

How Do We Persevere in Christian life?

How can we persevere in Christian life and please God in the right way without problems and anything that might withhold us? Well, this might be the desire of many believers, but how is it possible? We will surely have problems and failures sometimes, but how can we rise up and persevere?

The lesson of perseverance that God gives us through His word is something that we always need to have in mind, and it will help us endure no matter what situation we're in. It is something fundamental in Christian life. As believers, we need to have perseverance, and it needs to accompany us throughout the way. It is not something that solely comes from our strength and desire. It is born from the perseverance that our Savior had while accomplishing His ministry on earth. He endured till death on the cross doing that for us, and because of that, we can have that strength living in us and giving us a sense and meaning to persevere in Christian life even through trials and difficulties. It is because Christ lives in us if we truly trust and believe in Him, and He promises to carry us till the

end. We can say together with Apostle Paul: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” ([Philippians 4:13](#))

Let us have a look at some verses in Hebrews that talk about perseverance.

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” ([Hebrews 12:1, 2](#))

These verses state that we need to run with endurance the race. After them come passages talking of the father-son relationship, which is God’s relation toward us and His correction in our lives. We will discuss these topics in the next chapters, but before getting there, we need to comprehend more about what these passages want to tell us, which is to endure and persevere. What do we need to persevere on? Obviously, to run the race as this verse states, but what exactly does running the race represent? Do we need to persevere in reading the Bible (which obviously is right)? Or maybe going to church (which is also right) or having certain religious habits? The verse itself gives us clearance by saying: “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...” When I talk about perseverance and endurance, I refer to the same thing, as “to endure” means to persevere. The verse tells us to lay aside every weight and the **sin** that so easily

ensnares us. **So, we understand that to endure is not just about persevering in certain religious practices, which might be right and need to be performed, but above all, it is about keeping ourselves away from sin.** It is to fight with it and to resist it. Looking to lay it aside and not walk in its ways. This is what perseverance has to do with. We need to persevere in purity and walk on the right path, which is obviously not possible by ourselves but with the help of Jesus. That's why the next verse tells us to look unto Him, the author and finisher of our faith. Only He can help us to run the race and be on the right track. We cannot do it with our own strength.

There is another passage in this regard.

⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. ¹⁰ And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. ¹¹ Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. ¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ **But he who endures to the end shall be saved.** (Matthew 24:9-13, emphasis added)

This passage refers to the situations that the believers will have to go through at the last times, but what it says is actual for us today as it says: “**he who endures to the end shall be saved.**” In its context, it speaks about the trials that will come at the end

times as there will be reasons for which someone might leave God's way and go astray so that he can somehow escape the hardships. That's why this passage exhorts us to endure. In the present time in which we live, people can also be tempted to leave the way and not endure. It might be for the trials they are going through, and to live easier, they might choose to stop walking on the way. The Bible tells us there are two ways – a narrow one, with trials and difficulties, and a broad one, which is much easier to walk on.

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” (Matthew 7:13, 14)

Obviously, those who are saved know the reason for walking on the narrow way, preserving themselves pure and avoiding sin, and those who haven't encountered truly God yet would not find many reasons to follow the narrow road. Maybe they will do it for a while, but when they start encountering more trials and have to really give up things, they will stop. That's why it is fundamental that a person finds Jesus first. Obviously, when we talk about a narrow road with trials and surrender, we are not saying the Christian life is mainly a life of sadness and continual hardships with no joy. Believers have sorrows but have more joy and strength to face them. At times, they may appear more joyful than other worldly persons as they have real hope and are satisfied with the life God is giving them.

Yes, those who are saved know the reasons for following God and enduring, but it looks like the verse in [Matthew 24:13](#) saying: “[But he who endures to the end shall be saved](#)” talks about believers as well. Even if they clearly know the reasons to endure and carry on, they still need to be exhorted. People amongst different denominations sometimes discuss whether salvation could be lost or not, but here, I am not going to give a personal opinion on it. I just know what could happen to me if I don't endure in God's way and if I don't keep myself away from sin. I know myself, and I know the direction my heart will take. That's why it is good for us to follow the right way and listen to the Bible's exhortation to persevere. People can obviously fall into sin but must stand up and go to God. They mustn't persist in it.

Paul describes well in [1 Corinthians 9:24-27](#) what it is to stay on the path and run the race.

²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it*. ²⁵ And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

In the last verse, he says he disciplines his body and brings it into subjection lest he become disqualified. It again speaks about perseverance and running the race in “such a way” (a specific manner) so that he doesn’t get disqualified. This manner and way are surely personal to each believer but definitely have to do with persevering in the way God wants us to. This can only be obtained through Him. Only through His wisdom, we can know which is the manner and have the right guidance from Him.

Yes, this is an exhortation for a believer because the believers are those who run this race, but what is the main reason why people don’t persevere in the Christian way? The main one, as we said before, is that they don’t actually participate in this race, and they don’t understand the reason to persevere on this road. To persevere means that a person perseveres in faith and keeps himself pure. A person doesn’t walk this path mainly because he doesn’t know the reason for which to walk on it. That person might have common knowledge about what pleases God and what does not, but as he is not personally convinced, he won’t understand it completely, and in consequence, he will not find a reason for it and will not run the race. Understanding is fundamental. Not just intellectually knowing something but understanding it with our heart.

There is the explanation of the parable of the sower in [Mathew 13:18-23](#) that gives us an insight about it.

¹⁸ “Therefore hear the parable of the sower: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and **does not understand it**, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. ²⁰ But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. ²² Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. ²³ But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and **understands it**, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (emphasis added)

We can see that this parable deals with understanding the word of God, which is fundamental. If we don't understand it, the whole word will be as a parable to us; it will give us just a comparison of what it means, but we won't be able to truly comprehend the spiritual meaning of it. The gospel tells us that even if we have ears and listen, we won't be able to truly hear and understand.

“For the hearts of this people have grown dull.
Their ears are hard of hearing,

And their eyes they have closed,
Lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear
with *their* ears,
Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them.” (Matthew 13:15)

This passage tells us that the ears of the people were hard of hearing. We need to have spiritual hearing and ears.

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” (Matthew 13:9)

Not knowing the meaning of something will prevent us from following it.

The seed (the word of God) that fell by the wayside is the one that wasn't received by a good heart and consequentially wasn't understood. The one that fell on the good ground (good heart) is the one that was understood and bore fruit.

Obviously, no one is capable of having a good heart by himself. There is no one good (Romans 3:10-12). If someone is standing today or is having anything good, it is because of God. Only He can give someone a receptive and understanding heart.

It is fundamental for a person to understand. If this doesn't happen, that person will not follow the Lord and will not find a reason to endure either. Why live a pure and holy life and not live freely in sin? If we don't find a real reason for it and we are not convinced of it, we will never do it. As we said, to endure means to carry on walking on the way of the Lord and not to get ensnared by sin. This is the Lord's first desire for us, besides

any other ministry or calling we might attend. It doesn't mean that a believer doesn't sin at all. He might sin, but he will eventually come back to God.

Even though the main focus of a believer might be to persevere in purity and not sin, it is important to know that the secret of practicing that and being able to carry on is to set our eyes on Jesus and carry in the right direction and that He exhorts us to **endure** and go toward the reward set for us in heaven. Without this, after a failure, we can easily fall into desperation and fall into the devil's trap. **Hebrews 12:1** tells us to lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us. The author of Hebrews knew about the danger of sin.

One of the passages that encourage me to follow the way, despite seeing myself as vulnerable and with no strength at a time, is the one in **Isaiah 35:8**:

"A highway shall be there, and a road,
And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness.
The unclean shall not pass over it,
But it *shall be* for others.
Whoever walks the road, although a fool,
Shall not go astray."

It says that whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray. What is important is that the person is on the road. Many times, I've seen myself as a fool. Not as a fool who doesn't follow the Lord, but as a fool in my ways and behavior as a believer. Sometimes, I don't act wisely at all. What

encourages me in this passage is that He will help us to persevere and be on the road; He will sustain us even though we might be weak and see ourselves as incapable. We don't want to be such, but we eventually are this way sometimes.

Yes, this is for those who are weak, but how can someone carry on the road and not fall back and surrender? How can he find reasons to persevere?

There is a story that I heard once ago, and it is a story of a dog chasing a rabbit. A dog was going after a rabbit, and as it passed by some other dogs, they saw it running and barking and joined it, too. So, all of them were barking and running together. Soon, though, it happened that most of them retreated and stopped running, as none of them had actually seen the rabbit. Only the dog that saw it kept on running till the end. What does it mean? Why is it that not all of them persevered? Because they hadn't seen the rabbit. Compared to our situation, this means that we need to see Jesus. Only in this way we can carry on the road and persevere. Otherwise, someone could be running without knowing the real purpose and just because he saw others doing so. We need to personally see Him in our life.

We need to qualify for the race so that we can be on the road. Without qualifying, we cannot persevere; we cannot run the track because we are not on it. **We qualify by accepting Jesus in our hearts. By repenting and sincerely believing in Him.** This is salvation. For those who are qualified and are already on the track, God is telling them to persevere, to look right in front of

them, and to set their sight on Jesus and the reward awaiting them.

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