

On the Rock

1 Corinthians 15:58

Steadfast means to be loyal, steady, dedicated, dependable, reliable, single-minded and firmly established. **Steadfast comes from an Old English word stedefaest,-- stede, a place + faest, firm = a firm place.**

1. STAND FIRM

1 Corinthians 15:58; Psalm 40:1-3

- ✓ Nothing we do for the Lord is ever wasted
- ✓ God will deliver you
- ✓ God will give you a new perspective
- ✓ God will set you on the Rock

2. STAY FOCUSED

Psalm 16:8-11; James 1:6-8

- ✓ Keep your eyes on the Lord at all times
- ✓ Stay single-minded, don't become double-minded
- ✓ Move toward the goal

3. SHARE YOUR FAITH

1 Corinthians 15:58; Hebrews 10:24-25

- ✓ It is never a waste of time or effort if it's done for God
- ✓ Encourage others through acts of love and good deeds
- ✓ Be faithful and steadfast daily in the little things of life

LIFE GROUPS — HOMEWORK & DISCUSSION

STEADFAST

In The Amplified Bible, James 1:3 reads, “Be assured and understand that the trial and proving of your faith bring out endurance and steadfastness and patience.”

James, the brother of Jesus, not only wrote this, he also lived it.

History tells us that the scribes and Pharisees came to James for help in putting down Christian beliefs. James was instructed to take a stand at the highest point of the Temple in Jerusalem, where he could be clearly seen and heard by all the people below, and to persuade them that Jesus was not the Christ. James used the occasion to boldly preach about Jesus. This infuriated the scribes and Pharisees. So they threw James down from the Temple. The fall did not kill him so they took up stones to stone him. Kneeling, James prayed, “Lord God our Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” While they were stoning James to death, one of the priests begged the others to stop, crying out: “The just man is praying for us.” But one among them, a fuller, took a club that he used to beat dyed garments and struck James in the head. James died instantly from the blow, still in prayer. *(Adapted from Fragments from the Acts of the Church; Concerning the Martyrdom of James, the Brother of the Lord, from Book 5).*

James was steadfast. James did what Pastor Cooper challenged us to do in his message: James stood firm, he stayed focused, and he shared his faith. In his case it cost him his life. In our case it may not cost us our lives, but just the same, God wants us to be steadfast like James.

LIFE IN THE WORD

1. The Bible challenges us to look beyond what we see and focus on things which we cannot see. The visible is temporary while the invisible is eternal. God wants us to distinguish between the temporary and the eternal and make wiser choices. Read Matthew 6:33. Does Jesus say to seek **only** the kingdom of God, and his righteousness? What does this passage say to you

about temporary things? Now read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. In this passage Paul contrasts the temporal, which is visibly material, with the eternal, which is invisibly spiritual. According to this passage, what perspective does Paul want us to have? Why is it so hard to focus on eternal things?

2. Read Luke 12:13-21 and Matthew 6:19-21. It is easy for us to get too caught up in this world. What areas of your life tend to divert your focus away from eternal things?

3. It takes faith to see the invisible, and to choose the eternal over the temporary. Moses was a man who had access to all the world had to offer—the treasures and pleasures of Egypt and the power of the most powerful nation in the world. Motivated by faith, Moses left it all behind him and endured steadfastly because he looked beyond the visibly material—the temporal—and he saw the invisibly spiritual—the eternal. Read Hebrews 11:24-27. What do you admire most about Moses' decision in this passage?

4. People who follow God have always been persecuted for their faith. The Bible encourages us to face such persecution with patient endurance, which is steadfast courage under unjust suffering. Read Hebrews 12:1-4. What can we learn from this passage that can help us stay the course?

5. The story is told of a Coast Guard crew that was summoned on a stormy night to rescue survivors from a sinking vessel. One member of the crew was fearful: “Captain,” he moaned, “we’ll never get back.” The captain replied, “Our orders aren’t to come back, only to go.” As you read Revelation 12:11, do you see a similar attitude reflected in this passage? How does such an attitude help one remain steadfast? What do you think it means to overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony?

LIFE AT HOME

Dr. Grant Lovejoy, a professor of preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, shares this insight on staying power. “A recent television documentary pointed out that the cheetah survives on the African plains by running down its prey. The big cat can sprint seventy miles per hour. But the cheetah cannot sustain that pace for long. Within its long, sleek body is a disproportionately small heart, which causes the cheetah to tire quickly. Unless the cheetah catches its prey in the first flurry, it must abandon the chase. Sometimes Christians seem to have the cheetah’s approach to ministry. We speed into projects with great energy. But lacking the heart for sustained effort, we fizzle before we finish. We vow to start faster and run harder, when what we need may be not more speed but more staying power—stamina that comes only from a bigger heart. Motion and busyness, no matter how great, yield nothing unless we allow God to give us the heart.”

Is your life filled with good intentions, but lacking the stamina to stay the course? We all need help from the Holy Spirit to transform our hearts and lives. Rather than beat yourself up, try this prayer from the psalmist: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10 NKJV).