

Read: 2 Thessalonians 1:1-5,11,12

Is following Jesus hard?

2 Thessalonians 1:3,4

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Going to school can be hard work. There is homework, quizzes, and tests.

Being a parent can be hard work. There are meals to be made, clothes to be washed, and seemingly endless events to go to.

Having a job can be hard work. There are shifts to work, things to do, and projects to complete.

What about being a Christian? Is being a follower of Jesus hard work? It can be.

The work of following Jesus isn't about what we have to do to get to heaven. Jesus has already done that hard work for us. He worked hard when he was here on earth to obey all of God's commands—and he did it perfectly! It was hard when he took all our sin and failures and said they were his sin, and as a result of our sin, Jesus died. It was not an easy thing to live in our place, die for our sin, and then rise in victory over death and the devil. Being our Savior was hard work!

Following Jesus can be hard work too! Sometimes, we might not want to spend time with Jesus at church or in reading his Word. Sometimes we won't want to love others when they can be mean or unkind. Sometimes people may even be mean or want to hurt us because we follow Jesus. It is not always an easy thing to follow Jesus.

But Jesus promises that as we listen to what he has done for us, as we grow in our faith and trust in him, he will strengthen our faith so that we can do the hard work of following him! He will be with us and help us so that we can do the things he tells us to do in his Word.

It won't always be easy, but Jesus has already done the hardest work of forgiving our sin. Now, we can follow him here on earth until he takes us to heaven!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What is the hardest thing you have ever done in your entire life?
- What do you think was the hardest thing Jesus did in his life? Why?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What is your hardest subject at school?
- What do you think is the hardest part of following Jesus? Why?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- What makes it hard for you to follow Jesus at times?
- List two or three things you can do when following Jesus is hard that Jesus promises to bless.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, thank you so much for all that you did to save me. That was hard work. Help me to follow you, even when it is hard. In your name I pray. Amen.