

BUILDING PERSEVERANCE

October 25, 2025

Romans 5:4–5 CEV

And endurance builds character, which gives us a hope that will never disappoint us. All of this happens because God has given us the Holy Spirit, who fills our hearts with his love.

Children have many types of needs. Caring for my children's physical needs has always been straightforward as a parent: are they hungry? Feed them! Are they tired? Create space to rest. Are they sad? Comfort them. But when it comes to building character, I've wondered if I'm doing enough.



As a teacher and parent, I've heard many experts discuss the importance of two character traits: perseverance and resilience. This week, let's think about perseverance.

Two common synonyms for the word *perseverance* are *endurance* and *steadfastness*. But I associate these words more with God's character than with myself. God's love endures, and God's love is steadfast. And because both are true of God, by faith, I can persevere amid challenge and change.

Contrary to widespread practice, teaching kids to persevere might involve fewer pep talks focused on helping them dig deep within themselves and more of something else. Maybe helping our children learn to persevere means understanding God's character.

Parents can model perseverance with healthy responses to hardship. Adults don't enjoy unwanted change any more than kids do. The Covid pandemic, for example, turned our lives upside down for two full years. The freedom to spend extra hours at home quickly turned tedious. Fears for the health of older family members and friends hovered over every gathering.

At our house, we tried to remember to name our blessings each day. We also shared our anxieties. Offering gentle, balanced, and age-appropriate honesty about our circumstances (without instilling unnecessary fear) helped our kids understand that life is hard, but God is faithful. That's perseverance.

Parents can teach kids to see God's never-changing love in his people. All faith communities are gifted and flawed, but one particular strength of our church family is how members care for one another. When a loved one dies or someone faces a long-term illness, our little family of Jesus-followers offers meals, rides, money, or companionship. Simple acts of care bear witness to the constancy of God's own love for us. They also remind us that perseverance isn't something we cultivate alone. God designed us to both need and help one another. At times, our family has experienced trials that required us to lean on our church family for support. Their care helped us persevere.

Parents and children can witness God's steadfastness by cultivating awe for his vast yet intricate world. Thankfully, kids often wake to the world's wonders before they wake to its hardships. We serve a God who made a world full of grandeur down to its tiniest details. For example, on the wall of our dining room hang four photographs that each capture a detail of creation on a large scale. In one photograph, a droplet of water rests on a single petal of a daffodil. That one droplet holds a whole landscape in its reflection. The picture reminds me to pause and appreciate the grandeur of small things. Practicing this with our kids can build confidence that God cares for the smallest details of our lives.

I once thought perseverance was a character trait that depended on my personal inner strength. Life experiences taught me otherwise. When I think of perseverance, I think of God's character and his steadfast love for his people and creation.

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