



Week Two: Endurance – Study Guide

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New ideas, new goals, new dreams ... they're all exciting. But eventually they all get old. Excitement fades, persistence becomes more difficult, and the thrill of the dream is overshadowed by the pain of fulfillment. It takes a goal worth pursuing, and the willingness to undergo that pain, in order to see a dream realized. Nothing great happens without endurance.

Where Am I Today?

- 1) What dream have you set aside? Why is it on the backburner? Is it one that should be picked back up, or left on the backburner for one that's more important?

Into the Bible

- 2) Following Jesus takes endurance because He calls us to a radical life. Read **1 Corinthians 9:24-27** to see how Paul compares following Jesus to training for athletics. Why is athletic training a good metaphor? How is it different?

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- 3) A lack of self control is often the reason goals get dropped. Read **Proverbs 25:28** to see the dangers of a lack of self control. What do you open yourself up to if you don't have self control? According to **Galatians 5:22-23**, how do you gain biblical self control?

- 4) Sometimes the most important preparation for endurance is simply to know what you'll have to endure. Read **Luke 14:25-33** (especially verses 28 and 31) where Jesus taught about what His followers would have to endure as they followed Him. Why did Jesus give such strong examples?

How Does This Apply?

- 5) A great way to encourage yourself towards accomplishing a goal is to remember goals that you have achieved in the past. Think about a goal you've achieved that you're the most excited about. What was it? How did you obtain it? What did you have to sacrifice? What was the payoff?

- 6) Mike Madding mentioned two types of spiritual disciplines taught by Dallas Willard: Disciplines of Abstinence and Disciplines of Engagement. What Discipline of Abstinence do you need to focus on the most? Which Discipline of Engagement do you need to focus on the most?

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- 7) Think about a dream or a goal that you've wanted to fulfill for a long time but haven't been able to accomplish. What excuses have kept you from accomplishing it? What's your first step to work toward it again?

Prayer Focus

As a church, we are praying together for several things this week:

- Pray that things come together so we can close on the Statesville Campus building this month.
- Pray for Cove teams going out across the country and world. Also, pray specifically for the thousands of Syrian refugees fleeing conflict.
- Pray for our students that the new school year provides great opportunities to live out their faith.

Continue Learning on Your Own

- 8) Incorporating Spiritual Disciplines in your life can easily turn into, or be mistaken for, legalism. It looks as if you're trying to earn God's favor by living a "good enough" life. Maybe you've even caught yourself trying to earn God's favor by practicing spiritual disciplines. The fact is that you cannot earn God's favor, and you'll never be able to. Spiritual disciplines are a necessary way to build into a current relationship with God; they are not a way to establish one. They can seem cumbersome or arduous at first, but over time they can become something you look forward to. How do the two passages below explain the difference between disciplines to *build* a relationship versus discipline to *establish* one?

Read: **Romans 4-6, 2 Peter 1:2-8**