

Keep Doing What Is Right

One of the most difficult parts of the Christian faith is perseverance. Now, it's one thing if you have a large ministry and are making a difference in this world. If things are going well and you can see the fruits of your labor then it's a lot easier to find the strength to keep going. After all, look at all the good you're doing! It makes sense to persevere because what you're doing matters in a clear and obvious way.

It can also be easier to persevere if you're surrounded by people who are supporting you. Those people can lift you up when you're struggling:

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat; but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

The problem is that many Christians aren't in either of those situations. They don't have big ministries or a network of supporters. In spite of their best efforts they're not doing anything particularly notable. (There are many Christians who would love to make a big difference, but their life just didn't work out that way.)

What makes this worse is when Christians are doing their best to live for God, and are suffering greatly – not because they're being persecuted, but because life is hard and full of pain and suffering. That's a hard thing to endure because it seems like all of that suffering is accomplishing nothing (as far as they can tell). The grind of life can wear people down:

Mark 4:19: "And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other

things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.”

It's one thing to endure suffering when all of that pain is making a genuine difference. But what about all the times when it's not helping anyone? What about all the suffering we go through that *isn't* because of persecution? Why should we keep trying to do good in this world when each day seems pointless and empty?

That's where the principle of endurance comes in. The reason we must patiently endure isn't because we're accomplishing great things for God. It's because that's what God has called us to do. That's the price we must pay if we want to inherit eternal life:

Romans 2:7: “To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:”

The way we demonstrate our faith isn't by persevering when it's clear that doing so has great value. Instead it's by continuing to do well even when our suffering seems to be accomplishing nothing but making our life harder. It's vital to remember that our suffering isn't meaningless to God:

1 Peter 2:20: “For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.”

If we seek God with all our heart and walk in His ways, we may still experience suffering that has nothing to do with persecution. When this happens there are some people who leave the faith and walk away (which proves they were never saved at all). However, if we choose to keep going in spite of the problems that we encounter then we're proving that we have faith in God. Even if our problems seem frustrating and pointless, choosing to continue to do well in spite of them is acceptable in God's sight.

The Christian walk requires a great deal of patience:

Luke 21:19: “In your patience possess ye your souls.”

2 Corinthians 6:4: “But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,”

When the Bible talks about patience it's not talking about sitting around doing nothing while we wait for something to happen. Instead it's talking about the need to demonstrate our faith through our actions, by continuing to do well even when our life is hard and the world is wearing us down. Being patient through affliction means continuing to do well in spite of what we're suffering. That's the sort of patience God seeks in our life.

Patience isn't optional. If we want to receive God's promises then we must patiently wait for them:

Hebrews 10:36: “For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”

What do we need to do in order to receive the promise that God has made to us? We need to *keep doing His will*. In other words, we need to not give up.

There's a tremendous reward in store for us if we persevere. If we don't give up then we'll inherit everlasting life. God has promised that one day we'll live in a perfect world where there's no pain, suffering, or death. We will see *all* of God's promises come to pass! We'll witness the final end of the wicked, and will rejoice when the meek inherit the earth.

But the road to get there isn't easy. The only way to reach it is through patience:

Hebrews 12:1: “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run

with patience the race that is set before us,”

Do you see how each of these passages defines patience not as waiting around, but as continuing to do God’s will? Patience means *continuing to run the race*. That’s what God requires of us.

There are many times when we pray that God will remove suffering from our lives. However, sometimes God doesn't do that. One of the reasons He may allow us to suffer for a long time is because He uses trials to teach us patience:

James 1:3-4: “Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

Instead of delivering us from our trials, God may choose to give us the strength to patiently endure them:

Colossians 1:11: “Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;”

This can be difficult to do. There may be times when we simply don't want to do it anymore. We may grow tired of continuing to do good in a world that’s indifferent (especially if our efforts don’t seem to be making a difference). However, we *must* persevere. We *must not give up*. It will be worth it in the end:

Galatians 6:9: “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

The only way to reap is to *keep going*. Don't give up before the harvest time comes! Every single one of God’s promises will come true, exactly as He said they would. What God has called us to do is be patient and keep doing what’s right.