

An Unpopular Quality

Selected Scriptures

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Introduction

- Some things that the idea of Human Living through difficulty **might be thought of to be:**
 - Endurance
 - Strength
 - Perseverance
 - Persistence
 - Pursuit
 - Consistency
 - Determination and others!!
- As I **pondered my recent experiences**, I got to thinking about **just how God wants me to react to and engage with** what He has put before me...asked me to **undergo and deal with...**
 - I concluded that it **COULDN'T JUST** be **to put up with it**
 - One thing that I came to see is that it **has more to do with me see things from God's PoV or Perspective** than it does **from me interpreting or understanding it in human terms.**
 - I found **several Scriptures that are illuminating as to just what He intends** for me even in the midst of such things...
 - **First**...He wants me to **respond by developing:**

1) Endurance

A. Endurance Allows us to remain under trials, without succumbing.

- It's interesting that **God desires us to view such difficulties from HIS POV...**

- It is a matter of undergoing tribulation, no matter what it is, and view it from God’s perspective...
- It is NOT that He doesn’t care or is not interested

Rom 5:3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

- Note the “**produces**” word that Paul uses...
 - **Implies a couple things that we should recognize**
 - **1st** anything of the kind is NOT an accident
 - **2nd** anything of the kind HAS a deliberate and “**thought-through**” purpose
 - **3rd** that purpose can be and should be sought out
 - **4th** If we are to achieve God’s full purpose/plan in ANY experience we MUST seek it out under His guidance and light – and **NOT just kind of wander along under its’ weight**
- Note the reference to the unavoidable effect of testimony that is had in the midst of the experience...
 - The manner in which one undergoes one’s experience speaks eloquently (one way or the other) of their view of God and there MUST BE care given that this testimony accurately speaks of our Father in Heaven!

*2 Thess 1:4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God **for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,***

- Also – we need to recognize that whatever it is... is NOT MERELY a Human experience...
 - We’re not just walking along...
 - God intends for us to use the experience as a full and effective testimony those around us...

*James 1:3–4 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 **But** let patience have its perfect*

work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

- There is **more to know** than just what we are undergoing!
 - **THAT WHICH IS knowable...God WILL reveal it to us!**
- **“But...Let”**
 - There is a seemingly contrastive but wholly **productive result that CAN come from** seeking to see God’s work fully done
- What is **clearly and inarguably** a wondrous and **utterly desirable result** in the Christian life **that seems to come,**
 - **in large part** from **dealing rightly from the difficulties** in life and
 - **NOT from just walking along** the norms of human experience!!

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

- There are **two truths shown** in various places in the Scripture:

Believers must ENDURE temptation

- I’m **not just talking about temptation to fleshly sin**
- For our purposes, it’s **talking about the failure to persevere THROUGH** that which **God puts into our lives and which He intends to and WILL use** (**assuming** we persevere through and bear up under it) **to reshape us into His image!!!**
- I **NEVER** thought of my Epilepsy in those terms before this past week.
 - I **did some reading** and I **came across many voices that played the same tune** that we hear in a number of choruses...
 - **Waaaaaaaahhhhhhhh!!!!**
 - **God can’t be good and let people suffer** such stuff!

- How can you think that God is a God of love and yet think of Him and one who does....etc.
- But that is EXACTLY what Paul said in what we read back a bit...

*Rom 5:3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, **knowing** that tribulation produces perseverance;*

- Paul was talking about various nasty and difficult experiences...
 - He saw them (at least as best he, as a human being, was able) from the PoV of the God Who controlled all things.
 - He did not “adapt” that humanly twisted God to his own thinking and insist that God be **as humans might think of Him**...
- He changed his understanding of his experiences to “fit” what he knew God to be...
 - I think it readily and rapidly becomes apparent WHY this is so...
- It is also apparent that God further uses this truth to build BOTH our Christian life and our testimony to others around us...

B. Endurance Builds us/Establishes Us In the Christian life.

Heb 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

- Note the tie between the two things:
 - The holiness of living and forsaking sin
 - The enablement given w/ regard to the enablement to live and progress/move forward/accomplish progress in the **difficult “race” that is before all of God’s people.**

- Note what we've already said...it's difficult – races always are!
- God has enabled us the ability to do so successfully!
- And right along with that, we need to **recognize something that is very significant:**

C. Endurance can also be seen as a proof/demonstration of the Validity of Salvation.

Matt 24:13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

- It serves more than one purpose...it demonstrates salvation...
 - BOTH to the individual AND to the those among whom he walks...
- Btw - **NOT “The” proof but ONE of them!!**
 - There are a number of ways in which salvation demonstrates itself
 - This is only one of them...
 - Jesus saw fit to speak of this one in Matt. 24
 - The ones who persevere are **the same ones who are saved**—not the ones whose love grows cold (24:12).
 - This does not suggest that our perseverance secures our salvation.
 - Scripture everywhere teaches precisely the opposite:
 - God, as part of his saving work, secures our perseverance.
 - True believers

“...are being guarded through faith for a salvation” (1 Pet. 1:5).

- The guarantee of our perseverance is built into the New Covenant promise.
 - God says:

“I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me” (Jer. 32:40).

- **Those who do fall away from Christ give conclusive proof that they were never truly believers to begin with** (1 John 2:19).

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

- **To say that God secures our perseverance is not to say that we are passive in the process, however.**
 - He keeps us *“through faith”* (1 Pet. 1:5) – that is **to say our faith.**
 - **Scripture sometimes calls us to hold fast to our faith** (Heb. 10:23; Rev. 3:11)

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. (Heb. 10:23)

Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. (Rev. 3:11)

- **...or warns us against falling away** (Heb. 10:26–29).

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

- Such admonitions **do not negate the many promises that true believers will persevere**

- John 10:28–29

And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

- Rom. 8:38–39

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- 1 Cor. 1:8–9

who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Phil. 1:6

being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

- **Rather, the warnings and pleas are among the means God uses to secure our perseverance in the faith.**
- Notice that the **warnings and the promises often appear side by side.**
 - For example, when **Jude urges believers,**
“keep yourselves in the love of God” (Jude 21),
- **he immediately** points them to God,

“who is able to keep you from stumbling” (Jude 24).

2 Tim 2:12 If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

Cf. Matt 10:22

- Just to note...something that we often do not notice, understand or remember...

D. Endurance is clearly spoken of as a Characteristic of Genuine Love.

- Love does a number of things Biblically:

1 Cor 13:7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

E. Love’s Endurance Has Been Exemplified, for instance, by...

1. Abraham.

Heb 6:15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

2. Job.

James 5:11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful

- So “Endurance” is one quality that we ought, as believers, see to it is present and manifest in the manner in which we see and understand our lives...
- **How we move through our living...**

- **Another truth or term we want to see our lives demonstrate in the face of all of negative experience is...**

2) *Perseverance*

- It is the second or flip, the active side of endurance...
- Many of the ideas we spoken of already have **a similar aspect under our discussion here...**
- **FIRST, though, we need to remember that this is another way of talking about the fact that we must see things from God's PoV and not anything even remotely resembling a human manner or perspective...**

A. Perseverance is an evidence of salvation.

Job 17:9 Yet the righteous will hold to his way, And he who has clean hands will be stronger and stronger.

Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.

John 8:31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

Col 1:21–23 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Heb 3:6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

Heb 3:14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,

B. Perseverance ought to be manifested in

1. (Perseverance) **The way we go about Seeking God.**

1 Chr 16:11 Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face evermore!

2. (Perseverance) In our **Waiting** upon God.

Hos 12:6 So you, by the help of your God, return; Observe mercy and justice, And wait on your God continually.

3. (Perseverance) In **the Way we conduct** our Prayer.

Rom 12:12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;

Eph 6:18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

4. (Perseverance) **Doing good.**

Rom 2:7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;

2 Thess 3:13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good.

5. (Perseverance) Perseverance is Demonstrated in the Fact that **we are Continuing in the faith.**

Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

Col 1:23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every

creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

2 Tim 4:7 *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

6. (Perseverance) **Holding fast hope.**

Heb 3:6 *but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.*

- **We can readily agree about** the need and the “goodness” or godliness of Perseverance...
 - But, we **should also agree** that it is **NOT** simply a **matter of human strength or will...rather**

C. Perseverance is Maintained through

- And just as a note, it is **important that we REMEMBER**, in the **front of our minds** and **as a matter of application in our life...**
 - **Not just something we do...but** the conscious **habit of our lives...first we must look to:**

1. *The power of God.*

- **Not ANY of our own talents...**

Ps 37:24 *Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; For the LORD upholds him with His hand.*

Phil 1:6 *being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;*

- This power and willingness of God to keep us can be **spoken of as the...**

2. *The power of Christ.*

John 10:28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

- **Another name for this work of Christ on our behalf** can be seen to be:

3. *The intercession of Christ.*

Luke 22:31–32 And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. **32** But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”

John 17:11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.

- Some **many people misunderstand this next idea** when we think of it in relationship to our living **and what we will do or not...**
 - The **Scripture talks about the “fear” of the Lord...**
 - But **let’s not make the mistake of thinking that we ought “persevere”** because God will **get us or not bless us if we don’t.**
 - But that is **NOT the point in this matter...**
 - We **ought to understand** the...

4. *The fear of God.*

Jer 32:40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.

- It is the matter of fearing God that can give us the necessary PoV required to persevere in a given matter

5. *Perseverance is also Upheld via Faith.*

1 Pet 1:5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

D. Scripture says Perseverance Leads to the increase of knowledge.

John 8:31–32 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

E. We’re Told That Perseverance Results In Our Doing Good

- *Leads to assurance of hope.*

Heb 6:10–11 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,

- *Is not in vain.*

1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Gal 6:9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

F. Ministers should Practice and exhort to.

Acts 13:43 Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”

G. There are Quite a Number of Encouragement and promises When One Perseveres

Matt 10:22 And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

Matt 24:13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Heb 12:2–3 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

Rev 2:26–28 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—**27** ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—as I also have received from My Father; **28** and I will give him the morning star.

H. The Scripture Asserts the Blessedness of Perseverance

James 1:25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

I. Scripture also states what results from a Lack of Perseverance,

1. Excludes from the benefits of the gospel.

Heb 6:4–6 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*

2. Is punished.

John 15:6 *If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.*

Rom 11:22 *Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.*

3. Illustrated.

Mark 4:5 *Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth.*

Mark 4:17 *and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.*
