

## Patience / Endurance

(ὕπομονῆς = 'hipomonis')

*Patience, perseverance, steadfastness, constancy, endurance, a patient enduring, sustaining.*

**Hebrews 10:36, "For you have need of endurance (patience), so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise,"** The Greek word translated "endurance" describes the unique capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances, not with passive complacency, but with hopeful fortitude that actively resists weariness and defeat (steadfast commitment). The verb literally means, "to remain or stay under", and is also rendered "to remain behind" in Luke 2:43 and Acts 17:14. It is also transcribed as, "to stand one's ground; persevere; or remain steadfast," and is therefore translated 'endure' in Matthew 24:13. The noun *hypomone* usually denotes courageous, steadfast, or patient "endurance" that does not lose hope in the face of obstacles, persecutions, trials, or temptations.

Our verse clearly states that we have need of "endurance." Another definition of *endurance* says it is "the act, quality, or power of withstanding hardship or stress." The word carries in it the idea of continuance. Endurance suggests the idea of continuing under resistance or the adversities of life - to carry on in spite of hardships. Patience, on the other hand, can include the calm willingness to tolerate delay. In the New Testament, the Greek word usually translated "patience" is more often associated with *patience with people*, and "endurance" or "perseverance" with *conditions*, and *circumstances*.

Most New Testament translations of 'ὕπομονῆς' are either "endurance" or "perseverance," depending on the context. Often, when continuance on a course is in view, like bearing fruit or doing good works, "perseverance" is used. On the other hand, when continuance against difficult conditions is in view, "endurance" is used; but this varies with the different translations. These words are a derivative of two Greek words that mean, (1) "under" and (2) "to remain or abide." Fundamentally, they denote the idea of remaining under pressure in the sense of enduring, holding up under. Given the fallen condition of our world and its hostility to those who want to live godly lives and follow the Lord Jesus, these words are naturally used with relative frequency in the New Testament. The noun '*hipomone*' is used 32 times and the verb '*hipomeno*' 17 times.

## Perfect / Complete

(τελέω = 'teleho')

*Perfect, to bring to a close, to finish, to end, to perform, execute, complete, fulfil, to bring to a successful conclusion, put the finishing touches to.*

**2 Corinthians 12:9, And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.** It is thought provoking to find the word 'τελείται' ("perfect") used because it literally means, "to bring to an end" or "to bring to a close." After pleading with the Lord three times, Paul gets this communication direct from Jesus - bearing in mind that this was the only time Jesus personally addressed Paul after his conversion on the road to Damascus. Here is an example of God denying a prayer request because He wanted to give something better (though not as comfortable). What we must learn from what Paul told us about this messenger of Satan is that God used it to teach the apostle dependence on Himself and the sufficiency of His amazing grace.

Listen to what the Lord said to Paul; "*My grace is sufficient for you, for My divine strength and power come to a successful conclusion in your human frailties*" (a personal translation). Implying that His strength and power ('δύναμις') require our weaknesses and imperfections to be complete! It's as if the Lord's "power" homes in our inadequacies because that is the very place where His power will be fulfilled, and where He will receive the most glory. Human weakness provides the opportunity for divine power.

This is one of the most important lessons we can learn. Both natural weakness and supernatural power are constantly at work in us, as they were in Paul. The greater we sense our weakness, the more we will sense God's power (Ephesians 3:16; Philippians 4:13). Someone once said that Christians live on promises, not explanations. This is one of the greatest promises that God has given us to live on.

We may not have experienced as high spiritual highs or as low spiritual lows as Paul did, but we too are in constant need of being aware of God's supernatural power. Our success does not depend on our natural abilities but on God's power working in and through us. Human weakness can be a profound blessing if it results in our depending more on God and less on self. Hence, when God does not take away our troubles, He gives sufficient grace for us to have no reason to complain. Grace signifies the "good will" of God towards us, and that is enough to enlighten and motivate us. It is sufficient to strengthen and comfort us in all negative circumstances. His strength "comes to a successful conclusion" in our weakness! Because of this, His grace is manifested and magnified. When we are weak in ourselves, then we are strong in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we feel that we are weak in ourselves, then we must go to Christ, receive strength from Him, and enjoy the abundant supply of divine strength and grace. God has us covered!

## Persecution

(δεδιωγμένοι = 'theethiogmeni')

*Persecute, to make to run or flee, put to flight, drive away, to run after, to press on, to pursue (in a hostile manner), to harass, trouble, molest, to be mistreated, suffer persecution on account of something, to seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavour to acquire.*

**Matthew 5:10,11, "Blessed are those who are persecuted from righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil falsely against you for My sake." (Original Greek) "Blessed are they who have been persecuted on account of righteousness." Notice, neither translation says "on account of 'being' righteous." Therefore, the primary cause of persecution is loyalty or devotion to righteousness. And 'righteousness' in this context means 'anything that conforms to and is consistent with the revealed will of God' (as in verse 6). However, the revealed will of God is His Word! So whenever we align ourselves to God's will for our lives, or do anything that conforms to and is consistent with His Word, we attract persecution. Obedience to the Word makes us targets!**

Here we clearly see the results of spiritual maturity. As we mature, we are capable of reconciling our actions and they begin to agree with God's revealed will for us, so we get persecuted. The Greek word for 'persecuted' means 'to be pursued' or 'driven away' (as an animal that is being hunted). However, if we are pursued (or driven away) because of anything that does not conform to God's Word, this isn't persecution! Therefore, being hounded because of misdoings is merited punishment. Persecution is a direct result of our lives being in complete alignment to the will of God. Why? Because when they are, the might of heaven is backing our every move! The enemy hates this, so tries to apply enough pressure for us to back off and do our own thing.