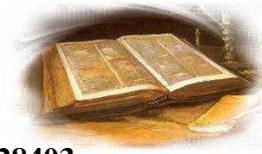


The Examiner



Published by the Winter Park church of Christ
Meeting at: 2122 Market Street; Wilmington NC 28403
www.winterparkcocnc.com

Vol. 9, No. 8

Edited by John Cripps

May 30th, 2021

Patience - The Art of Persevering In This Life (Concluded) -

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The man who has patience will not give up in the midst of the battle; he will keep on until the victory is won. Thus, we can see how vital it is to have patience in our lives. When trials come, we need to endure. When our Lord needs our service, we need to be mature, complete, and fully developed in order that we may serve him totally and without wavering. Let us indeed pray for patience.

We need patience in order that we might endure trials. The writer of Hebrews speaks of how terrifying it is to fall into the hands of the living God (**Heb. 10:31**). He then speaks of the former days when they endured a great conflict of suffering. Now he urges them not to throw away their confidence, which has a great reward (**v. 35**). Then he says, "For you have need of endurance (patience), so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised" (**v. 36**). "But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul" (**v. 39**). These Hebrew Christians had begun well. But now that Christianity had been declared an illegal religion by the Roman Empire, they are being called upon to undergo severe persecutions and even death. So the writer urges patient endurance - do not give up the faith; hold

on; do not lose your reward. He gives them added motivation by saying, "But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul" (**Heb. 11:29**). We, too, must have this patient endurance in order that we may not shrink back but that we may receive everlasting life in Heaven.

We need patience in order that we might run the race. The Hebrew writer continued; "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounded us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance (patience) the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (**Heb. 12:1-2**). Just recently the news media told of the running of the Boston marathon, a race of twenty-six miles. Very few of us would have the stamina to run such a race. The only ones who could do so are those who, by rigorous pre-conditioning, have prepared themselves for such an event. Even then it takes tremendous staying power to complete the race. There is some glory attached to completing such a race even if one does

not come in first. They look forward to the glory of completing and thus finish the race. So it is in running the race of a Christian. We see our goal - everlasting life. We also see the one superb example - Jesus, and we fix our eyes on him. We also are aware that others are watching us and that spurs us onward. With these incentives, we exercise our patient endurance and run the race. The victory will be ours as we continue in patience. We dare not turn aside to destruction.

Patience And Its Connections

As we study about patience, we see that it is connected with several other godly attributes. In fact, often we cannot have one without the other.

1. Patience is joined with faith.

Remember in **James 1:3** how he said, "knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience (endurance)"? It is our faith that produces the motivation to endure. Because I believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that he is the only way to Heaven (**John 14:6**), then I will patiently do his will in order to please him. Because I believe that the Bible is his word and that every promise is true, I will be steadfast in order to receive the blessed promises that are given. John tells us that the victory that overcomes the world is our faith (**1 John 5:4**). When these two great traits are joined together faith and patience - then I will have victory in my life. I will exemplify the fruit of the Spirit in living for Jesus.

2. Patience is joined with hope. Paul wrote: - Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in

tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance (patience); and perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us (**Rom. 5:1-5, NKJ**).

The whole spectrum of our salvation is viewed here. We are saved by grace on God's part which was manifested in his sending Jesus. We exercise faith on our part which causes us to have a right-standing with God. Because of our faith and our hope we glory in trials because these trials produce perseverance or staying-power. This patience produces proven character - that which has been tested and found to be pure gold (**1 Pet. 1:6ff**). This in turn gives substance to our hope which causes us to exult and glory because of what God has done and will do in our lives. This kind of hope that is based on grace, faith, justification, patience, and character will never disappoint us because we know of God's love for us. Because of patience and hope, we endure whatever is necessary knowing that the God of glory will give eternal glory to us.

3. Patience is joined with joy. "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy" (**Col. 1:11**). You see, it is the strength that God gives us that helps us endure with joy. Jesus had to endure the suffering of the cross. Yet he did so because of the joy that was set before him (**Heb. 12:1-2**). It was by looking to the ultimate position that would be his that he was able to endure the cross. Since he looked forward with joy to what was beyond the suffering, he had the patience to remain steadfast in

the midst of severe suffering. So it is with us. Only when we see beyond the sufferings of this present time will we really be able to patiently endure. Paul put it this way: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (**Rom. 8:18**). By our looking to the joy that is to come, we can patiently endure any present sufferings or discouragements.

4. This leads us to say that **patience is connected with the goal of glory**. Paul spoke of the time when God "will render to every man according to his deeds" and said, "to those who by perseverance (hupomone, patience) in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life" (**Rom. 2:6-7**). When one is seeking for the true glory and honor (based on the knowledge of divine truth), then he will have the perseverance necessary to attain. God will render eternal life to such a contender. Patience is connected to the goal of glory. This is what the Spirit taught in **Romans 8:25**: "But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance (patience) we wait eagerly for it." This is why Paul could pray, "And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness (patience) of Christ" (**2 Thess. 3:5**). Most likely, he is referring to the patience which Christ can give to us as we walk with him. We see our goal - everlasting life.. We have the positive expectation and the earnest desire to attain it. Therefore, we steadfastly endure and persevere in order to reach that goal, and Jesus gives to us strength and encouragement all along the way. Thus, through him we expect to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away,

reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen him, you love him, and though you do not see him now, but believe in him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls (**1 Pet. 1:4-9**).

Herein is the secret of endurance. They can endure with patience whatever is set before them because of what they are looking forward to. The trials only purify and strengthen the real faith so that it is able to persevere and look beyond to that inheritance that will never fade away. To me, this section is one of the most beautiful and powerful sections of Holy Writ. I can endure any trial or any temptation because I know that Jesus is going to come, and when he comes, he will take me to eternal glory with him. No momentary pleasure is worth it if I must give up my reward. I must, indeed, persevere. I am determined to do so. Someday we can look back and say, "It was really worth it all!"

The Great Example of Job and His Patience

James said, "Behold, we count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance (patience) of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful" (**Jas. 5:11**).

What a powerful example Job is! There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God, and turned away from evil. There were born to him even sons and three daughters. He had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and very many servants; so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east (**Job 1:1-3**).

What a great and powerful man he was! Especially so, when we see that he was upright and feared the Lord! He had wealth and influence. But all of this changed very abruptly because of the work of the devil.

1. Job lost all of his possessions in one day, yet he remained faithful to God (**Job 1:14-17**). This is what James meant when he spoke of the perseverance of Job. On the same day he lost all ten of his children to death (**1:18-19**).

What a staggering blow to this godly man! It would have been so easy for him to give up and to blame God for it all. Yet he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord" (**1:21**). His faith in God sustained him and he endured (exercised patience).

2. Job had horrible bodily affliction, yet he patiently endured. His afflictions are described in **2:7-8**. He had sore boils from the top of his head to the sole of his foot. He sat in the ashes and scraped himself with a potsherd. In **7:5** he described his suffering by saying, "My flesh is clothed with worms and a crust of dirt; my skin hardens and runs." Yet he did not give himself over to the devil. He persevered.

3. Job's friends turned on him (**2:11-13**), yet he did not deny his faith in God. Even his wife turned against him and urged him to curse God and die (**2:9-10**). Job had two options in the midst of all his difficulties: he could give up or he could handle his problems through faith in God and through patience (perseverance). Aren't you glad that Job opted to handle his problems? What a beautiful example he is to you and to me. When it seems that problems overwhelm me and that it would be easier to give up, I can look to Job and see that he handled his problems and that he endured. This is the message James was giving to us as he spoke about the patience of Job. We can further see that Job was rewarded for his integrity. As a result of his encounter with God (**Job 38**), he was able to put things in proper perspective. And God saw that his wealth and family were restored to him in an even greater capacity (**Job 42**). He says to us, "Don't get yourself so wrapped up in material things. They may not endure." He says, "While our family members are vitally important to us and we love them so very dearly, remember that all earthly ties must be severed." He says, "When we lose our wealth, our health, or even our nearest and dearest of family loved ones, make sure that we do not lose our relationship to God. Nothing is more important than that. So set yourself to develop genuine patience that will allow you to endure and persevere in order that some glorious day God will take you to himself in that state of perfect glory where there will be no pain, no decay of spiritual riches, and no death." My friend, resolve to grow patience as a great block in your spiritual life. **** **Via Guardian of Truth XXXII: 19, pp. 592-594, October 6, 1988******