

Love... always perseveres (1 Corinthians 13:7)

# Endurance, Perseverance, Steadfastness

## PART 1: Word Definition (Including its Contrast with "Patience")

**Its contrast with PATIENCE / LONGSUFFERING (found in 1 Cor 13:4):** The following contrasts form a general rule or guideline. Exceptions may exist (but would be indicated by context).

### **Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon:**

- **PATIENCE / LONGSUFFERING:** The self-restraint which does not hastily retaliate a wrong - opposed to wrath or revenge.
- **ENDURANCE / PERSEVERANCE:** The temper which does not easily succumb under suffering - opposed to cowardice or despondency.

### **Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words:**

- **PATIENCE / LONGSUFFERING:** That quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish; it is the opposite of anger, and is associated with mercy, and is used of God.
- **ENDURANCE / PERSEVERANCE:** The quality that does not surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial; it is the opposite of despondency and is associated with hope; it is not used of God.

### **Verses omitted from this study:**

Luke 2:43 (Jesus "stayed behind" in Jerusalem) and Acts 17:14 (Timothy "stayed" at Berea). These verses focus on "remaining" in a geographical location.

## **PART 2: OUTLINE - What does the Bible say about ENDURANCE?**

[\*\* Read the context of these verses. \*\*]

### **A. Our Obligation to Endure (Endurance as a Requirement)**

1. Learning it, going after it, making it a part of our life.
  - It must be added to one's faith - 2 Peter 1:6. (See also the context.)
  - We must pursue it - 1 Timothy 6:11. (At the same time, we must flee from what is sinful. Some of these things are mentioned in the context.)
  - We must teach it - Titus 2:2. [NOTE: This verse focuses on older people (who did not understand the need for endurance); the verse in 1 Timothy focused on younger people.]
2. We need it.
  - Needed so that we can properly "run the race" - Hebrews 12:1. (The Christian life is described, figuratively, as a major athletic event, with Jesus as our example - Hebrews 12:2-3.)
  - Needed as an ongoing characteristic of our life - Hebrews 10:36. (In the past, they had faithfully endured the trials they experienced - v. 32. But they needed to continue doing so now.)
  - [Needed in the light of the coming judgment - Revelation 14:12. In this context, those who *don't* patiently endure, but who give-in to the pressures of society, will have to face God's eternal wrath.]

### **B. Made Possible Because of What God Has Done**

1. God gives it to us - Romans 15:5.
2. A prayer for God's strength, in order to have endurance - Colossians 1:11.
3. A prayer for God's guidance into Christ's endurance - 2 Thessalonians 3:5.

### **C. A Part of Life, for Those Who Belong to Christ**

1. It's a part of being "in Jesus" - Revelation 1:9.
2. It's one of the ways that love expresses itself - 1 Corinthians 13:7. (This love is a part of our new nature, in Christ.)

3. NOTE: These verses, which express the *fact* of endurance, go hand-in-hand with the verses that *command* us to have endurance. The person who is truly in Christ will learn to obey what God commands.

## D. How Endurance Grows

1. Growth through trials. (Trials "exercise" it.)
  - Suffering produces perseverance - Romans 5:3.
  - The testing of our faith produces perseverance, which must then be allowed to grow/mature - James 1:3-4.
  - NOTE: This is the reason we can rejoice during trials.
2. Growth through our efforts to *add* it to our faith - 2 Peter 1:6 (read also the context). [Various other character qualities are also listed. These characteristics must be present in our lives, *in increasing measure* - see verse 8.]
3. Growth through encouragement.
  - The encouragement we get, when we see others make it through similar trials - 2 Corinthians 1:6.
  - The encouragement we get, when we consider our future hope in Christ - 1 Thessalonians 1:3. [NOTE: Other verses, mentioned below, tell us that endurance increases our hope. Our hope and our endurance seem to reinforce each other.]

## E. Endurance and Trials

1. We need to have endurance, when trials come.
  - We must have perseverance/endurance during times of suffering and trials - Romans 12:12.
  - Endurance is necessary whenever we have struggles - Hebrews 12:7. (We are to view our trials as a type of "discipline." God is using them to accomplish good things in our lives.)
  - Endurance is necessary in the *worst* of trials - Revelation 13:10; 14:12. (The context of these verses involves the end times, when conditions on the earth will reach their worst.)
2. If we are willing to endure our trials, we will be blessed.
  - Once we have "passed the test," God will reward us with the "crown of life" - James 1:12.
  - Note the example of Job, referred to in James 5:11. This "crown of life" is not necessarily restricted to blessings in eternity, but may include blessings even in this present life.

3. We can expect trials (caused by those who hate Jesus), but if we endure to the end, we will gain life/salvation.
  - Those who remain firm to the end will be saved - Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13. (Two of these verses focus on trials during the end times; the other doesn't.)
  - You will not perish, but will gain your life (even if you die!) - Luke 21:19. (The context of this verse focuses on the trials that will occur during the end times, but the principle would apply throughout all generations.)
4. A warning: Make sure your suffering is for the right reason!
  - It's commendable, if you endure suffering for doing what is right - 1 Peter 2:20b.
  - It's no credit to you, if you endure suffering for doing what is wrong - 1 Peter 2:20a.

## **F. Why is Endurance Necessary? (The Results or "Fruits" of It)**

1. Spiritual growth and maturity.
  - The growth of character and hope - Romans 5:4.
  - Spiritual maturity - James 1:4.
  - Various godly characteristics - 2 Peter 1:6+. (Various character qualities in this list get "added" to endurance.)
2. Some of the results that can exist now (in this present life):
  - A "fruitful" life - Luke 8 15. (The fourth type of soil, from the parable about the farmer who was planting seeds.)
  - We could be spared from unnecessary trials that could come later - Revelation 3:10 (a specific example).
3. It's impact on our attitude toward the future (with an emphasis on eternity).
  - We will have hope (through endurance, accompanied by the encouraging instructions God gives us in his Word) - Romans 15:4.
  - It enables us to wait for the arrival of the things we are looking forward to (our "hope") - Romans 8:25.
4. Some of the results that will occur in the future:
  - We will receive what God has promised us - Hebrews 10:36.
  - Eternal life (for those who patiently seek glory, honor and immortality) - Romans 2:7. (This is contrasted to those who are self-seeking, who resist the truth and follow evil... who will get only wrath and anger.)
  - We will reign with God - 2 Timothy 2:12.
  - [See also the previous section, about endurance and trials: We will receive life.]

## G. Examples to consider

1. Jesus, our ultimate example.
  - He endured the cross, focusing on the joy that would follow - Hebrews 12:2.
  - We are to consider his example, so that we will not become discouraged - Hebrews 12:3.
2. Some of the people who can be used as examples. [A focus here on individual people.]
  - Job - James 5:11 (We know what happened to him, as well as the blessings that came afterwards.)
  - John - Revelation 1:9. (He was a "companion" with us. He endured, just like we must.)
  - Paul - 2 Timothy 3:10. (His example was evident to others - as he reminded Timothy.) [See the next section, for some specific examples of how Paul endured.]
3. Some specific things about Paul's endurance.
  - He was willing to endure anything that would benefit the elect - anything that would result in their salvation - 2 Timothy 2:10.
  - His endurance was one of the characteristics that demonstrated that he was a servant of God - 2 Corinthians 6:4.
  - He endured everything that was necessary, in order to demonstrate that he was a genuine apostle of Christ - 2 Corinthians 12:12.
4. Some groups of people ("churches") who were good examples of endurance/perseverance.
  - The church at Thessalonica - they were such a good example of perseverance (and trust in God) that Paul was able to use them as an example for others to follow - 2 Thessalonians 1:4. (He was able to "boast" about them.)
  - The church at Philadelphia - they obeyed God's command to endure the trials they experienced - Revelation 3:10. (Because of this, God said he would spare them from much greater trials that would someday come.)
  - The Hebrew church - originally, they were a good example of enduring great trials - Hebrews 10:32. (Later, they became discouraged and needed to be encouraged to keep it up. See verse 36.)
  - [The churches at Ephesus and Thyatira - it seems implied that endurance was a positive characteristic in their lives. (See the next section.)]

5. A Warning - Jesus knows the extent of our endurance. (Examples)
  - o [To the church at Ephesus] I know your endurance/perseverance... You have had endurance/perseverance and have endured hardships... - Revelation 2:2-3. (The word "endured," near the end of the verse, is a different word in the New Testament language. It has the idea of being "carried" or "borne.")
  - o [To the church at Thyatira] I know your endurance/perseverance... - Revelation 2:19.

## H. A Few Misc. Comments

1. The word "encouragement" (or "comfort," or a similar word) is also found, in the context of some of these verses. Often endurance and encouragement go together. Romans 15:4-5; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7; Hebrews 12:1-3, 5.
2. The word "patience" is found in the context of some of these verses. This word focuses on our response to difficult *people*, whereas the word "endurance" (the main emphasis in this specific study) focuses on our response to difficult *circumstances*. 1 Corinthians 13:4, 7; Colossians 1:11; 2 Timothy 3:10; James 5:7-8, 10-11.
3. Various other words make reference to related concepts. One example found in these verses: When you have perseverance/endurance, you can "bear with" (or "put up with" or "endure") various trials of life - 2 Thessalonians 1:4. (These are two different words in the New Testament Greek language.)