

Endurance

vs. Discouragement

Endurance is experiencing the power of God's love by rejoicing in trials and tribulations.

Definition

Endurance is associated with the physical stamina required for a race. However, the character quality of endurance is much deeper than physical stamina. It includes the strength that comes by rejoicing in the reproaches that come as we follow the ways of God.

Kakopatheo, “to suffer trouble, to be afflicted, to undergo hardship,” and *anechomai*, “to hold oneself up against, to put up with, to sustain, to bear with,” are both translated in the New Testament as *endure*. *Hupomeno*, also rendered *endure*, means “to stay under; to undergo; to have fortitude, persevere; to remain; to have patience toward circumstances.”

To endure is to tenaciously hold on until a goal is accomplished. Jacob clung to the angel and declared, “I will not let you go until you bless me!” God not only blessed him but affirmed, “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed” (Genesis 32:28).

What Are We to Endure?

The following passages explain the types of trials we are to endure.

1. **Endure hardness**—“As a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (II Timothy 2:3).
2. **Endure afflictions**—“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine . . . they shall turn away their ears from the truth” (II Timothy 4:3–4).
3. **Endure persecutions**—“That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer” (II Thessalonians 1:5).
4. **Endure tribulations**—“Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God” (II Thessalonians 1:5).
5. **Endure grief**—“For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully” (I Peter 2:19).
6. **Endure chastening**—So that “God dealeth with you as with sons” (Hebrews 12:7).
7. **Endure temptations**—So you can “receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him” (James 1:12).
8. **Endure all things**—“For the elect’s sakes” (II Timothy 2:10).

How Do We Endure?

Endurance is based on hope. A runner will endure rigorous and painful training for the hope that he will win the race. Jesus endured



Endurance is focusing on a goal greater than distractions along the way.

When we realize that we have limited strength, we will reject unnecessary demands in order to conserve our energy and resources.

“Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”

—Hebrews 12:1

“No rock is so hard but that a little wave may beat admission in a thousand years.”

—Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Obedience leads us to inexhaustible resources of strength.

We must recognize and acknowledge our weaknesses in order to draw upon the strength of Christ. We can have confidence that God will provide what is necessary for us to accomplish an impossible task. God always enables us to do what He calls us to do.

“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.” —Isaiah 40:29



Follow champions. They set the pace for winning the race.

“If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?” —Jeremiah 12:5

Two Fears of a Runner

1. Running out of strength before reaching the goal.
2. Reaching the finish line with energy left over.

“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” —Philippians 3:14

Endurance comes by knowing we will win the prize unless we give up on the race.

As a seed must die before bearing fruit, so God brings “death of a vision” to test our endurance and then rewards us with supernatural fulfillment.

“And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” —Galatians 6:9

the cross and despised the shame associated with it for the joy of knowing that His death would conquer Satan and bring redemption for all eternity. The believer’s hope is that by enduring trials, he will experience a greater measure of spiritual power in this life, as well as rewards in Heaven.

This power includes the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, and peace. This sequence of the filling of the Holy Spirit that is followed by tests resulting in the power of the Holy Spirit upon us is repeated throughout Scripture. The Christian life begins with faith, and hope is needed during times of testing and tribulation. The result is genuine love. (See chart below.)

Biblical Examples of Endurance

- Elijah stood against the evil of his day and was hunted down, but he was faithful to the end. (See I Kings 19.)
- John the Baptist was imprisoned for his stand on divorce and remarriage, yet he remained faithful to his death. (See Matthew 14:3–4.)
- Daniel maintained Godly standards during the reign of four kings. He was tested when others attempted to take his life, but he endured to the end. (See Daniel 1:20–21.)
- Luke endured with Paul to the end. (See II Timothy 4:11.)

The Filling of the Spirit	The Testing of the Spirit	The Power of the Spirit
1. Jesus was filled by the Spirit at baptism. (Luke 4:1)	He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for testing.	Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit. (Luke 4:14)
2. The disciples were filled with the Spirit when Jesus breathed on them.	Their test was to wait ten days (after failing the “one-hour test” in the garden).	The Holy Spirit came upon them in power, and multitudes believed. (Acts 1–3)
3. Paul was “filled with the Holy Ghost” at his conversion. (Acts 9:17–18)	He gloried in infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, and distresses.	“I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (II Cor. 12:9–10)
4. The Thessalonian believers received the Holy Spirit through Paul’s preaching.	They had patience and faith in all the persecutions and tribulations they endured. (II Thessalonians 1:3–5)	Their faith grew exceedingly, and their love toward each other abounded. (I Thessalonians 1:3)
5. All believers receive the Holy Spirit into their spirits at salvation (Romans 8:9–16) and can ask God to fill their souls with His Holy Spirit. (Luke 11:13.)	The Spirit will lead all believers into fiery trials, temptations, and reproaches. (I Peter 4:12–14; James 1:1–3; Matthew 5:11–12)	“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.” (I Peter 4:14)

- Demas failed the endurance test. Rather than serve Paul in prison, he left to enjoy the pleasures of this world. (See II Timothy 4:10.)

How Does Truth Motivate Endurance?

Truth sets us free from the destructive attitudes and influences that diminish endurance.

When trials and temptations come, we are to meet and endure them with the following four responses:

1. Thank God for each trial.

We can be thankful for all things, because all things come from the hand of God. They are for our benefit and can teach us character. They also “work together for good to them that love God.” Job endured a great affliction, and he understood this point: “The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (Job 1:21).

2. Rejoice in all things.

Once we recognize the benefits that God intends through our trials, we can rejoice in them. If we lack wisdom to discern these benefits, we can simply ask God for it and He will give it to us.

3. Cry out when necessary.

Some situations should not be endured, and God will bring relief when we cry out to Him. “Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me” (Psalm 50:15).

4. Overcome by doing good.

“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

Personal Evaluation

How strong is your endurance?

- Do you live as a soldier who is in the most critical spiritual war ever waged, or as a civilian in a time of peace, prosperity, and pleasure?
- Do you rejoice when rejected by those who do not follow the ways of God, or do you complain that you have to suffer for the beliefs and standards of true discipleship?
- Do you rejoice in being falsely accused and blamed for things you did not do, or do you become reactionary, defensive, and bitter toward those who question your integrity?
- Do you accept God’s chastening for things you have done wrong, or do you become discouraged and want to give up on the Christian life?
- Do you resist temptation and bring every thought into captivity, or do you easily surrender to the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the mind?
- Do you look forward to trials and persecutions so you can experience more of the power of Christ’s love, or do you have a fear of man and suffering?



The palm tree endures abuse that would kill other trees, because it is not harmed by surface wounds.

The source of life in a palm tree is at its center rather than just beneath the outward surface, as in other trees. During times of drought, its roots can go deep into the ground and draw nourishment. The longer it endures, the sweeter its fruit becomes.

“The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.” —Psalm 92:12

“Do not pray for tasks equal to your strength, but for strength equal to your tasks.”

—Phillips Brooks



The **camel** illustrates the secret of endurance by maintaining the inward reserves to withstand “desert experiences.”