



Family Values

Virtue Realities

Perseverance

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Whereas persistence has an external focus, perseverance relates more to internal strength. It includes the idea of endurance, which is frequently combined in Scripture with the concept of patience. John the Apostle in Revelation identifies this quality as something he has in common with his readers. He introduces himself as: *“I, John, your brother, who shares with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance.”* (Rev. 1:9) Perseverance is a fundamental characteristic of the faithful.

Jesus elaborates on this idea in the Parable of the Sower. He describes the seeds that land on the good soil as those people *“who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.”* (Luke 8:15) When we persevere we hold on to the word and incorporate it into our way of life. Perseverance can actually become a source of joy and happiness. In Daniel the assurance is given: *“Happy are those who persevere.”* (Dan. 12:12) Paul exhorts the Romans to *“rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.”* He then adds a practical application: *“Contribute to the needs of the saints, extend hospitality to strangers.”* (Romans 12:12,13)

Suffering and perseverance go hand in hand. As a matter of fact, enduring the trials and tribulations of this life produces maturity and completeness. We read in James 1:2-4: *“My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.”* Paul says something similar to the Corinthians but adds that God does not test us beyond our limits. *“No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.”* (1 Cor. 10:13)

One of the reasons we are able to endure is because we have a model and source of perseverance. The writer of Hebrews challenges

us to *“run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross.”* (Hebrews 12:1-2) Jesus led the way. He is our sustenance. He gives us strength. He cautions us, *“Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.”* Christ is the bread of Life. His body and blood give us the strength to endure.

Finally, holding fast to what we believe, no matter what, is a witness and testimony to others. Paul emphasizes this in his second letter to Timothy. *“Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is Christ Jesus with eternal glory . . . if we endure, we will also reign with Christ.”* Our perseverance may open the door of salvation for others. The writer of Hebrews adds, *“For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what was promised.”* (Hebrews 10:36) The promise? To live in eternity with the Lord, whose steadfast love endures forever!

The following are ways to put perseverance into practice:

1. **Pray for perseverance.** Daily ask God to give you the strength to deal effectively with whatever life brings you.
2. **Welcome difficult times as opportunities.** Trust in the fact that God does not give you more than you can handle with His help.
3. **Remember what Christ endured on your behalf.** Focus on the cross as a model and source of strength.
4. **Cling firmly to the Word and Sacraments.** Remember that God comes to us and sustains us through these means of grace.
5. **Be an example of perseverance to your children.** Let them see in your actions God's enduring love.

Affirmation: With God I can do it!

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