

5 Day Devotional

Day 1: When Opposition Comes Knocking

Devotional

Opposition is inevitable in the Christian life. Just as Paul faced people who actively worked to poison minds against him in Iconium, we too will encounter those who mock our faith, undermine our character, or sabotage our efforts. The question isn't whether opposition will come, but how we'll respond when it does.

Paul's first response teaches us something profound: he gained perspective by remembering that his opponents needed the same grace he had received. Instead of viewing them as enemies to defeat, he saw them as souls to reach. This shift in perspective transforms everything. When someone attacks your faith at work or ridicules your values, remember they're not your enemy - they're someone who desperately needs the same Jesus who saved you.

Opposition often reveals what's truly in our hearts. Will we respond with bitterness and retaliation, or will we choose grace and love? The way we handle criticism and attacks becomes a powerful testimony to those watching. Your response to opposition today might be the very thing that opens someone's heart to the gospel tomorrow.

Bible Verse

'As they went out, they spoke to the people in such a way that a large number of both Jews and Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.' - Acts 14:1-2

Reflection Question

How can you shift your perspective to see your opponents as people who need grace rather than enemies to defeat?

Quote

They began to poison the minds of people. That's pretty serious.

Prayer

Lord, help me see those who oppose me through Your eyes of love and grace. Give me the strength to respond with kindness even when others seek to harm or undermine me.

Day 2: Love That Stays

Devotional

There's something powerful about staying when everything in you wants to leave. Paul could have easily shaken the dust off his feet and moved on from Iconium at the first sign of trouble. Instead, he chose to persevere in love, remaining in a difficult situation because God had called him to stay.

This kind of perseverance isn't about being stubborn or masochistic. It's about recognizing that God sometimes calls us to remain in challenging circumstances because He has work to do - both in us and through us. Maybe it's a difficult marriage, a toxic workplace, or a struggling church. The temptation is always to run, but love chooses to stay and fight for what matters.

Persevering in love means we don't just endure; we actively choose to love even when it's costly. We invest in relationships that seem hopeless. We serve in places that don't appreciate us. We speak truth in environments that reject it. This kind of love is supernatural - it can only come from the Holy Spirit working through us. When we choose to stay and love, we create space for God to work miracles.

Bible Verse

'Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division.' - Luke 12:51

Reflection Question

Is there a difficult situation in your life where God might be calling you to stay and persevere in love rather than walk away?

Quote

When things are going bad, don't make big decisions. In fact, when things are going bad and you feel like quitting whatever it is that you're faced with, would you give it a little bit of time, maybe even six months?

Prayer

Father, give me the wisdom to know when to stay and the strength to love well in difficult circumstances. Help me trust Your timing and Your purposes.

Day 3: The Danger of Success

Devotional

After facing persecution in Iconium, Paul encountered a different kind of challenge in Lystra. When he healed a lame man, the crowd wanted to worship him and Barnabas as gods. This reveals a crucial truth: the enemy doesn't just attack us through opposition - sometimes he tries to destroy us through success and praise.

Pride is perhaps more dangerous than persecution because it's more subtle. When people praise our ministry, our talents, or our achievements, it's easy to start believing we're something special. We begin to think we deserve the credit, the attention, the applause. But Paul's response was immediate and clear: 'You're not a God, you're a servant. You're not a celebrity, you're a servant.'

John the Baptist understood this principle perfectly when he said about Jesus, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' True spiritual maturity is measured not by how much praise we can handle, but by how quickly we deflect glory back to God. Success is a test of character just as much as suffering is. The question is: when good things happen, who gets the credit?

Bible Verse

'He must increase, but I must decrease.' - John 3:30

Reflection Question

How do you handle praise and success - do you deflect glory to God or subtly take credit for yourself?

Quote

If the enemy can't stop you by opposition, you know, another tool in his tool bag is exaltation. It's called pride.

Prayer

Lord, keep me humble in success and faithful in failure. Help me remember that any good thing in my life comes from You alone.

Day 4: Getting Back Up

Devotional

The most shocking moment in Paul's journey came when he was stoned and left for dead outside Lystra. Most people would consider this the end of the story - a tragic conclusion to a faithful ministry. But Paul did something extraordinary: he got up and went back into the city. This wasn't recklessness; it was resurrection power at work.

Sometimes our worst experiences become our greatest revelations of God's presence. In our darkest moments, when we feel abandoned and broken, God is actually closest to us. The psalmist reminds us that 'God is near to the brokenhearted.' Your current trial, no matter how devastating, may be the very place where you encounter God in ways you never have before.

Paul's willingness to get back up had eternal consequences. A young man named Timothy witnessed Paul's perseverance and later became his spiritual son and ministry partner. You never know who is watching your response to trials. Your children, your coworkers, your neighbors - they're all observing how you handle difficulty. Your faithfulness in the storm may be the very thing that leads someone else to faith.

Bible Verse

'Timothy, a disciple, was there, whose mother was a Jewish believer but whose father was a Greek.' - Acts 16:1

Reflection Question

Who might be watching your response to current difficulties, and how could your perseverance impact their faith journey?

Quote

Sometimes the worst experience you'll go through can become the greatest revelations of God in your life.

Prayer

God, give me the strength to get back up when life knocks me down. Help me remember that You are closest when I am most broken.

Day 5: Never Give Up

Devotional

Winston Churchill's famous words ring true for every believer: 'Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never.' But our perseverance isn't built on human willpower - it's anchored in four unshakeable foundations that Paul demonstrated throughout his ministry.

First, develop deep conviction about God's sovereignty. Paul declared, 'I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him.' When you're absolutely convinced that everything is in God's hands, you can endure anything. Second, be determined in prayer. When we lose heart, prayer is usually the first thing to go, but it should be the last thing we abandon.

Third, seek godly counsel. Even Paul needed encouragement from Jonathan and others during his darkest moments. Finally, saturate yourself in God's Word. Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that he was committing them 'to God and to the word of his grace.' Your response to today's trial may be producing eternal fruit in ways you cannot see. Keep your eyes on Jesus - you're heading home.

Bible Verse

'Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.' - Hebrews 12:1-2

Reflection Question

Which of these four foundations - conviction, prayer, counsel, or God's Word - do you most need to strengthen in your current season of difficulty?

Quote

You realize that the only time Jesus gave up was when he said, it is finished on the cross.

Prayer

Father, anchor my soul in these unshakeable foundations. Help me never give up, knowing that You are working all things together for good.