

PURSUE PATIENCE!

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We've been talking about related topics ... encouraging ourselves ... the importance of living by faith ... watching out for the enemies of faith.

I want to remain in this general area a bit longer.

We all know (theoretically?) that faith is important ... "The just shall live by faith".

We've probably all had experiences of starting out well ... the best of intentions ... but for whatever reason ... things don't work out as we expected.

This brings us to another "ingredient" required to live by faith. Some call them the "Power Twins" ... so you need both.

And that key additional item is the quality of patience. As we'll see ... Faith and Patience go together. A "Combo".

It's all very well to take our stand in faith — using our eye of faith to see the invisible — not being swayed by what our physical senses tells us .. but if our faith only lasts 60 seconds ... then clearly we are not going to accomplish very much.

Our faith has to continue ... has to be sustained ... and that's where Biblical patience comes in. The Bible has a quite a lot to say about this. And patience working with our faith.

Patience is an excellent characteristic. But ... it won't achieve things on its own.

Faith is a great characteristic too. But ... it won't achieve everything we want ... on its own.

We need to have both — FAITH AND PATIENCE.

James 1:2-4 (NKJV)

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

3 knowing that **the testing of your faith produces patience.** (*Our faith will be tested*)

4 But **let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.** (*Sounds like a good place to be*)

Would you like to be perfect?

There are 2 Greek words for patience:

1. Patience: Greek: Hupomone

The quality of being constant ... steadfast ... unchanging.

Thayer's Lexicon: "The characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose ... even by the greatest trials and suffering".

James 1:5-8 (NKJV)

5 **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.**

6 But **let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.**

7 **For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;**
8 **he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.**

This characteristic is linked to faith. Not double-minded — single-minded: Steadfast ... Not Swerved! Not hot and cold ... up and down.

James 1:12 (NKJV)

12 **Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.**

"Endures" ... the same Greek word: Hupomone — not swayed off course ... steadfast ... constant. If we stay on the course ... stay patient ... then we have a ROYAL CROWN to look forward to.

James 5:7-8 (NKJV)

7 **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.

8 **You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.**

Be patient. Prepare to wait. Establish your heart ... be steadfast ... standing your ground.

2. Patience: Greek: Makrothumia

Have a “long” spirit ... not a “short” spirit. Settle your mind for something that might take a long time ... the end is sure if God has said it.

Wait ... as long as it takes.

Establish: Make stable ... set fast ... render constant.

We wait patiently for Jesus' return. We wait patiently for all of God's promises.

Hebrews 6:9-12 (NKJV)

9 But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.

10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

11 And **we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,**

12 **that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.**

How do they inherit the promises? Through faith and patience ... Greek: Makrothumia.

How can we strengthen our patience? One way is through the Word of God.

Romans 15:4-6 (NKJV)

4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the *patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

5 Now may the God of *patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,

6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Patience and comfort of the scriptures” ... the OLD TESTAMENT!!

*The Greek word here is: Hupomone.

So. Both “faith” and “patience” feed off scriptures.

Many experiences are written for us ... Joseph ... Moses ... David ... Job. They can help us and comfort us.

It takes time for harvest. We need to wait patiently ... not give up after an hour ... a week ... a year! Don't dig up your “seeds”!!

God has been waiting a long time for you and me to sort ourselves out. He has been patient.

Luke 8:9-15 (NKJV)

9 Then His disciples asked Him, saying, “What does this parable mean?”

10 And He said, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that

Seeing they may not see,

And hearing they may not understand.’

11 “Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God.**

12 **Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.**

13 But **the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and *in time of temptation fall away.***

14 Now **the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are *choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life,***

and bring no fruit to maturity. (Do most Church of God people fall into this category? There is a danger of choking that growth)

15 But **the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.**

Some fall away in time of temptation. The “successful seed” ... keeps on going ... constant ... bears fruit with patience (Greek: Hupomone).

Galatians 6:7-9 (NKJV)

7 **Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**

8 For **he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption,** but **he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.** (You reap what you sow)

9 And **let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.** (There is a time element here)

Don't grow weary (or sluggish). Keep on “keeping on” ... constant.

“If we do not lose heart” — i.e. “If we don't Give Up”.

If we do give up ... no patience ... not constant ... we've swerved off our course ... and we can't expect a harvest. It is likely to happen if we get distracted by our physical surroundings ... or look at our own limited resources.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NKJV)

16 **Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.**

17 **For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,**

18 **while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, (subject to change) but the things which are not seen are eternal.**

One of the reasons that Paul didn't lose heart was because he was steadfast ... constant ... not swerving. He saw with the eye of faith. Best to keep your eyes on things that don't change ... so that you can remain constant.

1 Timothy 6:9-12 (NKJV)

9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

11 But **you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.**

12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Pursue = run after = chase and catch them. One of them is patience.
(Patience = Hupomone)

It takes action. Necessary for a man or woman of God.

2 Peter 1:2-8 (NKJV)

2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the **knowledge of God** and of Jesus our Lord, (*Knowledge = Epignosis ...full ... complete ... perfect knowledge*)

3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through **the knowledge of Him** who called us by glory and virtue, (*Knowledge = Epignosis ...full ... complete ... perfect knowledge*)

4 by which have been **given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 But also for this very reason, **giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,**

6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, (*perseverance = Hupomone. KJV: Patience. Weymouth: Power of endurance*)

7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We need to have the quality of being constant ... steadfast ... not swerving off course.

A quality/characteristic that Peter says we should seek.

Hebrews 10:35-39 (NKJV)

35 **Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.**

36 For **you have need of endurance**, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: (*endurance = Hupomone. KJV: Patience*)

37 “For yet a little while,
And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.

38 Now **the just shall live by faith**;

But if anyone draws back,
My soul has no pleasure in him.”

39 But **we are not of those who draw back to perdition**, **but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.**

So. Don't draw back ... or cast away your confidence.

Peter walked successfully on water ... until he focused on the physical. Then he cast away his confidence ... no longer constant ... steadfast ... now probably double-minded.

Colossians 1:9-12 (NKJV)

9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may **be filled with the knowledge of His will** in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; (*Knowledge = Epignosis ...full ... complete ... perfect knowledge*)

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;**

11 **strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;** (*Patience ... Hupomone. Longsuffering ... Makrothumia*)

12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

And “with joy” ... not miserable with long faces whilst we endure a wait.

Paul's prayer was that God would strengthen the Believers ... with His glorious power ... to have these qualities.

It applies to the overall purpose of our lives ... as well as those specific circumstances where we are looking for a specific response to our faith.

Colossians 1:23 (NKJV)

23 if indeed you **continue in the faith**, **grounded and steadfast**, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Romans 8:24-25 (NKJV)

24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?

25 But **if we hope for what we do not see**, **we eagerly wait for it with perseverance**. (*Hupomone. KJV: Patience*)

Our mind is set ... and settled in that area. No swerving ... waiting ... for as long as it takes. That is faith.

Matthew 24:13 (NKJV)

13 But **he who endures to the end shall be saved**. (*Endures – Hupomone*)

Endures ... is patient ... to the end. Don't cast away your confidence ... or draw back.

Patience ... remaining constant ... unswerving ... is a key quality.

It affects our whole life's-calling ... steadfast to the faith ... right to the end ... as well as being one of the power twins for all situations where we're expressing our faith.

We need to learn to practice to keep on keeping on.

It takes time ... trials and difficult times can help. Not like the prayer: "Lord give me patience ... and give it to me RIGHT NOW!:"

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: "He that can have patience can have what he will".

Let's do our best to develop patience ... and not be too hurried about it.