

READ LAMENTATIONS 3:23-24

DAY 4

Have you ever tried to play a guitar? It's not as easy as it looks! For one thing, your fingers **HURT** when you press the strings down and that can be really tough for a beginner.

It takes a long time to get comfortable with that feeling. But over time, your fingers harden up so it's not painful anymore. And you get used to the way the frets feel under your fingers. You learn to play chords, and you can play faster and faster, until finally you can play along with your favorite song. But it can take months, or even years to get to that point.

Learning any instrument takes *practice*. You've got to do the same thing again and again if you want to get better. Of course you'll make mistakes along the way. And some days you just don't feel like it. But you can't give up! You choose to keep going, even when it gets hard. If you want to make music, you have to stick with it over the long haul.

Following God is the same way. Some days you face some really hard things that discourage you or make you feel like giving up. And when you mess up, you wonder if you really have what it takes. But this verse is a great reminder that God is with you—helping you—as you decide to follow Him each and every day.

Write the first sentence of this verse on a sticky note. Put it right next to your toothbrush so you see it in the morning.

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Why do we need to remember that God gives us a fresh start every morning?
2. How does God's forgiveness help us to live with determination?
3. Do you think living for God is a decision you need to make every day? Why?



READ GALATIANS 6:9

DAY 1

Now find an iPad® or tablet (or the streaming device on your TV) and pull up the video for TobyMac's song, "Til the Day I Die." As you watch it, think about the lyrics.

This song is powerful because it talks about the determination we need to have as followers of Jesus. Remember, determination is deciding it's worth it to finish what you started.

That's what our memory verse is about, too. Choosing to do good all the time isn't easy. You'll feel tired. You'll feel discouraged. But like the song says, "It might flicker, but they can't kill the flame."

Decide that you're going to be someone who finishes what you start. You know that, in the end, it'll be worth it!

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. What do you think it means to "gather a crop" if you don't give up?
2. Can you think of a friend who shows a lot of determination because of the way they trust God?
3. How have you seen that person keep going even when life gets hard?

READ ACTS 3:12

DAY 2

What's your favorite sport? Who are your favorite athletes? What's the most amazing, most jaw-dropping play you've ever seen—maybe a game-winning catch, or a clutch hit at the perfect time?

Or how about a singing competition on TV? The contestants practice and practice and practice so they can pull off the performance of a lifetime. And when they pull it off, they leave the audience speechless.

We love to celebrate people for their talents and accomplishments. And we should! There's certainly nothing wrong with that. But look at Peter and John's story. They got a lot of attention when they healed the man who couldn't walk, but look how they handled the applause! They gave the credit where it belongs—to God.

The truth is, everything we're able to do comes from God. He gives us skills and puts us in situations where we can choose to use them. But more importantly, He connects us with other people, and He gives us a chance to show love to them. Just like Peter and John did, we can follow God's lead and help the people around us—whether it's easy or difficult.

The next time you pray, tell God that you need His help to live with determination.

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Do you like getting recognized for doing something good?
2. How did Peter and John go beyond just the good feeling of knowing others were in awe of what they had done? Why was it so important for them to give credit to God?
3. Why do you think it's hard for us to remember that we completely depend on God?



READ ACTS 4:13

DAY 3

One really cool thing about following Jesus is that He uses ordinary people to do really extraordinary things. You don't have to be a superhero to do what God has called you to do. After all, it's not about how great WE are. It's about how great HE is!

That can be the thing that first opens people's eyes to see that God is real because they can see the difference He makes in our lives.

Think about Peter and John. They weren't experts. They weren't "important" in the eyes of other people. But they were willing to speak boldly about Jesus, even to the point of getting arrested! If they were willing to put everything on the line like that, then everyone could see that they must have really believed.

In Acts 4:4 it says, "Many who heard the message [of what Peter and John did] believed"—not because of Peter and John's skills and talents, but because of their determination. They were willing to keep going and tell everyone about Jesus, even when things got hard.

Trust God confidently this week, because your determination speaks loud and clear to the people around you!

THINK ABOUT IT:

1. What are some hard things you're going through right now where you need to have some extra determination?
2. What does it show to other people when you're able to trust God in the middle of those tough things?
3. The verse says, "They realized that these men had been with Jesus." What do you think would make your friends say that about you? What would make them see that you had been with Jesus?