**Growing in Grace – Perseverance**

*2 Peter 3:18; 1:5-7*

**Introduction**

1. **2 Peter 3:18** – we are commanded to grow in God’s grace.
2. **2 Peter 1:2** – He is seeking to multiply grace to us through the knowledge of Jesus.
   1. Ultimately, that we share in the divine nature **(v. 4).**
   2. This connected with the glory and virtue of Christ that we are called TO **(v. 3).**
   3. Attained through the knowledge of Christ which instructs us in the way of life and godliness **(v. 2).**
   4. Knowledge increased to the bearing of fruit when we supply diligence and add to our faith the list of virtues **(vv. 5-8).**
3. Virtue – the goal of moral excellence like Christ, and the courage to reach that goal.
4. Knowledge – the comprehension and grasp of God’s will for us necessary to achieve the goal of virtue.
5. Self-control – the decisive action to deny the inordinate desires of flesh and submit ourselves to God’s will, practicing the knowledge we have obtained.
6. To self-control we are to add perseverance.
7. Perseverance – *hypomonē*
8. lit., “an abiding under” (hupo, “under,” meno, “to abide”) (VINE)
9. cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy (STRONG)
10. the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty, patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance (BDAG)
11. steadfastness, constancy, endurance (THAYER)
    1. in the NT the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings (ibid.)
12. God’s Call to Constancy, and the Challenge of Trial and Tribulation
13. God Calls Us to Faithfulness and Inhering in Faithfulness is Constancy
    1. Paul had confidence in the reward because he kept the faith **– 2 Timothy 4:7-8**
       1. **(v. 7)** – notes completion, but completion is only accomplished through a lifetime.
       2. ***“loved His appearing”*** – **2 Peter 3:13-14** – looked forward to His coming as He brings the reward and prepared accordingly.
    2. “You’re only a success for the moment that you complete a successful act.” (Phil Jackson – NBA coach, Bulls, Lakers, 11 championships)
       1. You have to do it again, and again, etc.
    3. Faithfulness for a period of time is no longer faithfulness if it comes to an end:
       1. Demas – **2 Timothy 4:10** – accompanied Paul in his ministry but fell away. (**cf. Colossians 4:14; Philemon 23-24**)
    4. The cross is taken up “daily” – **Luke 9:23**
    5. Good soil – bear fruit with patience – **Luke 8:15** (hypomonē)
       1. “with patience” (NKJV, ASV, ESV)
       2. “with perseverance” (NASB)
       3. “in continuance” (YLT)
          1. **Romans 2:6-7** – “patient continuance” (hypomonē)
       4. Here denotes the constancy of the call to bear fruit for Christ, but also the perseverance it takes through the difficult times. (see **vv. 13-14** – didn’t endure through difficulty) 🡪
14. Perseverance is Such Constancy Even in Trial and Tribulation
    1. Our faith will be tested – **1 Peter 1:6-7**
    2. James called his readers to be patient in the midst of trial – **James 5:7 (vv. 1-6 – oppressive rich)**
       1. Three examples were given:
          1. Farmer **(v. 7)**
          2. Prophets **(v. 10)**
          3. Job **(v. 11)**
       2. Consider Job
          1. Job showed the consistency of faithfulness – **Job 1:1-2, 4-5** (“Thus Job did regularly.”)
          2. Such was not simply constancy in ease, but perseverance through trial and tribulation – **Job 1:8-12**
             1. Lost property (livestock and servants) – **(vv. 13-17)**
             2. Lost family (children) **– (vv. 18-19)**
             3. Job’s response – **(vv. 20-22)** – did not sin.
             4. Lost health (boils) **– (2:7-8)**
             5. Lost support of wife – **(2:9)**
             6. Job’s response – **(2:10)** – did not sin.
          3. Job persevered through trial and tribulation – HE REMAINED FAITHFUL UNDER SUCH ADVERSITY.
    3. We need perseverance because God requires the proving of our faith through adversity:
       1. **1 Peter 5:8-9** – like with Job, the devil is seeking to devour us, but we must persevere.
       2. Perseverance through trial is proof that God rewarding us is just – **2 Thessalonians 1:4-5**
          1. God’s judgment – to count us worthy of the kingdom, and to punish our troublers – shown righteous.
          2. Such is shown righteous by the evidence of our perseverance/patience and faith in persecutions and tribulations.
       3. If we don’t persevere, we show our strength and faith is small – **Proverbs 24:10** – strength small if faint.
15. Developing Perseverance
16. Pray to God
    1. God is the source of patience (*hypomonē* – perseverance) **– Romans 15:5** (needed in bearing with the scruples of the weak – **v. 1**)
    2. Such persevering is linked with rejoicing and prayer – **Romans 12:12** (the three meant to be taken together)
       1. Persistent prayer is needed in trials.
       2. For one of many reasons – to obtain the ability to persevere from the “God of perseverance”
    3. **James 1:4-5** – in enduring trials, one who lacks wisdom needs to ask God for such.
       1. Wisdom – especially in relation to the trials which one is to endure.
       2. The WHY of trials, and the HOW of enduring trials.
    4. If we ask Him, God can direct us into perseverance – **2 Thessalonians 3:3-5**
       1. Love of God – the love God has for us, and our participation in such, i.e. loving as God loved us.
       2. Patience (perseverance) of Christ – the perseverance which Christ demonstrated, and our participation in such.
       3. Direct – not a miraculous process where God gives the power to endure, BUT A GUIDING/DIRECTING ULTIMATELY BY TEACHING.
          1. “of Christ” – teaching the virtue by teaching Christ.
    5. God is the source of patience, but the source of His direction into patience is His word – **Romans 15:4-5**
       1. **Colossians 1:9-12** – the knowledge, wisdom and spiritual understanding comes through His word which gives us the strength according to His power for “patience” (hypomonē).
       2. **James 1:5, 19-21** – the way God imparts wisdom is through His word which needs to be heard and accepted.
       3. A STUDY OF GOD’S WORD WILL BRING ONE INTO A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE WHY OF TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS, AND THE WAY GOD DESIRES HIS CHILDREN TO HANDLE THEM.
17. Rejoice in Hope
    1. **Romans 12:12** – in addition to prayer, rejoicing in hope is linked with persevering in tribulation.
       1. **1 Thessalonians 1:3** – patience of hope – perseverance springs from hope.
    2. **Romans 2:6-7** – the patient continuance springs from the desire to partake in the glory of eternal life God offers.
    3. The goal of glory in becoming as Christ is outweighs the suffering we must endure – **Romans 8:18, 24-25** – for this reason, the hope we rejoice in and are eagerly waiting for helps us to persevere.
       1. **1 Corinthians 15:58** – the confident expectation (hope) of the resurrection helps us to be steadfast in Christ.
       2. One cannot remain in the faith through tribulation WITHOUT THE CONFIDENCE OF REWARD FOR DOING SO.
    4. **Hebrews 10:36-39** – the goal of salvation in the end requires endurance through trial.
       1. **Hebrews 11:35-38** – all feats of perseverance were accomplished through faith. (**Hebrews 11:6** – faith in the reward)
       2. **Hebrews 12:1-2** – Jesus’ endurance came from looking forward to the joy set before Him.
    5. When we have our focus on the goal, and rejoice in such we are able to bear up under tribulation – **Philippians 4:4, 13**
18. Rejoice in Trials and Tribulations
    1. The one who has prayed to God for perseverance should not be surprised at trials and tribulations but should rejoice in them as opportunities by God’s providence to exercise and grow in perseverance.
    2. Perseverance is in a sense sustained self-control – when we add to our self-control perseverance, we are simply maintaining such self-control through trial and tribulation.
       1. There must be something to abide under.
       2. Hence, the introduction of trial and tribulation in our lives is necessary to the production of perseverance.
    3. **Romans 5:1-5** – in addition to rejoicing in hope, the Christian rejoices in tribulations due to what they produce.
       1. Christians don’t view tribulation according to the pain and misery that accompanies it, but in view of the positive spiritual effect it has on the Christian, and the reward at its end.
       2. Character – proven character
    4. **James 1:2-4** – the rejoicing is not in trials for the sake of trials, but the good such has on the Christian – maturity, especially in perseverance.
    5. Paul learned the value of suffering through trials and tribulations:
       1. **2 Thessalonians 3:5** – direct hearts into patience of Christ.
       2. **2 Corinthians 12:7-10** – such strength of perseverance comes through tribulation.
          1. **(v. 7)** – given him for spiritual benefit.
          2. (**v. 9a)** – “strength…power” (dynamis); “perfect” (teleioō – complete)
          3. **(v. 9b)** – “boast” (**cf. Romans 5:3 –** “glory”) – why? To receive the “power” of Christ – His strength – grow, in part, in perseverance in such trial.
    6. Christians must understand God’s practical wisdom behind trials and tribulations. Perseverance is necessary to finish the race and reach the goal, but it does not come without the crucible of pain.

**Conclusion**

1. Our self-control in the exercise of the knowledge of God’s will is to be constant.
2. However, the Christian will be faced with the many difficulties of physical existence, and the added difficulty of desiring to live a godly life in Christ **(cf. 2 Timothy 3:12**).
3. For this reason, perseverance is of great importance.
4. If we wish to be sharers in the divine nature, then we will participate in the ***“patience of Christ” (2 Thessalonians 3:5)***.