, pains, and sorrows. Take that list and thank God for protecting you from something worse, or allowing them to happen so that you can grow stronger. Thank Him for loving you so much that He’s walking through it all with you, holding you up, and giving you strength and wisdom. Thank Him for building your perseverance and giving you a hope that will not disappoint you, and a godly character to carry you through your life.



DAY 6

LET US RUN WITH PERSEVERANCE

"WHEN I WAS ABOUT FIVE, I GAVE MY HEART TO JESUS CHRIST, AND SINCE THEN IT'S JUST BEEN A STRONGHOLD IN MY LIFE. REALLY, THROUGH THE SHARK ATTACK AND ALL THE HARD TIMES THAT MY FAMILY AND I WENT THROUGH, IT GAVE US UNITY AND PERSEVERANCE TO PUSH THROUGH ALL THIS CRAZY STUFF THAT WE NEVER KNEW WAS GOING TO HAPPEN."

-BETHANY HAMILTON

New International Version

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

DAY 6

PRAY: God, as Christians, we are all being watched. People know that we are different, and they are intrigued with who we are and what we do. I want to be a great witness with my faith. So, please help me to throw off everything that hinders me, and my sin, which so easily entangles me. I want to run with perseverance the race marked out for me. But I need Your help to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus and to fill me with perseverance! Amen.

REFLECT: We must remember we are responsible to live out our faith without sin. People are watching. What does it take to run a good race, to keep our eyes on Jesus, and to do it with perseverance? We can't just assume that since we're Christians we have our act together or we are good witnesses. It takes commitment, hard work, and dependence on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. What is hindering your Christian witness to others?

DAY 6

ACT: Think about the people whom you are around each day. The people at work, your neighbors, your family members, your friends and the people at the stores you frequent. Do they know you're a Christian? If so, are you a good witness? If not, what do you need to change that is hindering you? What sin is affecting your life? What do you need to do to run a good race, with perseverance? Ask God right now to reveal that to you so that you can make changes in your life that will not only make you run a better race, but will be noticed by the great cloud of witnesses around you. Do whatever it takes to keep your eyes on Jesus.

DAY 7

ADD PERSEVERANCE TO YOUR FAITH

"LIFE IS NOT EASY FOR ANY OF US. BUT WHAT OF THAT? WE MUST HAVE PERSEVERANCE AND ABOVE ALL CONFIDENCE IN OURSELVES. WE MUST BELIEVE THAT WE ARE GIFTED FOR SOMETHING AND THAT THIS THING MUST BE ATTAINED."

-MARIE CURIE

New International Version

2 Peter 1:5-8

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DAY 7

PRAY: God my Father, what do I need to get more faith, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, affection, brotherly kindness and love? I need You so that I won't be ineffective and unproductive in my knowledge of Jesus. I never want to forget that You want me to make every effort to grow in my faith. Help me to persevere so that I can possess these qualities in increasing measure! Amen.

REFLECT: Perseverance is presented in the Bible in many different contexts. We need to persevere in witnessing to others, in trials and in suffering, because a cloud of witnesses is watching us. Even our love has to persevere. Here in 2 Peter we're told that self-control leads to perseverance and perseverance leads to godliness. There are so many other references in both the Old and New Testaments that perseverance is particularly important to God. Would you describe yourself as someone who perseveres? If not, what might you do about that?

ACT: Since perseverance is so important to God, take another week to study all the other biblical references for perseverance. It's worth the additional study. After reading all of the scriptures and asking God for insight and wisdom, you'll surely be more persevering, more godly, have more kindness and self-control, and it will become more natural to "remain in Him." Persevere for another week of study, learning and memorizing. It will be worth it!