



"There is scarcely anything that is right that we cannot hope to accomplish by labor and perseverance. But the first must be earnest and the second unremitting."

—Robert E. Lee

05-Aug-22

Persevering to the End

[Jeremiah 30:5-7](#) alerts us to consider that the time of the end will be unique and horrific to experience, but it concludes with comforting hope that we can persevere through it:

For thus says the LORD: "We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of [peace](#). Ask now, and see, whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labor, and all faces turned pale? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; and it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it."

Though broad, this declaration forces us to realize that in all of man's history, no other time can fully compare to "the time of Jacob's trouble" and the universal and intense fear it will cause. In His Olivet Prophecy (Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21), Jesus provides greater detail concerning specific events of that same period, leaving no doubt that His [second coming](#) will be preceded by frightening and tumultuous events.

Worldwide, a multitude of wars, earthquakes, famines, and disease epidemics will occur with increasing frequency as events approach their climax at His return. These will be accompanied by heart-breaking, fear-driven betrayals of one Christian by another and by outright hateful persecutions of [Christians](#) from [the world](#). It will be an intensified, larger-scale repetition of what happened before the [Noachian Flood](#). God's pledge to deliver Jacob from it promises that He will oversee events just as He did with Noah, his family, and the animals in the ark ([Genesis 8:1](#)).

Noah is surely the Bible's most outstanding example of persevering through a long and dreadful experience. The Flood was also unique, universal, and devastating to the earth and everyone caught in it except for those on the ark. Not only did Noah have to persevere through the Flood itself, but also through 120 years of events during his preparations for its arrival. We need to be fully aware that Noah's salvation was ultimately God's doing, but we should also thoroughly and thoughtfully consider that he was fully involved with [God](#) in carrying out all that He told him to do for that 120-year period ([Genesis 6:22](#); [7:5](#)).

The English word "perseverance" is rare in the Bible. In the King James Version, it does not appear at all in the [Old Testament](#), and in the New Testament, it appears only once ([Ephesians 6:18](#)). However, though the term is missing, the thought it conveys is most certainly present. This is not a translators' oversight; it frequently takes more than a one-word translation to convey in English what the Greek word for "persevere" implies.

It is easy to assume that enduring and persevering are synonymous. There are similarities, but they are not an exact match. In English, *endurance* can indicate "putting up with," "bearing up under," or merely "tolerating" a demanding circumstance, implying a definite passive quality to it in common usage. Jesus says in [Matthew 24:13](#), "But he who endures to the end shall be saved." "Endures" is translated from the Greek *hupomeno* (*Strong's #5278*), and can easily be translated as "persevere," yet it, too, can indicate merely "bearing up under." Jesus uses this word because situations will arise in the end time when nothing can be done except to put up with them and hold onto one's [faith](#) for dear life!

However, the English word "perseverance" and its Greek counterpart, *prokarteresis* (*Strong's* #4343) suggest more than mere toleration of a circumstance because they have definite proactive characteristics. Their verb forms mean "to be earnest or strong toward; to be constantly diligent; to attend assiduously; to adhere closely to; to continue instant in; to be steadfast with a person or thing." Both contain a strong sense of continuous persistence toward achieving some activity. The Greek verb *proskartereo* (*Strong's* #4342) is most frequently translated into English as "continue in." Its closest English synonym is "persistent."

[Acts 1:14](#) uses it like this immediately after the ascension of [Jesus Christ](#) to heaven: "These all *continued* with one accord in prayer and supplication . . ." [Acts 2:42](#), 46 states, "And they *continued steadfastly* in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. . . . So *continuing* daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart." Paul writes in [Romans 12:12](#), "Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, *continuing steadfastly in prayer.*"

In the context of performing duties, the apostle says in [Romans 13:6](#), "For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers *attending continually* to this very thing." Duties are responsibilities assigned by a superior such as a parent, teacher, or supervisor. They are obligations of services to be performed or a course of action required by custom, law, or religion. God has called us and opened a great hope before us, but this is not without cost to us. Since we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior, He has become our Lord and Master. We are His bondslaves, obligated to serve Him through our loving obedience. [I Corinthians 7:23](#) tells us that we have been bought at a price.

The duties imposed on us are those having to do with fulfilling His great creative purpose of which we are now a part:

- Glorifying Him by our willing obedience to His instructions and laws.
- Fulfilling our responsibilities to the church, for which He has given us gifts to enable our performance.

- Making every effort not to allow the world to squeeze us into its mold.
- Loving one another, even our enemies.
- Willingly persevering through whatever trial He has given us to work our way through.

It is our duty to sacrifice ourselves to the glory of God in all things, including praying without ceasing and consistently studying to show ourselves approved to God.

Our calling has become our vocation, and it is filled with duties to perform. However, like every vocation, even this one despite its inspiring and awesome hope, has times when boredom creeps in, weariness assails us, or fears produce occasions of doubt. It is then that we must buckle down and persist in pressing forward to overcome those challenges. Merely enduring may hinder our reaching this great hope.

[Romans 4:18](#) tells us that Abraham hoped against hope. His hope was in God's promise of a son and thus of a family that would follow him in inheriting the [Kingdom of God](#). When God delayed in giving him a son, long past when his aged body could produce one, Abraham nonetheless persisted in believing God's promise and continued to act to accomplish his part in fulfilling what God required of him. He persevered. He did not merely patiently endure but actively continued forward, and he was rewarded for his diligent faith.

This example from the father of the faithful provides a pattern for us. We must follow it when, amid our trials, our hopes for the fulfillment of God's promises are assailed by boredom, weariness, doubts, or fears. Persevere, push on, be persistent, continue moving forward against the challenges before us. God is faithful.

- John W. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Resistance \(Part Three\): Persistence](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Derek Redmond's inspiring example provides a spiritual analogy to all of God's called-out ones who must continually battle external obstacles (as well as the inner obstacles of carnal human nature), erecting a formidable barrier of resistance. The elite athlete, not always the one with the superior skills, nevertheless is the one with the gritty persistence to fight on regardless of the obstacles, wanting nothing to do with mediocrity. Persistence is the key attribute, having the attending synonyms endurance, steadfastness, or staying the course. Jesus counseled the value of this trait in the examples of the persistent neighbor asking for a loaf of bread in the middle of the night and the importunate widow who wore out the judge. Isaac provided a wonderful example of this tenacity, as he trusted God, repeatedly moving away from quarrelsome situations, trusting God to provide. Isaac, as a type of Christ, prefigured Jesus' returning to God the Father for sustenance and strength. Similarly, we are to return to the well of God's Spirit if we are to move forward. To develop Godly persistence, we should (1) have a clearly defined goal we desire with all our heart, (2) have a clearly established plan we can work on immediately, (3) make an irrevocable decision to reject all negative suggestions, and (4) accept encouragement and help from those on the same path.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[I Want Patience - and I Want It Now!](#)

by John O. Reid

John Reid discusses two forms of patience, showing how we need it to build godly character.

If you would like to subscribe to the C.G.G.
Weekly newsletter, please visit our [Email
Subscriptions page](#).
