

Alley Rundown - May 11-12, 2019

Bible Story: I Won't Back Down (Paul and Silas in Prison) • Acts 16:16-40

Bottom Line: You can choose joy when life gets hard.

Key Question: Why is it worth it to keep going?

Memory Verse: Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:31 NIV)

“Good to see you all. May is already off to a great start! And speaking of May, my guess is many of you are already counting down the days until summer break. Be honest, who is counting?”

Pause for responses.

“A few of you. I knew it! I think we all look forward to summer break because, well, school can be tough! There are a lot of things that happen during the school year that require us to persevere, right? Maybe you're studying for a test and you're only halfway through the study guide . . . and you can hear the video games calling from the other room. Or maybe you started out really well on that science project but are so tired of papier-mâché volcanos that you're tempted to call it quits before you're really finished. Anyone know what I mean?”

“But those are one thing, right? If you study for the test, you should get a decent grade. If you push through and finish your science fair project, you might win—or at least get a participation ribbon! But there are things that happen throughout our lives when we wonder if perseverance matters at all. Like even if we give our best effort, there really isn't much to show for it. Maybe you persevere through a month of working on your running skills but still can't break a seven-minute mile. Or you work really hard at math, but there are somethings you still wonder if you'll ever understand. In those moments, do you ever wonder why it's worth it to keep going? Wouldn't it be better to just call it quits and stop the misery?”

“I'm guessing that is a question we all might ask ourselves at some point. And when we have questions like those, the first place we should look is the Bible. Let's check it out with the help of this week's episode!”

CG: Lesson Video (Runtime: 13:50)

“The entire prison was listening to Paul and Silas, watching them worship God even after being beaten. I'm sure that made an impression. And then when the earthquake happened, did you see whom the jailer went to? Paul and Silas. And they had the opportunity to introduce the jailer and his entire household, including his family and servants, to Jesus.”

“Let's back up for a second and imagine Paul and Silas. They have just been beaten and thrown into prison. Now imagine them in their prison cell complaining and whining about how unfair it is or how this mission from Jesus is just too hard and they don't want to do it anymore. Would that have changed things? It sure would have. But because they were willing to keep going, even when it got really difficult, there was a huge payoff in the end: many people put their faith in Jesus.”

"I'm guessing from time to time you all find yourselves in spots where you're wondering if it is worth it. It doesn't have to be big things like prisons and earthquakes. Maybe you have put in long hours of practice for that dance recital and you are starting to wonder if it is worth it. Or maybe you have been practicing really hard but you are still not getting the playing time you were hoping for. Or maybe you have been sticking around in a friendship that has gotten really difficult. Or it might be what we started with . . . hanging in there until summer break and not checking out early. There are a lot of opportunities for us to show perseverance . . . to hang in there and keep going."

"As we head to Small Group today, ask yourself this question:"

CG: Key Question Slide

"Why is it worth it to keep going?" First, think about some of the times when you find it difficult to hang in there. Then start to identify why it might be worth it to keep going in that situation. But don't worry if you can't think of something off the top of your head. You'll talk all about it together during Small Group. But before we head out, let's spend some time worshipping God with our offering and attention!"

OFFERING TIME:

Homer Glen: Victor

New Lenox: Daniel

Orland Park: Michael and Valerie

CG: Picture of Child

CG: Kenyan Facts

"Offering Time is important here in the Alley, because it gives you all an opportunity to worship God by giving your money generously. Here at (*your campus*), we give our offering to help support (*your campus child*) in Kenya. Our offering goes to show kindness to them by buying clothes, and food, and other materials they may need. We have a picture of some facts about Nairobi where (*campus child*) lives! If you brought an offering today, you may place it in our Alley Offering Bin (*point children to location of bin*)

CG: Alley Offering Bin JPEG

...when the video plays. If not, that's ok too. You can bring an offering next week. The Bible tells us this about bringing our offerings to Him..."

CG: Offering Verse JPEG (Hebrews 13:16)

(Invite students to place their offerings in bin)

CG: Worship Experience Video (Runtime: 5:00)

NOTE: Students will participate in an endurance activity, while worship music plays.