

Faith's Extension – Endurance or Perseverance

2 Peter 1:2-11... After abundantly supplying to your faith **virtue** and then adding **knowledge**, the next character trait you require is **self-control**. This nicely follows the previous thought which suggests that every piece of experiential **knowledge of God** you acquire must be put into practice. Notice, Peter tells you to add or supply **self-control** to your faith before he mentions **perseverance**. In fact, the two go hand in hand. But self-control needed to come first because without it you can never exercise or develop perseverance. It takes self-control to endure life's pressures.

James 1:4 says, ***“Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”*** Perseverance suggests stability, and a stable person knows how to endure. There is an assurance in such a person's life, and in spite of any negative circumstances, they will keep on hanging on.

The reason so many Christians never receive anything from God is because they can't or won't endure. Many of you just give up too easily. However, a true champion keeps making an extra effort, and produces an extra bit of strength whenever it's necessary. **James 1:3** states, ***“The trying of your faith works patience.”*** Testing implies there'll be some degree of hardship to tolerate. ***“Therefore, endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Timothy 2:3).***

Your “faith walk” does not provide an automatic exemption from hardships or trials. Furthermore, the experience of such difficulties does not mean that the people undergoing them possess less faith than those who are not afflicted. The same faith that enables some people to escape trouble may enable others to endure it. Your heavenly Father knows what's best for you. Therefore, your faith is not a bridge over troubled waters, but a pathway through them. Jesus sets the course and destination, and then promises that you **will** get to the other side. However, He never said there would be no storms. This is why you must keep your eyes on the Lord and hold on to every promise!

If there is a need to **endure**, in order to live by faith, then we must fully understand what this means! The Greek word literally means 'to abide under', or 'to remain under' or 'to bear up courageously', and this suggests 'continuance, constancy, steadfastness and patience'. Yet, it also describes the capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances, not with a passive complacency, but with 'faith filled' fortitude (true grit) that actively resists weariness and defeat. Quite simply, to *remain under* God's promises takes guts!

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.”*** This is describing a unique capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances, not with passive complacency, but with hopeful fortitude that actively resists weariness and defeat.

Notice, in the same way that **faith** and **hope** operate together, **endurance (patience)** and **hope** operate together also. **Hope** is an extension of **faith**, and **endurance (patience)** is an extension of **hope**. Faith is the present possession of God's promises (*believing you've received what you've asked for in prayer*). Hope is the confident expectation, based on a solid certainty that all of God's promises will be fully accomplished (*in the future*). **Faith** puts substance to the things hoped for [**Hebrews 11**], and **endurance (patience)** is the evidence that hope exists. If you have no hope then your faith is nullified. Likewise, with no hope your capacity to endure under difficult circumstances is non-existent.

Patience and endurance in hard times is what develops strong faith. **James 1:2-4** declares, ***“Count it all joy when you fall into various trials; knowing this that the testing of your faith develops patience. But patience must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”***

We can't be mature, and we can't succeed at anything without endurance. Harry Truman once said, *“The way you endure, that which you must endure, is more important than the circumstances.”* True commitment takes patience, and it is an accurate measure of your strength of character or maturity! One of the main ways you can tell how spiritually mature you are, is by measuring your patience. Is your patience level at the zero mark, or have you progressed up the scale a little?

Someone once said, *“To know how to wait is the great secret of success.”* A very successful businessman when asked about the secret of his success simply replied, *“I stayed.”*

Patience promises to bring great rewards for the Godly. ***“And let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not”*** [Galatians 6:9]. Patience is a green house for developing strength of character, therefore, the sooner you form the habit of reacting patiently (not impatiently) to life's surprises, the easier and more beneficial your walk of faith will be. You must learn to be patient with God, with yourself, and also with others. Patience or endurance is the ability to “keep on keeping on,” no matter what life is throwing at you!

Faith might float your boat but endurance keeps you from falling overboard when the storms come.