

PERSEVERANCE



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“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.” Hebrews 12:1. Throwing off sin and continuing, persevering, in self-control? How novel an idea.

Take drugs for an example (or any sinful habit or practice). As we study the Bible, we come to the realization that God created our bodies to be His dwelling place. Our bodies are to be temples for the Holy Spirit to live in. Since the temple is to be holy, we want to get rid of every thing and substance that would prevent the Holy Spirit from living in our temples. Light and darkness cannot dwell together. Sin must leave when we let the Holy Spirit in. ***The Spirit will not live with sin.***

To do this we give our sins, habits, desires and all to Jesus. We fall on our knees and confess that we have been serving the god of drugs (or money, power, ego, pride, etc.) and breaking the Ten Commandments of love. We repent and now decide to turn away from it. We let God know that we need His power. This is not to inform God, He already knows. It is for us to **acknowledge the fact** that we need God.

Now we put our will on the side of God. “Just as you **used to offer** the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so **now offer** them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.” Romans 6:19. We say “No” to drugs or any sin. Every time the thought, urge or desire comes to us as a temptation, like Christ, we say “No”.

Our next obligation is “not be misled: ‘**Bad company corrupts good character.**’ Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning.” 1 Corinthians 15:33, 34. Stay away from people, places, events, TV, radio, porn, conversations and thoughts that

bring on the desires to do drugs or any sin. “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?” “Therefore **come out** from them and be separate, says the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 6:14, 17. This includes churches. If they are not teaching us the teachings of Jesus to be perfect, stop sinning and keep the Ten Commandments for our eternal life, we must come out.

“God is love.” 1 John 4:16. But love also hates! God hates sin. He hates wickedness. It destroys His work and creation. There is a “hate” that is full of “love”. We must develop the same mind and attitude in us as Christ had. “In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.” Hebrews 12:4. Jesus will provide the power, but you must provide the will. It is hard work. But look at the alternative, a life of slavery to drugs and sins that are destroying your life and the lives of those who love you and you claim to love.

“You love righteousness and hate wickedness.” “Let those who love the Lord **hate evil.**” Psalm 45:7; 97:10. “Because of all their wickedness in Gilgal, I hated them there. Because of their sinful deeds, I will drive them out of My house. I will no longer love them; all their leaders are rebellious.” Hosea 9:15.

At first it will be hard. No doubt about it, struggling with sin in your life is hard. But the end result will be victory. “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into **strict training.** They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

The road to heaven is straight and narrow. It is filled with temptation and struggle up the narrow path. “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the

kingdom of God.” Mark 10:24, 25. The eye of the needle was a very small gate in the wall of the city. Under attack, the main gate was closed to keep out the enemy. The “eye of the needle” was opened only to let runners in and out to send and receive messages. A camel could go through it, but to do so it had to:

In the Christian life we must do the same. On our knees, giving our burdens to Jesus and coming to Him in meekness and humility, He will then lift us up in His image and likeness. By remaining steady and keeping our eyes on Jesus we can do all things through Him who gives us the strength. “Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. **Resist him**, standing firm in faith.” 1 Peter 5:8, 9.

- Get on its knees
- Remove all its burdens
- Crawl through the gate



I cannot stress the importance of knowing for sure that you are **doing exactly** what Jesus has commanded you to do for your salvation. It is not what you **feel**. It is not what you **think**. It is not what **others think** for you. It is not what your church says, or what your pastor tells you. Do not look at others. Do not look at other people’s sins and mistakes. Don’t worry about others. You must put yourself to the test of what Jesus says, and Jesus ONLY.

alone when the crowd is having a good time. But our only guide is the Bible and the teachings of Jesus.

Jesus said, “. . . teaching them to **obey everything I have commanded** you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:20. If you want Jesus on your side, then teach people to obey His teachings. If the crowd, the church, the pastor, or your closest friend is not walking in the teachings of Jesus; walk away, and Jesus will be walking with you. “You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised.” Hebrews 10:36.



“The yoke worked well enough when used on oxen, the earliest draft animals; however, the horse does not possess the breadth of shoulder needed to sustain the yoke, and the device pressed against the animal’s neck, choking it. Thus only when the yoke was replaced

by the horse collar (in Europe, during the Middle Ages) could horses be efficiently used as draft animals. Yokes are still used in India, with humped oxen, and in Africa, with the African buffalo.”

So why would you want to be yoked? If you were a farmer and had 100 acres to plow, how would you want to plow it? With one oxen, or two? With a yoke the farmer can combine the strength of two oxen and plow more effectively.

The same goes in our Christian walk. If we are yoked with Jesus, it is His strength that carries us through. Life’s burdens become better managed when Jesus and you handle them together. By taking the yoke of Christ, the Ten Commandments, and binding them on your heart and mind and soul, the Power of Jesus is available for all your needs. You rest in His love and trust Him to get you through all troubles.

Jesus commends those who practice perseverance. In fact, we can not get into heaven without it. Revelation tells us, “I know your deeds, **your hard work** and **your perseverance**. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have **tested** those who claim to be apostles (churches, pastors, etc.) but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for My name, and have not grown weary.” Revelation 2:2, 3.

Hold fast to that which you are now learning. It is the truth of Jesus. Persevere against all obstacles and influences to the contrary. Peer pressure is very influential. It is hard to walk

“Therefore consider carefully how you LISTEN. Whoever has will be given more. Whoever does not have, even what he *thinks* he has will be taken from him.” Luke 8:18 Do you think you are saved? Watch out!

I know men in prison who have had to stand up for truth against all odds. Many placed their lives on the line for the truth. The other “Christians” wanted to kill them because their beliefs differed. Living in danger for Jesus they had feces put on their bed and hit in the face. All this for Jesus.

We in America have it too easy. The majority of Christians are not ready for heaven. They are not ready for the trouble that will soon come upon the whole earth. Unless we begin now to build the Christ-like character, we will never make it to heaven. We are in a battle. Put aside the foolish things of the world. The enemy has *you* blinded.

The Old Testament is for us to study as an example. Listen to Paul, “Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.” 1 Corinthians 10:6. Let’s take a look at some examples of perseverance.

“Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” Isaiah 40:30, 31. When our hope is in the Lord, and with our eyes on Jesus and not on ourselves or others and we persevere in the Name of our Strength, we have the victory.

Paul and Silas are an example of perseverance. At Macedonia the authorities “inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them . . .” Act 16:23-25. Could you persevere? Can you take a beating for Jesus? Would you be singing? And where did they learn how to persevere for Jesus? By reading about Job

in the Old Testament.

Job is an example of perseverance. He lost everything. He had no idea why he was being treated like this. His wife said, “Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!” Job 2:9. But Job was a man of perseverance and trusted in his God. Even though he did not understand, he said, “You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?” Job 2:10.

Do we act like foolish people sometimes and blame God for our troubles? Most of the time it was our own sinful acts that brought on the painful consequences we are suffering. Should we blame God for our stupidity?

In Job’s case, he was a righteous man and was not a sinner. He was “blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” Job 1:8. In all that he went through, “Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.” Job 1:22.

You see my friend, it was not God’s doing. God only permitted Lucifer to do what he wanted to do with Job. Lucifer could have blessed Job and showered him with wealth and love. But that is not what Lucifer wanted to do. But God was not responsible for the trouble of Job.

People blame God because they say that He can do anything. **Not really.** He must follow the rules. He created us to be free moral agents. We have the ability to choose. Any parent can understand that. Just because they bring children into the world doesn’t mean that the parents are responsible if their child drinks and drives then hits and kills a person. The parents knew when they brought that child into the world that bad things could happen. They didn’t plan for them. They just knew that the child would have choices to make. They would do their best to educate the child to choose the right.

Same with God. He brought us into the world to live our own lives. He gave us the Ten Commandments and taught us how to live in love toward each other. But if we choose to hurt others,

that is not God’s fault. Let us not blame God for the choices of wicked people.

Now four friends came to sit and mourn with Job. But they were under the assumption that Job must be a sinner and had done something wrong to receive all this trouble. They tried their best to convince Job that if he would repent, God would then restore his fortune. But Job persevered in his integrity and refused to accept their nonsense. He knew he was righteous and did not sin. He hated sin. How dare they come and try to tell him that all this was a result of his sin.

In the end, God came to Job’s rescue. Jesus said to Eliphaz, “I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.” God was so emphatic about clearing His servant Job that He said it a second time. “You have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.” Job 42:7, 8. (Could your preachers not be speaking right about God?)

If you are living the perfect, Ten-Commandment life, don’t let the devil, the family, the wife, the church or anyone try to discourage you or tell you that you can’t live the righteous, blameless, perfect life. You can. In the power of God, we can do everything. Persevere in all good things.

Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30. What “yoke” is Jesus talking about? First, do you know what a yoke is? I’m not talking about the yolk of an egg. In today’s world, very few people have grown up looking at yokes. So, this is a yoke.

“The oldest form of HARNESS, the yoke is a device for linking two or more draft animals to a cart or plow. Early yokes consisted of curved wooden bars that rested on the shoulders of the animals or were fastened to the horns or necks by metal or rope collars. The yoke was attached to the vehicle by a pole.