

Supplement to Endurance Lesson

Endurance is needed to take us to our purpose. Also we must endure to keep our conversational relationship with Jesus.

Our God ordained purpose in life can only be transferred by Jesus to us through His Word. When the Word of God is planted in our hearts, as in Mark chapter 4, the parable of the sower, we undergo great trials that require endurance.

Mark 4:14-20,

“14 “The sower sows the word.

15 “And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan **comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.**

16 “These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

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.

18 “Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word,

19 “and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

20 “But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept *it*, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.””

We are not able to endure just in ourselves, it must be Christ us that endures.

Hebrews 12:2

“2 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.”

How do we look unto Jesus?

Speak this until you believe it in your heart.

Galatians 2:20,

“20 “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

“The words of God which you receive by your ear hold fast in your heart; for the Word of God is the food of the soul.” GREGORY I.

I have been thinking a lot about sensing the love of others when they really love me. It brings about an extreme sense and feeling to be loved in a very special way. I receive a similar feeling with God many times.

I feel that God is the same way. Sure He loves everybody, but not everybody, even many believers, give Him the type of love that really stirs His emotions and is pleasing to Him. I believe that when we endure trials for the Word sake that He has given to us, that He senses our love for Him.

Here are some Scriptures on how we please God.

Romans 12:1 AMP

“1 I APPEAL to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship.”

Ephesians 5:2

“2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”

Philippians 4:18

“18 Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.”

Hebrews 10:38

“38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if *anyone* draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.””

John 14:15

“15 “If you love Me, keep[guard]My commandments.”

Colossians 1:10

“10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;”

Running the Race

Endurance

We need to often focus on the issue of endurance. The writer of Hebrews gives sober warnings to all believers that:

- 1. We are in a race, a long endurance race.*
- 2. We are in great peril if we give up and do not finish.*
- 3. If we do finish the race, there is a great prize for us.*

In other words, “Grow or Die.”

Hebrews chapter 6 discusses moving on from the elementary principles of Christ to the road of inheriting the promises by faith and endurance. This chapter also infers that if we do not endure, we may “fall away” and put the Son of God to open shame. While I cannot explain everything this writer had in mind, it sounds serious!

Hebrews chapter 12 is more explicit about the warning!

Hebrews 12:1-2 says,

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,

2 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.”

Hebrews 12:15-17 says,

15 “[Looking] carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.

17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.”

I feel that the reason that Esau is mentioned here is very relevant to our lives.

Esau had an inheritance coming. We have an inheritance coming. As the first two chapters of this book pointed out, we inherit God’s abundant life by faith and by His promises growing as a seed in our hearts. The caution is that there is a time of trial, and sometimes tribulation, between the planting of the seed and the fruit bearing. That period of time is called “The Race.” Esau’s lust of the flesh just said, “Who cares about the promise and the inheritance, my flesh wants to be fed, now.” If we are not careful we can be guilty of saying to God, “I am tired of this suffering, tired of waiting, I just can’t take this pressure any longer, and I give up! This faith stuff does not work.” Giving up is like Esau taking the one morsel of food, which fed his selfish flesh nature.

It is also interesting to note that Esau did not even get the type of stew/soup that he had demanded. Notice in the Scriptures below that Esau asked for red stew, red meat. However, Jacob tricked him and gave him lentils, or vegetable soup. Not only did he lose his inheritance, but also his “flesh nature” was not even satisfied!

Genesis 25: 30, 32, 34 says,

30 *“And Esau said to Jacob, ‘Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary.’ Therefore his name was called Edom.”*

32 *“And Esau said, ‘Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?’”*

34 *“And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.”*

Under the Old Testament, as a foreshadow of Jesus, every firstborn male had a superior birthright to be priest and lord over all the rest. It carried the privilege of king and priest. Esau forfeited this. We can forfeit our kingship and priesthood if we are not careful to finish the race.

Warning.

Esau could not repent after this incident, and we are warned that this type of behavior will lead to bitterness.

We are also warned to depend upon the grace of God lest we would become bitter.

Hebrews 12:12-15 (Amplified Bible) says,

12 *“So then, brace up and reinvigorate and set right your slackened and weakened and drooping hands and strengthen your feeble and palsied and tottering knees,*

13 *And cut through and make firm and plain and smooth, straight paths for your feet [yes, make them safe and upright and happy paths that go in the right direction], so that the lame and halting [limbs] may not be put out of joint, but rather may be cured.*

14 *Strive to live in peace with everybody and pursue that consecration and holiness without which no one will [ever] see the Lord.*

15 *Exercise foresight and be on the watch to look [after one another], to see that no one falls back from and fails to secure God's grace (His unmerited favor and spiritual blessing), in order that no root of resentment (rancor, bitterness, or hatred) shoots forth and causes trouble and bitter torment, and the many become contaminated and defiled by it.”*

As we “run this race” there are times when it seems like our spiritual knees and hands are feeble and tottering. It makes us feel like giving up. This Scripture tells us that we are *to do* something. Our job is to “make firm, plain and smooth paths” for our feet so that our spiritual limbs do not become disjointed, but rather be healed. Then it says to secure God’s grace.

Why is it that we feel our spiritual limbs are about to become disjointed? It is God's discipline. Look at the verses in Hebrews 12 just before the warning about our spiritual limbs and joints.

Hebrews 12:9 says,

9 "Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?"

God is attempting to get us onto the path that He can bless. We might need to make some course corrections that will keep us out of the ruts, away from the rocks and keep us on a smooth path. We may need some character changes. It may be forgiveness, giving, getting honest with the government regarding some obligation, paying a back debt or bill, giving up a certain idol, changing our direction in our social or vocational paths, etc.

How do we make smooth paths spiritually and secure God's grace? It certainly is not through our own human efforts; that will not secure God's grace.

Here is how.

Psalm 119:105 says,

105 "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

Psalm 91:9-12 (KJV) says,

9 "Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;

10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

12 They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

Staying plugged into the Word of God through the Holy Spirit will keep our paths smooth. Proverbs 3:5-6 also says that if we "know" the Lord in intimate way that He will direct our paths.

Okay, lets now focus on the prize.

As the writer of Hebrews said, "But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner" (Hebrews 6:9).

Running the Race for the Crown.

1 Corinthians 9:25 says,

25 "And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown."

Revelation 3:10-11 says,

10 “Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

11 Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.”

The above Scripture was given to the Church of Philadelphia. The Church of Philadelphia represents those believers with whom Christ found no fault and who have not been designated to physical martyrdom as in the Church of Smyrna. Their overcoming has to do with receiving a crown, a prize, the authority, for certain issues in the Kingdom of God. Notice that Jesus warns them that they have the crown, but if they do not endure they will lose it.

The crown is the prize. What is the crown?

“Crown” represents authority and royalty. When we “finish a race,” we receive spiritual authority. Finishing the race is another way of saying “overcoming.” Through this time of endurance God has defeated a spiritual stronghold or curse in our realm of influence. It may be a generational curse that our children do not have to endure. It may also be a curse for a people group who will be set free to hear the Gospel with open eyes and ears.

Authority over what?

The parable in Luke 19 about the nobleman who left his servants a responsibility and then came back to evaluate their stewardship, gives us a look into the heart of Jesus on this issue of running the race for a crown.

Luke 19:12-13 says,

12 “Therefore He said: ‘A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.

13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, “Do business till I come.””

Luke 19:17 says,

17 And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant: because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.’”

More than us.

We need to understand that this potential crown has more to do with God’s Kingdom than our own well-being and good feelings. The potential benefits are weighty in God’s mind and kingdom and should give us a heavy sense of responsibility to finish this race, no matter how we feel. As a sister in the Lord said to us recently, “The benefits are exponential as are the consequences for giving up.”

Philippians 4:1 was one of Paul’s cities: “Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren [the people in the city of Philippi], my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.”

While the race is about more than just you, it is also about you.

We stand against the wiles of the devil, endure with patience and finish the race while our seed of faith is growing. The end of that faith is not only the “salvation of our souls” it also brings us the manifestation of that issue in life that we have been trusting God for. Perhaps it was physical healing, perhaps finances, perhaps a prodigal child, a healed marriage, etc.

Now that you see the prize, what about the race?

The race is that part of our life during which we must endure hardship while standing on the Word of God for something God has entrusted to us by speaking His Word to us. The seed was planted when He spoke, now the “race” is the time during which that seed must grow and then bear fruit. Sticking with God during this time is a race. Not giving up when our minds are screaming at us is the race. The race is not a sprint, it is a marathon.

Hebrews 12:22-24 tells us that we have come (past tense) to the power of the Kingdom of God, to Jesus and His blood. This gives us the confidence that if we simply stay in close intimacy with Jesus and don’t quit, we will win. Jesus already won, so all we need to do is hang on to Him long enough to see His victory manifested in our lives.

Hebrews 12:22-24 says,

22 “But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,

23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.”

Hebrews 12:22-24 infers that we have the power as a gift from God to finish the race.

We have the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, the Cross, Jesus our mediator, angels, and all the other power factors inferred.

We have Jesus. This is our “verb”: looking.

Hebrews 12:2 says,

2 “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.”

The word *looking* means “to turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on something.”

The Holy Spirit.

We need God’s character and power to overcome our spiritual enemies.

The Holy Spirit is called the comforter. The Strong’s Concordance defines *comforter* as the Greek word *parakletos* (*summoned, called to one’s side, esp. called to one’s aid, one who pleads another’s cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defense, legal assistant, an advocate, one who pleads another’s cause with one, an intercessor*).

In the ancient Greek marathons, the parakletos was a friend of the runner who began running next to the runner during the final few miles as an encourager. He would verbally encourage him as well as have the runner synchronize with his running steps to keep his mind off of the extreme pain the runner was in. The Holy Spirit comes along side of us during our race as an intercessor, comforter, encourager, and even as a lawyer.

The Cross.

The blood of sprinkling of the new covenant reminds us that we have been crucified with Christ, yet He lives His life through us. This is the exchange.

Through the Cross and the Holy Spirit we can shed the weights, repent from the sins, put away the flesh nature and finish the race. However, it will require constant intimacy with God. It will require a constant repentance from sin and the flesh nature. It will require standing against the devil with the Word on our lips.

Circumstances and the satanic world will always try to discourage you and convince you to quit enduring. Remember this, with God if you don't quit you will win!

Hebrews chapter 13 shows us some of the disciplines to keep us in the race.

Paul finished.

2 Timothy 4:7 says,

7 "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

The following is a quote from God Calling¹, Near the Goal - February 13.

In a race it is not the start that hurts, not the even pace of the long stretch. It is when the goal is in sight that heart and nerves and courage and muscles are strained almost beyond human endurance, almost to breaking point.

So with you now the goal is in sight, you need your final cry to Me. Can you not see by the nerve and heart rack of the past few days that your race is nearly run. Courage, courage. Heed My voice of encouragement. Remember that I am by your side, spurring you on to victory.

In the annals of heaven, the saddest records are those that tell of the many who ran well, with brave stout hearts, until in sight of the goal, of victory, and then their courage failed. The whole host of heaven longed to cry out how near the end was, to implore the last spurt, but they fell out, never to know until the last day of revealing, how near they were to victory.

Would that they had listened to Me in the silence as you two meet with Me. They would have known. There must be the listening ear, as well as the still small voice.

I can remember watching television in 1952 and witnessing the famous swimmer Florence Chadwick attempting a record breaking swim across the Catalina channel in Southern California.

¹ A.J. Russell, *God Calling*: Barbour and Company, Inc.; Uhrichsville, OH, 1989, Page 43
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From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence_Chadwick)

In 1952, Florence was the first woman to attempt to swim the 26 miles between Catalina Island and the California coastline. As she began this historical journey, she was flanked by small boats that watched for sharks and were prepared to help her if she got hurt or grew tired. Hour after hour Florence swam, but after about 15 hours, a thick, heavy fog set in. Florence began to doubt her ability, and she told her mother, who was in one of the boats, that she didn't think she could make it. She swam for one more hour before asking to be pulled out. As she sat in the boat, Florence found out she had stopped swimming just one mile away from the California shoreline, her destination. Florence explained that she quit because she could no longer see the coastline – there was too much fog. She couldn't see her goal.

Two months later, Florence got back in the water to try her task once more. This time was different. She swam from Catalina Island to the shore of California in a straight path for 26 miles. The same thick fog set in, but Florence made it because she said that while she swam, she kept a mental image of the shoreline in her mind. She didn't lose sight of the shore because she focused on that image of the coast in her mind, and in this way, she reached her goal.