

PERSEVERANCE

Hebrews 10:35-39 | Philippians 1:6

Vincit qui patitur. “He who suffers conquers.”

Puritan maxim

Perseverance: The Hardest Spiritual Discipline.

- I. All spiritual discipline is a *godly struggle*.
 - a. Godly struggle means *opposition* with God’s enemies. (1 Pt. 2:11; 1 Jn. 2:16)
 - i. *The World* hates Christ and *hinders* his disciples with temptations.
 - ii. *The Flesh* hates Christ and *frames* discipline as punishment.
 - iii. *The Devil* hates Christ and *hounds* his disciples with hostility.
 - b. Godly struggle means *consistency* in godly pursuits. (Ga. 6:9, 10; Co. 1:28, 29)
 - i. Better to follow Christ *slowly yet regularly* than *intensely but irregularly*.
 - ii. Better to be Christlike with *little spare time* than worldly with *ample spare time*.
 - iii. Better to be struggling for *glory and eternal life* than cozy with *shame and destruction*.
- II. Thus, all spiritual discipline *requires perseverance*.
 - a. Perseverance means we *follow Christ* where he goes, when he goes. (Mk. 12:29-31; Hb. 12:1-8)
 - i. It’s *rarely convenient* to follow Christ but *always best*.
 - ii. It’s *often difficult* to follow Christ but *seldom desolate*.
 - iii. It’s *always costly* to follow Christ but *never fruitless*. (Hb. 10:35-39)
 - b. Perseverance means we *prioritize Christ’s kingdom* above all else. (Ro. 2:8-10; 1 Co. 15:58)
 - i. Sin drags us backward and so *must be seriously fought*.
 - ii. Distraction slows us down and so *must be regularly cast off*.
 - iii. Grace speeds us on and so *must be zealously sought*.

Preservation and Edification: The Wings of Perseverance.

- I. The *Holy Spirit’s Preserving Role* in Perseverance.
 - a. The Spirit assures us that he both *sustains* and *preserves* us to the end. (Ph. 1:6; Jd. 1:24, 25)
 - i. Reminded of *Christ’s finished work*, we may *rest in his sustaining grace*.
 - ii. Reminded of *Christ’s ongoing work*, we may *run in his preserving grace*. (Ph. 1:6; Hb. 12:1-3)
 - b. The Spirit produces in us both *desire for* and *power unto* perseverance. (Is. 11:22; Ti. 1:7)
 - i. Through the *means of grace*, the Holy Spirit awakens our desire to persevere.
 - ii. Prompting us to *improvement of grace*, the Holy Spirit empowers us to persevere.
- II. The *Church’s Edifying Role* in Perseverance.
 - a. The Church *helps* us persevere in discipline, lest we be led astray or dispirited. (Ep. 4:16; Hb. 13:7, 15, 16)
 - b. The Church *oversees* our perseverance in discipline, lest we become proud or lax. (1 Th. 3:13, 14; Hb. 3:17)

Concluding Applications.

- I. A *charge*: If you would be Christ’s disciple, *you must persevere*.
 - a. Without perseverance, the difficulty of discipleship *soon disheartens us*.
 - b. Without perseverance, *discipline becomes irregular*, our best efforts to improve unhelpful.
 - c. Without perseverance, we become *easy targets* for the enemies of our soul.
 - d. Without perseverance, we become *disciples of sin*, weighed down with distractions, strangers to grace.
- II. An *encouragement*: If you would persevere as Christ’s disciple, *cling to his Spirit and Church*.
 - a. *Ask the Holy Spirit* to remind you that the Christ who graciously *saved* you will graciously *keep* you.
 - b. *Apply yourself* regularly to the Holy Spirit’s means of grace both *privately and corporately*.
 - c. *Submit yourself* to the oversight of the Church whom Christ has graciously given to *guard your soul*.
 - d. *Edify the Church* in godly fellowship—improving on every grace and encouraging others *to do the same*.