

Old Testament Bible Heroes

Jeremiah - Persistence

Ready (*Plant the seed*)

Let us not become weary doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

—Galatians 6:9

Set (*Get the conversation started*)

Jeremiah was an Old Testament prophet in Judah during a time when God's people were being disobedient to God's laws. God told Jeremiah to warn the people to repent and turn from their wicked ways. And so every day he warned them of the danger ahead if they continued worshipping idols and listening to false prophets that told them everything was great and they could do whatever they wanted. Jeremiah did this for 40 years. That is 14,600 days! That is persistent! Persistence means to continue working hard at something especially when it becomes difficult. After all of those warnings, the people of Judah still did not listen to Jeremiah. God removed his protection from them and they were conquered by King Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah wept for his people.

Persistence is important as an athlete. You must practice your sport to get better. Most basketball players have a sweet spot on the court they like to shoot from because they get the best results there. While it is great that you can score from that place most of the time, the other team can pick up on that and anticipate your move. You must be able to shoot from more than one place on the court. If you are good on the right side, practice on the left to give you more options and make you a well-rounded player. This is hard if you aren't as good with your left hand, so you will have to be persistent like Jeremiah. Keep moving through the obstacles that make it difficult to be successful. It may take longer than you expect; I'm sure Jeremiah didn't think his people would ignore his warnings for 40 years!

Grow (*Talk it over*)

-Tell me a time when you were persistent in pursuing something.

-Why is it so easy to give up?

-What are some things in your life that you could be more persistent about doing?

Pray

God, you are our great and powerful father who knows all that we need before we ask. Thank you for sending Jeremiah to remind us to be persistent in the things we should do. Help us to listen to what you want for us and not be like those people in Judah. Help us not to give up when things become difficult. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Overtime (*Team Building Game to Support Concept*) Oh, Captain!

Split group into 2 teams that line up behind the sideline. Each team gets a basketball & elects a captain. The captain in each team takes 5 steps away from his line then turns to face them. He/she will bounce pass to the first person in line. If they successfully catch the pass with only 1 bounce between them on the first try with two hands, they shout "Oh, Captain!" and their captain takes one step backwards towards the other side of the court. That person goes to the back of the line and the next player receives the pass from the captain. Play continues until one team gets their captain all the way to the other sideline.

Once the game is over say: *Who should win?* They should answer that the team that crossed the line first won. *Well, God isn't interested in how fast or slow you are, He is more interested in you showing persistence. It's not always easy to keep going, especially when it gets difficult. It was not easy for Jeremiah to get up day after day to warn his people. This game got more difficult as your captain got farther away from you, but you all persisted. So, I think you all win!*