

Topic 20: Perseverance *Dealing with Doubt, Trials, and Fears*

"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him." —James 1:12

Never...Ever...Give Up

In this lesson, we want to look at the rare and wonderful quality of perseverance. Disciples have this trait because Jesus, the one they follow, had it. Why should you keep trusting the Father in heaven and walking with him, when doing so doesn't seem to make your life easier or better?

It's tough to keep hanging in there when you're feeling doubts and facing problems, isn't it?

Perseverance: What Does It Mean?

In the New Testament, there are two primary Greek words that get translated "perseverance." One is *proskartere*. It means "to adhere" or "to cling" or "to be devoted." Some of our English Bibles translate it "to continue (in something)," "to be steadfast," or "to be constant."

The other word is *hupomone*. It conveys the same ideas of endurance, patience, being steadfast, having to wait. Again, the implication is that you are weary of your hard circumstances, and tired of waiting for things to change. You want to throw in the towel. But the voice of perseverance urges, "Don't quit. Hang in there. Cling. Remain faithful despite the opposition and the tantalizing promises of life elsewhere."

Looking at the Text

"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him." —James 1:12

Blessed – Happy; to be envied

Crown of Life – Reward of Life itself, (will receive) eternal life



Looking at the Wider Text

In what specific ways are followers of Christ supposed to persevere?

Take a look at these verses that urge followers of Jesus to *persevere* in some aspect of the life of faith:

- “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer” (Romans 12:12).
- “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9).
- “But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you” (2 Timothy 3:14, nlt).
- “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (Hebrews 12:1).
- “Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong” (1 Corinthians 16:13, nlt).
- “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful” (Colossians 4:2).
- “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people” (Ephesians 6:18).
- “So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter” (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

Looking at the You and me of the matter

1. What specific areas do you see which calls the Christian to persevere?

2. How do you rate yourself when it comes to persevering in the areas mentioned?

3. These verses speak of what God does to help disciples to persevere and remain faithful:

- a. "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand" (Jesus, speaking in John 10:28-29).
- b. "God's gifts and his call are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29).
- c. "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6, nasb).
- d. "All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance – an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see" (1 Peter 1:3-5, nlt).

According to these verses, why – if we have faith in Christ – do we not have to fear?

4. Writing to Christians who were facing a lot of hard things in life, the apostle James said:

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (James 1:2-4).

What can we do to cultivate perseverance in our lives?

The Lord has given his children four great resources for the hard times of life:

1. **His Word.** "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The trustworthy promises of the Bible can shore up our flagging faith.

2. **His Spirit.** "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:26-27). *The indwelling Spirit can give us the power to continue to cling.*

3. **His People.** "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now" (Paul writing to the Philippians, from prison, 1:3-5).

The body of Christ can surround us and provide encouragement to keep going.

His Mission. “But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:57-58)
Participation in an eternally worthy task can keep us focused on what matters.