**Live on Your Own**

**Day 1: Talk about Commitment!**

Review the video for this session.

**Engage**

Read [Acts 6:1–15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac6.1-15); [7:51–60](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac7.51-60).

**Consider**

What does extreme commitment look like? Maybe you think of star athletes who push their bodies to the limit. Or perhaps a rock-solid marriage comes to mind, with two people who have stayed together through thick and thin. In today’s Bible story, Stephen showed us what extreme commitment to Jesus looks like. Faced with threats, lies, unfair persecution, and even death, Stephen stayed committed to Jesus. Some Christians still face extreme persecution and even death for their faith, but most of us may not. No matter what we face, Jesus calls us to never give up.

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| **QUESTION**What are some of the ways that Stephen is described in these passages? |

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| **QUESTION**What would those qualities look like in Christians today? |

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| **QUESTION**Who in your life challenges you to stay committed to Jesus when things get hard? |

**Reflect**

Think of the example that Stephen set for his friends. He could have easily given up, but he didn’t. This had to challenge the other Christians who knew him. They may have thought that if Stephen could stay committed, then so could they. This challenges us in our own faith today. Will our life be a strong example to those who are watching us follow Jesus?

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| **QUESTION**What would it look like for you to stay committed to Jesus—no matter what? |

**Activate**

Think of someone who sets a good example for you as you follow Jesus. Maybe it’s a pastor, a family member, or a friend. Reach out to that person this week to thank them for challenging you. Ask them to pray for you to be that same type of person.

**Pray**

Dear God, thank You for being trustworthy, no matter what I face. I want to trust You through anything. Help me, my family, and my church to remain committed to You—no matter what. Amen.

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**Day 2: Paul’s Really Rough Days**

**Engage**

Read [2 Corinthians 11:24–30](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.2Co11.24-30).

**Consider**

Next time you think you’ve had a rough week, read this passage! It’s interesting to note that Paul, the author, was actually there on the day that Stephen was killed for his faith ([Acts 7:58](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac7.58)). He was called Saul in those verses, and he was not a Christian yet. In fact, he was part of the group that was persecuting Stephen.

Paul’s story serves as a reminder that God can save anybody, even those who seem far away from Him. Stay committed to God, just as we read Paul did.

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| **QUESTION**Of the hardships that Paul listed, which would be the most difficult to you to handle? |

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| **QUESTION**What did Paul say he would rather boast about at the end of this passage (verse [30](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac7.30))? |

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| **QUESTION**What does it mean to boast about your weaknesses? |

**Reflect**

Sometimes, we need someone else’s example to give us hope for what’s possible in our life. There is something powerful about saying, “If they made it, then I can too!” Paul’s life reminds us that it is possible to stay committed to God when we face hard times and trials. No matter what you may be walking through or where you feel weak right now, you can trust God just as Paul did.

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| **QUESTION**Where do you feel weak in your own life right now? How can you learn to trust God with it? |

**Activate**

Make this a “no-complaining” week. Every time you are tempted to complain this week, take a deep breath and remember this passage. Instead of complaining, take it as an opportunity to thank God for His strength in your weakness.

**Pray**

Heavenly Father, I know I can trust You no matter how difficult life gets. Thank You for sustaining me and helping me through every situation. I don’t want to complain about my weaknesses. I want to boast in them because I know You are giving me strength. Help me to turn my complaints into praise this week. I love You. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

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**Day 3: Who Gets Blessed?**

**Engage**

Read [Matthew 5:3–12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt5.3-12).

**Consider**

[Matthew 5](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt5) contains one of Jesus’ most well-known teachings: the Sermon on the Mount. Here, Jesus gave a peek into what kind of a life God blesses. And it might not be what you expect. According to Jesus, God doesn’t bless the rich, famous, and popular. Instead, God blesses the poor who realize their need for Him, the humble, and those that the world easily overlooks. If you feel like a misfit or like you’re walking through a difficult season, this passage is for you.

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| **QUESTION**How does this list differ from the way non-Christians view life? |

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| **QUESTION**What did Jesus say to be happy about in verses [11–12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt5.11-12)? |

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think Jesus said to be glad when facing persecution? |

**Reflect**

Enduring persecution is one thing, but Jesus took it a step further in this passage. We shouldn’t just endure it; we should be happy about it. That doesn’t seem to make sense. But Jesus gave us two reasons why we should do this. First, we can be happy in persecution because God will bless those who are persecuted. And second, we can be happy because we have a great reward waiting for us in heaven.

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| **QUESTION**Why is it so difficult to be joyful when we face persecution? |

**Activate**

Write a list of the difficulties that you have faced or are facing in your life. As difficult as it sounds, find a way to thank God for His provision and presence with you in each situation. Use this list as a reminder of the reward He has promised you in heaven.

**Pray**

Faithful God, I know that if I am going to stay committed to You for my whole life, I am going to face challenges and obstacles. I want to learn to rejoice in You, even in the toughest times. Help me to live that kind of blessed life. I am determined to trust You. I pray that You would encourage and strengthen everyone who is going through a tough time. Amen.

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**Day 4: A Resounding NO!**

**Engage**

Read [Romans 8:35–39](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro8.35-39).

**Consider**

In today’s Bible reading, Paul focused on the inescapable nature of God’s love for His people. Feeling the need for love is something everyone goes through at times. After the rejection of a relationship or the loss of someone close, it can sting the most. And when we face intense challenges in our Christian life, it may feel like God has left as well. But Paul’s words reveal the opposite. There is *nothing* we can face that will remove us from the love of God. When people are mean to you, God offers love. When you’re threatened, His love is there. And when you feel alone, you can rely on God’s ever-present love.

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| **QUESTION**In verse [38](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro8.38), what was Paul convinced of? |

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| **QUESTION**Have you ever doubted God’s love for you? If so, how does this passage speak to your doubts? |

**Reflect**

We all walk through suffering and challenges of some sort. And when we go through hard times, it’s easy to ask all sorts of hard questions. Does God love me anymore? Did I do something wrong to deserve this? Has God given up on me? Is God even there? When these feelings seem overwhelming, it’s time to stop and focus your mind on Him. Take a pause to pray. Reflect on how He has shown you love in the past. The love He had for you when things were easy is just as strong as when they are hard. Remain committed to God in spite of your situation, and know He is committed to you.

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| **QUESTION**How would you describe your walk with Jesus when you’re faced with challenges? |

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| **QUESTION**How would your closest friends describe you when you are facing a tough situation? |

**Activate**

When we repeat the truth over and over, it becomes more ingrained in our life. It helps us become more and more convinced of what is true. Write out the first sentence of verse [38](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ro8.38) on a piece of paper and put it somewhere visible. Say it out loud every time you see it to remind yourself of its powerful truth.

**Pray**

Dear God, thank You for loving me! I am convinced that You love me, no matter what I face. Please help me not to let my circumstances cloud my view of You and what is true. How great is Your love toward me! In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

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**Day 5: Let It Grow!**

**Engage**

Read [James 1:1–4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jas1.1-4).

**Consider**

Running a marathon requires a lot of endurance. To build up their endurance, athletes must test themselves and push themselves to the limit. Training is painful in the moment, but it is worth it in the end. Just like a race, following Jesus requires endurance, too. We want to make it to the finish line. And just like runners train to build up their endurance, James wrote that we can build up our faith endurance, too. In this passage, he noted that the key to doing so is to go through some training and testing of our own.

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| **QUESTION**What are some “troubles of any kind” that we might face as Christians today? |

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| **QUESTION**What should our response be when troubles come our way? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you think it means to have endurance in our walk with God? |

**Reflect**

Notice how James wrote that “troubles of any kind” can be an opportunity for joy and growth. His original audience would have understood this as persecution for their faith. We may not face death threats like James’ first audience, but that doesn’t mean that we won’t have challenges that are opportunities to grow. We simply have to remember to keep the perspective that every challenge is an opportunity to grow.

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| **QUESTION**How have these devotions helped you in your commitment to Jesus? |

**Activate**

One of the greatest ways to grow in our faith is to share with someone else what God is doing in our life. As we close out these devotions, share with someone how God is growing your faith. Consider sharing one of the devotions you’ve read with them. If you can, talk about how God is helping you to think differently about the challenges and struggles that you face.

**Pray**

Dear God, thank You for helping me to see my struggles and obstacles Your way. I want my faith to grow and thrive in the hard times that I face. Help me to see them as opportunities for growth, so that I can be fully developed in my faith. Help me to trust You more. Amen.