

Sunday, January 29, 2023 am

Sunday, February 26, 2023 – Noon – Indio, CA

## PATIENCE AND PERSISTENCE

It is no secret that getting to heaven is not easy. Jesus in Matthew 7:13-14 noted that the way to eternal life is difficult and narrow. Few will find it. What makes it difficult is the various obstacles we face, both externally and internally. But how do we deal with these obstacles? Each one will have its own set of actions we must take. But something they will ALL need is patience and persistence. For this lecture, I have been assigned the topic of patience and persistence as it relates to getting to heaven. So in this lesson, I want to examine what these terms mean, notice the imperative nature of God's commands to us and finally consider some things that can help us develop/maintain patience.

### I. The Bible - patience & persistence – Luke 21:19

#### a. Defined

- i. Patience – Webster defines the word as, “bearing pains or trials calmly and without complaint. 2. Manifesting forbearance under provocation or strain; 3. Not hasty or impetuous; 4. Steadfast despite opposition, 5. Able or willing to bear”<sup>1</sup>
- ii. Persistence – Webster, “to persist in a state, enterprise, or undertaking in spite of counterinfluences, opposition, or discouragement.”<sup>2</sup>
- iii. More simply stated, patience is the idea of being willing to calmly wait even if you are faced with challenges and doing so without complaining. Persistence is essentially the same thing with a determination to not give up. Associated with persistence would be the idea of long suffering if needed.
- iv. Biblically they are typically the same word.
  1. ὑπομονή (hypomonē) is the Greek word primarily translated patience AND persistence. It is found some 32x in NT (NKJV) – 20x (of 23) as patience and 9x (of 10) as persistence. It is also translated as endurance 3x.
  2. The word is defined as, “the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty. Patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, persistence.” (BDAG<sup>3</sup>) Bullinger<sup>4</sup> defines the word as, “a remaining under, a bearing-up under; hence, patient endurance, holding out, enduring.”
  3. The word typically is associated with steadfast endurance - not giving up or acting hastily – especially in difficult situations. It is easier to remain patient if the stakes are not that high.

- b. How are patience and persistence related? Biblically there is not much difference between the words. But in our understanding they are slightly different and BOTH needed as we process a situation. Patience is the attitude and persistence is the action. IOW, it is our patient disposition (attitude) that causes us to persevere (endure, suffer long). In an article at a motivational website<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Patient.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/patient>. Accessed 27 Jan. 2023.

<sup>2</sup> “Persevere.” Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Arndt, William, et al. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., University of Chicago Press, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Bullinger, Ethelbert W. *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*, Fifth Edition, Revised, Longmans, Green, & Co., 1908.

<sup>5</sup> “Patience and Persistence | The Difference & Examples.” *MrMotivate.Com*, 26 Jul. 2021, [mrmotivate.com/patience-and-persistence/](http://mrmotivate.com/patience-and-persistence/). Accessed 27 Jan. 2023.

the two were contrasted this way: *Patience is the capacity to manage or handle waiting, delay, or tardiness without becoming restless or agitated. Meanwhile, perseverance is defined as constant effort and determination through a challenge or difficulty. Patience gives us strength and maturity, while perseverance helps us to accomplish tasks and reach goals.* That is a good summary of their relationship to each other.

- c. We need patience and perseverance.
  - i. Patience teaches us kindness and tolerance toward differences (not necessarily acceptance – NOTE: This is where our society right now, and even among brethren, is getting this wrong – they are teaching, yea DEMANDING, that tolerance means acceptance as equally valid. Understand that wrong is always wrong!).
  - ii. It is a characteristic of our disposition. When you consider qualities that make one pleasant, patience and perseverance is there. **Galatians 5:22-23** includes “longsuffering” in the fruit of the Spirit. NOTE that vs. 23 concludes, “against such there is no law”. People avoid those who are impatient and the fruit that produces.
  - iii. Perseverance keeps us from giving up. It keeps us going. **Galatians 6:9**, “*Let us not grow weary in doing good...*”
- d. When we lack patience/perseverance.
  - i. We live in a society where patience is often in short supply. We have all experienced the impatient driver (maybe that describes me).
  - ii. We live in an instant gratification world – people don’t want to wait for anything. The result is shorter attention spans and short-fused tempers.
  - iii. The lack of patience/perseverance often cause us to rush into something – you may not do your job to your fullest potential, leave it half-way done or neglected.
  - iv. Impatience can lead to frustration and angst. It can cause us to give up.
  - v. It can lead to sinful attitudes and responses to others including sinful anger, careless words that you cannot easily take back, or worse.
  - vi. It can affect our disposition and cause us to be bitter, sullen, sharp in addressing others, and numerous other negative attitudes.
  - vii. It can cause us to act rashly and lead to regrettable and even disastrous consequences. Think of crimes committed in anger, road rage, accidents, damage done to property and even lives.
  - viii. It can strain relationships if not controlled.
  - ix. ALL of these results can endanger your soul and put your eternity in jeopardy.
  - x. If only we would learn to slow down and be patient. As we will now see, that is what God expects of us. It is a trait that we need to develop.
- e. The Bible and patience/perseverance
  - i. **1 Timothy 6:11**, Paul called upon Timothy to *pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and gentleness*. While addressed to Timothy, clearly Paul is describing the way Christians are to live.
  - ii. **Colossians 1:10-11**, *that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;*
  - iii. **Colossians 3:12-13**, *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.*
  - iv. **James 5:7-8,11**, *Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is*

*at hand.... 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. If you want to understand patience and perseverance tested, consider Job – he lost everything and yet patiently clung to his faith in God. He was frustrated but he NEVER denied God.*

- v. **1 Corinthians 13:4**, “*Love suffers long and is kind...*” The very first quality Paul mentions in describing love involves patience and perseverance.
- vi. **Hebrews 10:36, 12:1** – *you have need of endurance.... Run with endurance.* Consider these “bookends” to the heroes of faith. It was their faith that caused them to persevere even through troubling times.
- vii. **Ephesians 6:17-18** – as we don the “armor of God”, we *pray always being watchful with perseverance.*
- viii. In passages like these, and many more, we can see that God expects us to patiently persevere through this life and as we wait for His return.

## II. **Some things that can help us persevere.**

- a. God HAS to be our priority. Matthew 6:33 – seek first the kingdom of God. If heaven is your priority you will focus on that in everything you do – consider **Colossians 3:1-2** – SET your mind on things above. **Hebrews 12:1-2** – keep your eye on Jesus, as we run this race with endurance.
- b. Have a mindset that will help you endure.
  - i. **1 Peter 2:21-23** – consider the example of Jesus. What He endured for us. He persevered until he completed the job. And he COMMITTED Himself to God to complete the task.
  - ii. Commit yourself to Him. MAKE UP YOUR MIND that you are going to persevere and overcome. Without firm resolve it will not happen.
  - iii. Realize that with each victory, you are made stronger and next time overcoming will be easier.
  - iv. And NEVER, EVER give up! You may not be able to control the circumstances around you, but you CAN control how you react to them. Philippians 3:13-14 – keep pressing toward the goal.
- c. We need self-control/discipline – a crucial element that promotes perseverance. Virtually every sin, failure and success we achieve is the result of self-control or the lack thereof. If there is a difference between the two – self-control is what keeps you from doing what you should not do while self-discipline prompts you to do what you ought to do. Consider 2 Peter 1:5-7 – it is foundational to growth.
- d. We must face our struggles and troubles – you cannot sweep problems or challenges “under the carpet”. They will NOT go away and invariably get worse. The only question is WHEN you will you deal with them. Realize that facing your trials, whatever they are will strengthen you and build up your patience/perseverance.
  - i. **Romans 5:3-4** – tribulations produce perseverance. See also **James 1:2-4** – let patience have its perfect work.
  - ii. **Galatians 6:9** – let us not grow weary in doing good...
  - iii. **Hebrews 6:11-12** - *And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*
- e. Find godly brethren –
  - i. I am a strong advocate of church membership. When available, it to be more than a mere suggestion, but an expectation of God. The church is a part of God’s eternal plan (Ephesians 3:10-11) and a manifestation of His manifold (varied, having many forms) wisdom as well. Understand that this includes BOTH the church universal AND the local congregation.

- ii. That is why when it comes to the church we must respect it as HIS church – we must respect His pattern and be true to His will in organization, work, worship and even teaching.
  - iii. I say this to encourage you to find a church that will stand true to God’s word both in work and doctrine. Such will help you persevere. A church that compromises doctrinally or morally – whether in practice, teaching or tolerance thereof – may hinder your fellowship with God rather than helping you to endure.
  - iv. Godly brethren are going to help you persevere. They will lovingly correct you when you falter and stand with you when you struggle and are discouraged. Is that not what Paul commanded in 1 Thessalonians 5:14, *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all*. NOW, more than ever, WE NEED EACH OTHER!
- f. Keep your eye on the goal.
- i. You have to know why you are doing something. Keeping your eye on the goal gives you reason.
  - ii. Recall Hebrews 12:1-2 – you are looking to Jesus at the finished line.
  - iii. 2 Timothy 2:2–7 – Paul told Timothy to endure hardship. He gave examples – a farmer, a soldier and an athlete – all required patience and perseverance. But there is a goal. Realize as the saying goes, “Good things come to those who wait”.
  - iv. There is ALWAYS reward if we are patient.
    1. It may be as simple as NOT doing or saying something you soon regret.
    2. You will eventually get to your destination, even if it takes a little longer. Think of that speeder who just has to get around you and 30 seconds later, you stop beside him at the next traffic light. And you were safer and less likely to face disaster – an accident, ticket, etc. And you were not breaking the law.
    3. Most worthwhile resolutions take time to accomplish (e.g. well developed resolutions), but if you persevere, in the end you accomplish a goal – sometimes powerful – you are healthier, more knowledgeable at some task, etc.
    4. And that applies to spiritual goals as well.
    5. And ultimately, that is what will get you to heaven. How often does the Bible warn us to not quit? Galatians 6:9 again. Philippians 3:12-14 – Paul pressed toward the goal. He kept his eye on Jesus who was there waiting at the finish line.
- g. Finally, BE PATIENT! That’s right – if you are develop patience, it will take patience (on the job training). But as with so many other things, with time it can be done.

If we want to get to heaven, we need to persevere. Romans 2:7 tells us that eternal life awaits those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor and immortality. Jesus told His disciples that they would face troubles, even by friends but, “*By your patience possess your souls.*” So, what about you? Are you patiently persevering? Think about it!