Andy Wood ([00:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/0zu0DL5VQwUJq1_lremww51wJ3eJVsnLCPthjKFSGpzmj5wSQCV-rf3T_sycRIKT66OTASo3Ga4vgXtxWEZ_WbRe5ZE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=0.33)):

This has been a great journey. We're halfway through a journey of reading through the New Testament over an eight-week period of time called the Immersed Bible Reading Challenge, the Anchored Life Challenge. 21,000 of you have taken that challenge, which is awesome. If you're just joining us this weekend, you can still jump into the challenge. You can pick one of these bibles up on the patio, step into the challenge with us for the second half of it. But as you're in the middle of this challenge, this is a little bit like a race that requires endurance. And it reminds me of a time a few years ago, I had the thought, I thought, "I want to be a runner," because partly when I look at runners, they look happy to me. They got a pep in their step. They usually have colorful clothes on, they're running and they just look like they're enjoying. I'm talking about real runners, okay? Fake runners or grinders... I'm talking about the person that's out there just running. I'm like, "I want to be a runner."

([00:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/I-Km0gI_9DNFhnaW04unR-156E7GlSRsvhaEdcmwhGlbI6TqGxhqdhGrfuDWRH8ulwfPXBUKEx1BXG8rlQCsWBvjEMY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=59.67)):

Anybody ever thought, "I want to be a runner"? No, just me. Okay. So I went to a running store, because I'm like if I'm going to be a runner, I got to get some really good running shoes. That's the way to start. Buy some expensive running shoes and that'll help me run better. So I went to the running store, and the guy sits me down. He actually has this little computer and looks at my foot and how off balance it is. Then he says, "Okay, well tell me a little bit more about you. Are you a runner?" I said, "No, I'm starting now." He's like, "Oh, I know you. You've been here before. There are people just like you that come in here all the time wanting to get nice shoes to start running thinking that will help them be a runner. So I got some advice for you," he says, "my encouragement to you is to start with two miles. So start running with two miles. Once you got two miles, go to three. Once you're comfortable with three, go to four. Once you got four, go to five." And so I did that and it worked.

([01:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/bFBGvr2bpjUOM7jBz037E-F2bbG7PeyWMnf47OPJmhQDPLO8XknUxbts7T1OA-NmwEDHqVfu7jsGGNSCG4PGcdwLqMI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=108.51)):

So I got to five miles, and it was great. I could go out, I could go for a run, five miles, be done in two hours. It was great. It was a lot of fun. And so I got this down, and I really was enjoying running. So I'm like, "I'm going to do a marathon. I'm going to run a marathon for my 40th birthday." So I started training, and what happens in a training regimen for a marathon, any endurance athletes know this, once you get about seven or eight weeks into the journey, you're running like seven or eight miles in one slot. It's like a part-time job, y'all. It's crazy.

([02:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/BfieZNlQ-r6AENTeg10_HLZBjS-GfANdwm2nHN1g1C8UHjyj6jsEtf07wW6D_1E_q6Dy7G3NrAVOEWrJOHTR61gVHc4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=142.38)):

So I got there and I'm like, "Okay, I'm not going to stop. I'm going to run the whole way to the race. I'm going to do the race, complain the whole way, talk about how hard it is." But then when I got to the end, I was like, you know what? I'm not a runner anymore. I don't want to be a runner. I don't want to be an endurance athlete. This is not me. Now, if I had stuck with it, I could be an Ironman athlete now. I just tell myself that. But I got to the point where the pain was not worth the payoff, if you know what I'm saying. And maybe some of you love to run, you're endurance athletes. We celebrate you, you're awesome. But when it comes to the journey of reading through the Bible, it's a little bit like that.

([03:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/hcHZt9RiEonWK8inoNf1VUpHtDy8afTdn33wKwl0TUFOshf3QvZHDAEc6VSpZ9ql6W6lj1jkdsxvU9uHfdu0dEIhDhc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=182.07)):

It's a little bit like running a race. And maybe some of you you're like, "Oh, I didn't realize it was going to be this hard. I signed up for it. Andy said it's going to be 20 minutes a day, and it's 40 minutes a day. And it's a lot harder than he said it would be." And maybe that's where you are right now. And I just want to encourage you if that's where you are, to stick with it. Now, this week in our Bible reading, we're going to be reading through the Gospel of Mark, 1st and 2nd Peter, and Jude. And you might want to write these down in your notes, but I'm going to give you some encouragement that I've given every service, all of our campuses, all weekend long. And this is some really good encouragement. If you think about our eight-week journey of reading through the New Testament, like running around a track four times, we're two times through the track now, and some of you're like, "I'm just one time through right now."

([03:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/GKwJtsqE4piv6nEyWkGxNY3gyb8zSrrUgwwoY13GW0_wBg2NytGWwDXW9pPNeoR2kQYwAJeHHPncD-4e37pCLLK_tpc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=232.08)):

And what I want to say to you is just cut across the track, come hang out with us, stand right next to us and keep going. Just come across. Don't feel any guilt or shame, because the goal of this journey is not to check a box every day. The goal of this journey is to change, and Luke will be waiting for you. And at the end of it, you can go back to anything that you've missed. The goal is to change and put in place a lifelong habit of reading through the Bible. Just cut across this track and start with us today. And part of the challenge in any journey that we take, anything that stretches our faith is there comes a moment where, often, you make a commitment that's more than you anticipated it would be. And this is true when it comes to the journey of faith, as well.

([04:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/FtT5LaGWj3OPL92SlX6ZEcoCxYDJUmfJYRHtOUvKGxaoEmNMM5_c0JsJLp-kJ-yGGqqkJSv0838fw0pG_mf6TMR9uQc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=279.06)):

Perseverance is one of those subjects in our culture that, in many ways, we've avoided because we've drifted so far to focus on the subject of comfort. How can I make my life easier? But Jesus, when he would teach people, he would teach about the subject of perseverance. He would talk about the importance of going all the way with what God calls us to. And in Mark chapter 4, the gospel that we'll be reading through this week, Jesus is teaching on the soils. And he makes this comment about the third soil. So he gives the illustration that soils are like different people that respond differently to the word of God. And this third one, it doesn't bear fruit. So the first three don't bear fruit. And the third reason that people's lives don't bear fruit, Jesus spills it out in these couple of verses.

([05:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/MH_MP3a8ctmLAF1uXg2KngF3pLZwRxRdmQmXPXi0PWN4n1Q_zdlh4eDJiZT1km6Uv4cVFtA5zzu3dN1TEMpMSppfV8A?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=326.73)):

He says, "The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word." Now, I want to encourage you, circle that word that says problems and circle the word persecuted, because what happens in the journey of faith is that there's a moment for all of us when we step into relationship with God or we decide that we're going to do the right thing, we're going to move along the journey that Jesus calls us into, there's a moment where all of us will encounter difficulty. There's a moment where there will be resistance. There's pain and suffering that comes when you're moving along the right path. And this is the point I want us to focus on today. My perspective, your perspective on pain is either propelling your growth or preventing your growth. So the way you see your problem that is in front of you right now is pushing you further into the life that God created you to live, or it's becoming a prison that you find yourself stuck in.

([06:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/8p7wuaJ3HoG2px4FvljSdKtmc3uX2Tyb7ghrW8FsNbMi12kWd21mFtsvDG-JH32v-76BTWacnhiqvyySNHPUwq__nlc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=392.7)):

And I've watched so many people along the journey of faith, I've watched them move. And there's a point at which you hit that wall, and that thing that you encounter, whether it's difficulty in marriage or a physical ailment or a mental health crisis, something that you run into, a challenge financially, there's the natural tendency when you encounter it to try to move around it. But the solution is not to move around. It's to leverage it with God's help to move into the life that he's created you to live. So I have a vision for the message this weekend, and this is my vision. There's a percentage of people that will finish the Anchored Life Challenge, and there's a percentage that won't. And my goal today is to increase the percentage of those who will persevere to the end.

([07:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/0ruyVZSYXl2JpxyzDBuL-ec41OQb4__zyi0sz_VVmacx-O_Ygmdrw8MeNJvzdb8akKo6gdlFByd2_No_Szw-rsdDGRs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=437.91)):

And there are a percentage of you right now that you are on the verge of quitting with some area of your life that's so important. And there's going to be some of you today that God gives you that extra nudge, that extra level of strength to keep going in the thing that he's called you to. Now, part of what the enemy does when it comes to difficulty, he wants to convince you in your perspective that you are cut off from the power that is available to you in God. But Peter, who we're going to look at today, has a different perspective on pain, different perspective on perseverance. And what we're going to do is we're going to allow ourselves to be encouraged by Peter, the early follower of Jesus. We're going to go to I Peter, and we're going to look at four ways that God can help us persevere and adjust our perspective.

([08:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/O3E5ojxiDIcS-UTLadCkhBwa8GSMcizvimETbudobncSMNHY42gOtwfMkndj1SR1cs51nz1C07J22IAiBUb-z6e56J0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=485.64)):

Now, let me say a little bit about Peter before we go there. Peter, initially when Jesus found him was a fisherman. He's an entrepreneur. And undoubtedly, when you read through all four of the gospel accounts, Peter was an extrovert because he was constantly saying stupid things, putting his foot in his mouth, saying things that he shouldn't say, saying things like, "Lord, let's build some tents for you." Elijah and Moses, there's a story of the transfiguration. You may be familiar with it, but lots of things like that where he's saying dumb things. And I can relate to Peter, I've said a lot of stupid things in my life. And Peter, over the course of time, is changed by Jesus. And after seeing the resurrected Jesus, fully yields his life to God and decides to go all-in. And by the time he writes this letter, he's like Grandpa Peter. So he is not the young entrepreneur, stick his foot his mouth. He's an old, wise, seasoned man of God who's writing to a group of followers of Jesus who are dispersed across the Roman Empire.

([09:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/tbL7Vy2axRqKcI8iMKiBBrWiwFN--85pPkMjHFVHp0xx2V3flcwG4m7y3fPmeunxHriiW0oMLxXx6cqiDae2dILnft4?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=544.62)):

And at the time when he writes this, he's writing to a group of people that are currently being persecuted for their faith in Jesus. Nero is the leader of the Roman Empire. He hated Christians. And what he would do is he would take followers of Jesus, and he would burn them at the stake. He would burn them in his garden as lamps for his garden parties. This is how evil to man is. So all of these followers of Jesus that get the letter from Peter are under great persecution and don't know their future. And Peter's trying to encourage them, "Keep going with your faith, keep following the ways of Jesus." And he's got a couple of things to say to us.

([09:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ppHAoG3ztYekCoH24GRYwAS8oSMGG33Bww2ZC4scgF-Sv0UBKlXuZs64zqKP9SbhBzODsSXpefRk00fwR5OahsZhO5o?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=582.99)):

So the first truth I want us to extract is this, that part of that perseverance is to recognize that all of my trials are temporary. Now, this might be difficult to think about your trial right now through a temporary lens. Maybe you're walking through something you've been in for a decade, maybe there's a challenge that you've been trying to pray out of your life, and you're still in it. Peter gives us this encouragement in chapter one, verse six. He says, "So truly be glad. There's wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while." I want you in your notes to circle the phrase that says many trials, and that original word is like trials of many colors. That means that trials come in all different forms, shapes and sizes. Trials come in the form of cancer, in the form of marriage challenges, in the form of parenting with difficult kids. Trials come at your place of work with gossip. Trials come with dreams that don't come to fulfillment. Trials come with ailing bodies. They come in a lot of different forms and fashion towards us.

([10:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/CpMZaL5NAo2-1hGYr5EjkTEMkj2wo9L-l0fDKzNU-dC4w1C_ox2zFL3dp_FueR6ev_DcRArvbtvAFdObhluAsTZELpY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=649.8)):

And what Peter is saying is consider these with joy, for there is ultimately a blessing that's ahead. These are temporary. He continues his thought that says, "These trials will prove or show to you that your faith is genuine." And what he's saying is, on the backside when you've walked through a trial, when you've withstood some difficulty, there's a confidence that the faith that God has deposited in you is a true faith. Your faith will be tested, is genuine. "It's being tested as fire test and purifies gold - though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world."

([11:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/EWN06xuT3naP39DMPVeFTMqJ5kZCi3X9eUwjIzjAzSS8PfCw6kMiLtLh9WDNlhB_cWLeshimA0T7ud4XSExKt7Av6wU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=695.79)):

Now, I want to come to that second phrase, but before I go there, I want us to see Peter's encouraging us. Your faith, the kind of faith that has been tested is the kind of faith that can be trusted. So when you walk through a trial over the course of your life, and I think about so many people who are part of our church family that have been following Jesus for decades, they've gone through losing loved ones, they've walked through cancer, they've walked through trials, and they're still standing. That's the kind of person whose faith you can trust. But somebody who has a faith that hasn't been tested, it's not a faith that can be trusted. Somebody said one time never trust a person that doesn't have some sort of a limp, because in life, there's pain that we encounter, and there's a call to persevere through that pain. Some people, their pain has become a prison and they stopped walking. And then there are others, they're still walking, but they have a limp and that faith has been tested.

([12:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/tI-Hq28IbLjO1TSj8ISjV7a5Y3JY8I-Yu1uneHYzbXNO6JvI9-orKQl6zstp-lqip3ZgKGReE2eKldG51alRhX4mEG0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=753.27)):

And the way to get through it, the way to keep persevering, Peter is saying, is to recognize there's joy ahead. There's a blessing that's coming. You'll stand before the Lord himself, and he will bless you for your perseverance. So endure this trial. It's temporary in light of eternity. Even our trials that are lasting for decades on end, even if they go all the way to death, they're temporary in light of eternity. I had this experience a couple of weeks ago that kind of stopped me in my tracks. And what happened was, our kids are sick right now, had been sick last week. And in order to make sure that we were okay to hear them at night, we left their door open and my door, the kids' doors open so I could basically hear them if they were crying in the middle of the night or needed something.

([13:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Advir3JC5ga_Spb-SW9jG0S1VG4pfEAwGSHiGDZ9gbchFLovVROOrgRalbblGys6_Ki9y4pjk8UoIamVxTwHxCGqp5c?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=800.49)):

And there's kind of this weird feeling as a parent. I don't like my door open while the kids are sleeping. I don't like the thought of waking up and somebody's face being right next to you. It's just a little unsettling. So in this moment, the door is open, and I'm thinking about that. I'm laying down thinking about a kid coming in and a little unsettled already. And as I lay down to go to sleep, there's this loud bang in the kitchen. And so the hair in my arm stood up, the hair in my neck. I'm immediately goosebumps. And so I'm like, "Stacey, go check that out. Go see what that is." I'm just kidding. I'm a man; I didn't do that. But I immediately jumped up, went downstairs, and looked in the kitchen. Nothing. Okay, maybe a dish had fallen. I don't know what it was. It was just a loud noise.

([14:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/O4DDTQmF7GVBxLa9Enm10OgGhSjfgTfZW-PJyXYCOqIPSEeSwNZeKYdOtPUVnfYJ2JiXnfsKfUg7cR_xN4inT_lMj4k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=850.11)):

So I went back, and I'm laying there, and I'm thinking about a child coming in, and I'm still a little bit unsettled. And then I had this thought that was very sobering to me. And the thought was this: what if the Lord Jesus himself were standing right next to the edge of my bed. And my heart, even as I had that extra energy, my heart jumped and just skipped a beat as I started thinking about the reality of every one of my thoughts, every word that I speak, every motive on the inside, the reality is that he is there and he's able to see it all. And there's going to be a moment where every one of us see him in the fullness of his glory at the end of this physical life. And there's going to be an account that we're giving to him for our lives.

([14:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/zwQIcQDCytaxUMt_WrSEipBiWzJit_Z4YQbazj3NJwBPP-XW8Km0rleWqE0XeFoeeM6BCoOPVoRJxGtEFcDmbuACLMw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=898.98)):

And certainly, if our trust is in him and we've received forgiveness, he'll welcome us into eternity with himself. But there's also the reality that every idol word and every choice that we've made is going to be laid bare before the Holy God of the universe. And there's something to be said. The love of God is so important, but the love of God without the fear of God is problematic in our lives. The fear of the Lord is the banks of the river in which the love of God flows. So I have to have a perspective when it comes to seeing God for who he is to recognize this moment is coming, and I want to stand before God. I don't want to hear from God, "Oh, I had so much more for you, but you didn't endure. I had so much more for you, but you complained all the time about the difficulty." I want to hear from him those words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." And it's not until I see that trial in light of eternity that I'm able to endure, to recognize there's a reward if I'm faithful, there's a reward if I persevere.

([16:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/hTSOqvHk77yQCYVfuruuqpdJg-Zt-I-qlU1K9D6bviSiT5mP5UV7twsamKalIaeDHfwHCDbJOyBsRuuHsU0wyjpgZTk?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=966.72)):

Now, part of the perseverance is also coupled with the expectation that it's hard. Life is going to be hard. And that's the second point I want to focus on is to expect difficulty in every season of life. Peter is trying to encourage the people he's writing to, to not be surprised by their difficulty. And he gives us some words around it. He says to them in chapter four, verse one, he says, "So then since you suffered, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourself with the same attitude that he had." Now, when you think about Jesus, Jesus was crucified for the sins of the world. He was nailed to a Roman cross with nails in his hands and feet and a crown of thorns in his head.

([16:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/TWwLdRz_utr8t5JLTAsD4dnbPHnd-kkKGcnqaTZVAVfpC1MeeZIyGBicBRyQNfC49v5k0gGxeVGW1ciX0pZwmuFb6WI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1015.53)):

And as he is being crucified, he is forgiving the people that are crucifying him. So Peter's talking about this kind of heart and this kind of willingness to walk through difficulty in obedience to God. And he says, "You must arm yourself with the same attitude that Jesus had and be ready to suffer, too, for if you've suffered physically for Christ, you've finished with sin." Now, he's not saying you're never going to sin again. He's just saying that suffering or difficulty has a way of driving out the sin from our lives. It forms us and shapes us. It makes us stronger in our faith. And then he says, "You won't spend the rest of your life chasing your own desires, but you'll be anxious to do the will of God."

([17:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/MbvmbrBwjUH0BnymFsmsrd38AZ-MCRFlxaKobILNyaXBLaWfHOqWwIMxyBpjKf5e_RJRAG4aEHLufXqYMbYOzml55KI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1056.87)):

So skipping down to verse 12, he says, "Dear friends, don't be surprised." You might want to circle that phrase, "don't be surprised at the fiery trials you're going through, as if something strange were happening to you." Like you're the only one who's ever encountered this kind of difficulty. I was talking to a friend this last week, and he is going through some tough stuff in his family. And I said to him, "Man, you're walking through it. I'm praying for you." And he said, "I was reading in the Bible this last week about how the Apostle Paul was whipped across the back, and Peter and all these disciples that were killed for their faith in Jesus. My trial is a little small compared to that," and I loved his perspective because his expectation was framed by the reality of other people's suffering who had gone before us, who walked through fiery trials.

([18:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Spfz5_VqE7JZQov5_CtIxYwu15MamTNjyAW8pqaidSIeFM2eoFXw49GVT2kqFUApL1GZF2VyGNb_PZqDcgeCW4Wm7kw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1109.34)):

And Peter says, "Don't be surprised if you walk through difficulty for doing the right thing, for you are now partners with Christ and his suffering so that you will have wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it's revealed to the entire world." Now, I've noticed for myself sometimes my expectation is that it's going to be easy in this life. I oftentimes will drive home, go into the driveway, get out of my car, and as I'm walking into the house, I have a vision of what it's going to be like when I walk through the front door. I imagine my kids stopping everything that they're doing saying, "Wonderful father, I'm so grateful for your diligence and faithfulness all day at work. I know you must have endured great difficulty for the wellbeing of our family. We're so glad to welcome you home. Dad, so good to see you."

([19:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/cdjo-VBGtDolg-7tUm40dyOkoAsSBDIpznebNFsFEIoBOblHjtPMdGQTY1nUK0PTZuICTQ_MT-yYFLI4-1JzQXC7p54?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1167.18)):

That doesn't happen. In fact, last night after preaching two sermons, my son walks up to me and says, "Dad, can you make sure this fish somebody gave to me gets home tonight?" And sure, I'll do that for you. Thank you very much. And my expectation is often fueling my frustration. Now, my dog welcomes me home all the time, and that's great. Stacey does, too. But it's so wonderful to have mercy of the dog who's there. And that expectation though, if I frame it, it's going to be easy, it's going to be wonderful. And then it's not easy, it's not wonderful, I'm disappointed, I'm frustrated. And what I've seen in my own life, this is so important, God's good gifts come with grief and grind. So it's hard to do the right thing. A marriage comes with difficulty. Parenting comes with difficulty. A job...

([20:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/9piIqtx5tcTNXk6-gtBznUIih9S0ig5IylehtO8POYFUUgdd1oUltAJboIii8Q_zn2ECsVwfEc5JaFQVLFwo1hosZFs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1219.44)):

People say things like this, "Just follow your passion. You'll never have to work a day in your life." That's so stupid. It's such a dumb line. It's like anybody ever had that? It's like life is hard, work is hard. Anything that's valuable in the future has difficulty in the now. And so to have perspective... There used to be this mindset of a helicopter parent, that a parent that just kind of hovers over their kids. And now, the parenting philosophy that a lot of people are living with is snowplow parents. It's just like I'm going to remove all the difficulty from my kids' life, make it really easy on them, apply for college for them, find a job for them, buy a car for them, and they never have to encounter difficulty so they never form into who God's created them to be. Studies are showing us right now that the emotional maturity of kids that are growing up, and this is not to knock those who are growing up, it's the parents that really are the ones that are shaping this, is that kids are growing up less emotionally mature by three years as opposed to 20 to 25 years ago.

([21:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/0val6LWy73ye6tCL3JQPh-r9sscAi_MSYsL-wrD1re4qkgCgnlCPV6QbKGKfc9Z8qiNDAO3TVa-aXVSBPxtEifQBOBY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1287.27)):

And in large part, it's because we're so easily offended because we've removed all difficulty from our lives. And that difficulty is what God uses to make us stronger in our faith. A good parent allows their children to walk through difficulty. So every season comes with gifts, grind and grief, every season of life. If you're newly married, there are going to be moments after the honeymoon where it's hard. When you have babies, you bring them home and you have to stop and get diapers on the way home. You walk through difficulty in every season of life, that grind and the grief that comes with it. I remember being younger thinking, "Oh, maybe when I'm my parents' age, it's not going to be as hard." And then watching as my parents are getting older and burying all four of their parents, and then seeing them even now, their health is not as strong as it was at some point.

([22:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/5gEP-NUsRTSQfZG5IJ9Ge-WizMJyQP2JikON0Ne2at_bEKiBvylTi0130qvHz2G9QNikR3J0n_rfQSSoPEJUNLgJSrI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1341.42)):

So every season, there's something that we're encountering that's difficult. And the expectation of difficulty is so important. I know I'm preaching this point, but I'm so passionate about this subject because I've watched so many followers of Jesus, so many people that maybe in their mind, the bar was so low that if I just kind of can say yes on a connection card and then that's all I have to do to follow Jesus. And I will say forgiveness is free. It is. Jesus died to pay the price. He hung on a cross so that we could be forgiven. But following Jesus will cost you everything you have. It will cost you your whole life. And at the same time, it's worth everything that you could give. So the invitation is to walk in expectation. If you're going to do what God wants you to do, it's going to be hard. Expect it, Peter says.

([23:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/VWaOkdQexvHbWT8USzwq5r_9GldCx_OiJENHO5eug_MB8c4tI3JmLIe1V_qejwSfuoXs3ohtd6uqZ-To7jfHYuk_CZ8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1398.42)):

Now, part of the difficulty in all of the pain that we face is being able to discern good pain from bad pain. And that's a third point is to distinguish that pain which is good pain from that which is bad pain. And I love Peter's words here as he encourages us to see the difference between good pain and bad pain. He gives these phrases to the church. He says, "If you are insulted because you bear the name of Christ, you will be blessed." What he's saying is there's a kind of blessing that comes with suffering. See, I believe we're all equally loved by God. Jesus, he demonstrated his love for you in this. While you're a sinner, he died on a cross for your sins. And at the same time, we're not all equally blessed before God. And there's a blessing in obedience that Peter's saying. "If you suffer for the name of Christ, you'll be blessed for the glorious spirit of God rest upon you if you suffer. However, it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble and prying into other people's affairs."

([24:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/WlrADk2eXVc_dRdx29iejkNZPcvuXP1JpxPFBNoTAtduUG83WRetb8nmpsX9h20wfbnKecPIzGR8a2vpgCfe7fBXl3s?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1464.96)):

He's like, if life is hard, don't let it be hard because you're being stupid. That's what he's saying. Stupidity comes with a measure of pain. Folly comes with a measure of pain. So the more you do these things, you have bad pain. So the invitation is to move towards good pain. Now, let me distinguish a couple of things. Good pain is pain for doing what is right. It's the pain that comes from following the path of righteousness. It's good pain. Bad pain is the pain that comes for doing what is wrong. So if I make a choice that's unwise, there's pain, and we've all had that. We've all done things we regret, and we experienced the pain as a result of that. Good pain is pain that is now, and bad pain, the pain is later.

([25:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ffdY0gGhsSC-ceDiR9wk_-Do6cubbQNrpBK47fDYtocSxDAv0xXzhoxwt_eT4Gkx_MrBOQz2WtaZ7Pp3NqH9dnLVcng?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1508.67)):

So the flip of this is that oftentimes, we're looking for the payoff, and the payoff with good pain is later, but the payoff with bad pain is now. It's kind of like when you do a workout, the pain is now. The benefit and the pleasure is later. I love donuts. When I eat donuts, the payoff is now. I could eat a box of a dozen donuts, and they would just slip down like that. Give me a cup of coffee, I feel wonderful for about 30 minutes. The payoff is now, the pain is later. So that measure of perspective, Peter is saying, to shape your thinking, good pain and bad pain and separate it out. You might even think through your pain from this perspective: what is the pain that God needs to bring healing to in our lives? And maybe some of it is cleanup. Maybe some of it is going to celebrate recovery and for the habits hurts and hangups from your past to find some healing and strength and to allow God to restore you, but to distinguish some pain that is good pain. It's meant to be endured.

([26:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/m5ZzBf2GpInrdWkUwEPrfZfMGKzxafOwhE4MlI9Ah7-dbn_5rgV5rDIk83lxLgCQatsjYe8MWx-ARDsYXgizu1ToyTY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1577.43)):

So the lie, the enemy will breathe into your mind that will get you to stop is that the good pain, this pain is really telling you that God's not for you, that he's left you. That pain is a symptom, and it's telling you something. And we have to be able to have the wisdom and discernment to know what the pain is telling us. I remember in our church we pastored in the Bay Area, we were getting into a building. And the city where we were going into the building, man, their city management was chaos. I won't say the city's name, but it was pure chaos. And we were trying to get in, and there were all these regulations and inspection after inspection. And we had set a date to open the building, and I just remember there's so much frustration.

([27:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/uma4n1pJNv42v7ZUYAEDTJnkRCuohRskt0WF-VAf4_1vzHVy5i1ZQsLbojIJ5uOeZmDXhYNaMaHUR1J7ReM56ysOt8w?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1620.78)):

And somebody walked up to me one time and they said to me, "What do you think God's trying to tell us with all this difficulty," as if we're not supposed to be getting in the building because it's hard. I said, "I think God's telling us to endure. I think he's telling us that he wants us in this building. He's already told us that, and it's going to be hard." So if I have the expectation that good pain, that good pain comes when I'm doing the right thing, it helps me endure.

([27:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/lOoes5Nk-vs1xHZSdWgdg_aZT1dPgAPFsfg3dLdWpghucUNxzr_T8dZ5CAt-a6rR7aXx5TIhJ5iZpJnvpkNjrssHc20?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1646.94)):

Now, there's one final component that I want to emphasize with good pain. Part of the pain that we endure often, we endure in isolation. And Peter writes this letter to the church. So it's a communal letter that's going out to groups of people. They would've read it together much like we're reading it in church today. And it's important for us to see. In verse seven at chapter one, he says, "These trials will show you that your faith is genuine." He's not just speaking to individuals, he's speaking to the church. So saying collectively, "I want a church that endures difficulty." It will show you you're a strong family of faith if you endure. It's being tested as fire tests and purifies gold. He's saying that the kind of suffering we're after is suffering together. That's good pain versus suffering alone. And some of you, you're walking through difficulty in isolation. And the invitation might be today to get into a small group or find somebody that can walk through difficulty with you.

([28:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/KeiLpm0cjBHoE8RathTFsSCpj7ATfqJvmXXacQLSCVnRns7aXTVYMa7a2uKF4bcD1O_YdGsCB-nt85I_ssqdIC2mUxw?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1708.62)):

Good pain suffers together. Bad pain suffers alone. I saw this research paper that was written about a group of people. They pulled them together and they put them at the base of a hill, and they wanted those people to say, "What do you think the grade is of the hill? How steep is it? So give us the percentage." So one group of people, they were alone, and another group of people, they had friends with them. And so they said, "Based upon what you see, what percentage grade is it?" And what they noticed was that the people who had friends with them versus the people who didn't, they saw the hill as being 10 to 20% less steep because they had somebody with them. And what it is saying is when you look to your future, the hill in front of you is a lot smaller when you have somebody with you. So the call is to endure together. It's to endure with somebody else in the context of community.

([29:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/kYSdszovc-2EsuB9yLTw5w1zNCfYbg54ZlGZdffAo7oo1I0e74D_QsPxsUpOKfGFLRt9KQkzVYKjv5wDuofP2OX0z8o?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1762.83)):

Now, there's one final component I want to finish on, and I think often when it comes to endurance, part of the reason we quit is because in our minds, our perspective of how we're supposed to endure is skewed. A lot of times, we have this image of ourself enduring race perfectly. And what Peter tries to encourage the church with is that we have to be released from the burden of perfection. So when you're running the race, the goal is not that you would run the race perfectly. And what the enemy will do is he will lie to you in your mind. He will flat out lie to you, and he will tell you that if somebody else were in your shoes, they'd be doing a better job. Somebody else had your kids, they'd do better. Somebody else had your calling, they'd be more faithful. Somebody else had your job, they'd be killing it. Somebody else had your challenge, they'd be more hope-filled.

([30:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/wNG7Ln_2zCmW4_dMPn5LNVQNsOWS7L-NawPmUHV4dewjrCLRneZupJ2Hxd-Iuwgc18TMXyHBNuYSy3zAkeDRQ_E2DN0?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1821.3)):

And that lie the enemy is using often to get into your soul so that you'll quit and be cut off from the grace of God that can sustain you through difficulty. I Peter chapter 5, verse 10 and 11, I want you to hear these words. They come on good merit. They come from a man who's fallen. They come from one who's literally denied his belief in Jesus. I Peter 5:10 and 11, one who's been restored by Jesus says to us, one who's walked with the creator of the universe for three years and saw him in human flesh would say to us as a church, "In his kindness, God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus who died on a cross. So after you have suffered a little while, he, Jesus, will restore, support, strengthen you, and place you on a firm foundation all power to him forever. Amen."

([31:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/E6Tcq56Vte8soKfqb3nkyxVwyMoexkecdurFVdLPbjxbOIM5gor7mnVwqcpFQ84d2m7jC2XHNyMAoU8NemWVycW2uvg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1886.25)):

Those words are so encouraging, because I think in my mind, all these lies about I could do it better, somebody else could take my job and do a better job than I'm doing, all those lies get into my mind and they make me want to quit. And a part of this message is I'm preaching to myself right now. These words, I need them to understand even deep in my soul. Perseverance does not, write this down, does not require perfection. Perseverance does not require perfection. Somebody needs to hear that today, because part of what's happening on the inside is you're about to quit because you can't do it perfectly. And sometimes what you need to do is reach deep down into your soul, tell yourself that God has given you everything that you need to run this race, even though that you're running it imperfectly. And you need to look square in the eye of the enemy that Peter says is a roaring lion coming around looking for somebody to devour. You need to look square in his face, and you need to let him know, "Jesus Christ is Lord, and I'm still standing. I'm still on my two feet. And I know you've tried to take me out. I know I'm doing it a little wobbly and imperfectly, but I will persevere. I will run the race that God has asked me to run."

([32:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/IK23ow1MeLwody1BnfGC039ofGbawWuGIo-nxtjrSo0wItKP7sHLznGlKaDgoYOO1qXjApNmOjLpVjrMM6vO7yIC1ME?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1969.23)):

And some of you, you're so close to quitting. And a part of that story that we tell ourselves in that moment, that moment where you don't have anything left to give is often the greatest moment of your life. Some of you are hanging on by a thread right now in this moment, and the invitation is to let yourself fall into the hands of Jesus, the one who can sustain you, the one who can strengthen you, the one who will restore you, the one who will help you be on a firm foundation to walk in faithfulness with his power. I Peter 4, verse 10, I'm going to finish on this verse. "So if you're suffering in a manner that pleases God, keep on doing what's right and trust your life to the God who created you, for he will never fail you."

([33:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/VHKhJoEqtzUatV76o1O5s7gmdK9kwEQYPeNgwcmpmA8V6VdJVM94r7LEPxr-J-CwsSIuyHAmxw_DaE9DAr8-hntnubc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2021.52)):

He will never forsake you. He's with you in your darkest moment. He's near to you through the power of the Holy Spirit. And if you are in Christ Jesus, the same power that brought Jesus from death to life lives inside of you, the spirit of the living God. The Apostle Paul calls this the hope of glory, that for ages past, this secret that God would one day come and live among his people, he would die on a cross for our sins. He would resurrect from the dead, and he would commission his spirit to live inside of his people so that they could live the life that he created them to live. This is a mystery that, for ages, people have looked forward to, and now we're living it, that we get to live with the power of God on the inside to strengthen us in our human frailty.

([34:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/ayHHWMVLakdh2qDh7xVyZRFGu76FikJ8VBjBcL_XrdTeDIvvrDDT6Yd1LxWmMhv9d8crWaoVQrhnprM4R5tx9e_02oU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2073.15)):

Paul would say that the spirit of the living God gives life to your mortal body so that you can be faithful. So you cannot persevere in your own power. You can't keep pulling yourself by the bootstraps and get yourself to the finish line. We need the power and the grace of God to sustain us to run the race that he's asked us to run. So I want to invite you to stand up to your feet right now. I want to invite you, even in this moment, perhaps even just to recognize I'm still standing. I'm still standing. Let's say it together, I'm still standing. Let's say it one more time, I'm still standing. I'm on my feet right now. I'm on my feet. I know, devil. I know you want me. I know you want me seated. I know you want to knock me out, but by the grace of God, I'm still standing.

([35:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/mOWjafLsq92s_UJxo55PcbTp76IKu_ZpV09c3nGJc3SKXJO7s--K9EqYxdso7ghTmIGAd5bxaMIjStsno7V4dFwaY0w?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2121.87)):

Some of you right now, maybe you're not confident of your relationship with God. This can be your moment to surrender to the one who's making a way, the one who died on a cross for your sins, conquered the grave. You can have his forgiveness in your life today just by recognizing, Jesus, I believe you died. I believe you rose again from the dead. I'm surrendering my life to you. And in this moment, we're going to sing a song. Maybe this is your moment to seal that with God. Others of you, this is your moment even to cry out. He's a way maker. Even when you can't see it, he's working. Even when you don't feel it, he's still moving. And we're telling our soul today that we're going to keep persevering, because he's making a way, he's moving, he's faithful.

([36:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/Ud2z6e4yBndBlRgcXZG-sfcEQaozb7rgkvz76cJGBAzww5gB94cPwgsCYibN_ghU1TN7GEWH0yJzfwodAOl-oxE38IU?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2166.15)):

So God, we worship you today, miracle worker, way maker. Even when I don't see it, you're working. Even when I don't feel it, you're still moving. And so God, I pray that you'd fill our hearts with a measure of faith right now. I pray that you would give us the kind of faith that can be tested, that you would help us be men and women who persevere, who endure, who don't turn back and say, "God, you're worthy. You're worthy of our perseverance." So come now, Holy Spirit, and fill us even as we sing this song, fill us anew, afresh to be people who run the race with perseverance. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen.