

Why Lacking Endurance Isn't an Option for Spirit-Filled Followers

For most of my life I have avoided anything that would cause me pain, suffering, difficulty, trouble or hardship. Who willingly wants those things in their life? I've also heard over and over again not to pray for patience because then something bad will happen to you, so you can learn patience.

However, God clearly tells us that we must have patient endurance. If we don't learn how this virtue operates, we may not endure. Then where would we be? I think the opposite is much worse than actually learning how to incorporate this valuable virtue into our lives. We may not like the learning process, but apparently, God feels it something we need.

"[With joy] let us exult in our sufferings and rejoice in our hardships, knowing that hardship (distress, pressure, trouble) produces patient endurance" (Rom. 5:3, AMP) tells us. This is saying all the bad stuff we are trying to avoid in this life helps us produce a virtue God wants us to possess.

Blaming God Never Works

I hear from Christian women who are angry at God because things aren't going the way they want them to. They tell me that God isn't living up to His end of the bargain because they prayed with faith, believing they would be healed—or their husbands would come back into their lives ... or they would get a job—but didn't happen like they wanted, so God is to blame.

It's difficult to help someone who has made up their mind that everything that happened to them is God's fault. They believe this, and as a result, they are done with Him. Why would they

trust Him? But in Romans 5:3, Paul tells us that these difficult things we are bound to go through produce in us a steadfastness we wouldn't have without them.

Jesus told us this would happen in John 16:33b. "In the world you have tribulation *and* distress *and* suffering, but be courageous [be confident, be undaunted, be filled with joy]; I have overcome the world."

We don't get a special pass from trouble just because we have accepted Him, but when we follow Him, He will guide us through our difficulties. We will grow in spiritual maturity in the midst of our issues. As a result, we will be able to weather the storms of life because we will have the experience of using patient endurance in order to make it to the next day.

Endurance Helps Us Overcome

Several years ago I wrote a book called *Journey to Transformation*, which includes five steps for transformation. Even though it is specifically about weight loss, I have realized these five stages apply to almost anything in life. The fourth stage is what I call the experience stage.

This comes after we've identified our problem, owned the issue as ours, and gone through instruction about what to do. We have to apply what we've learned while going through the difficulties life throws at us. This comes before the last stage, which I call the overcomer stage.

Patient endurance is what we need in order to overcome. We have learned that we need to rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to get us through difficult times, but we also need to be applying everything else we know to do on our Christian walk. More than anything, though, this is the stage where the evil one will throw everything at us to distract us from our main mission, which is to do God's will.

Rejoice in Endurance

James 1:2-4 TPT tells us more about this. "My fellow believers, when it seems as though you are facing nothing but difficulties, see it as an invaluable opportunity to experience the greatest joy that you can! For you know that when your faith is tested it stirs up in you the power of endurance. And then as your endurance grows even stronger, it will release perfection into every part of your being until there is nothing missing and nothing lacking."

James is telling us to look forward to these times of difficulty because it means that we can't help but get stronger in our faith if we keep trusting God, which will build our endurance level.

I understand this a bit on a physical level. Several months ago I started going to physical therapy to strengthen my quads after several falls I had. When I went, I had no strength in that area when the therapist tested me. After three months of strength training, he tested me again, and I had greatly improved.

Do I love physical therapy? That's a big no, but I can tell my legs are becoming stronger, which is definitely my desire. Is it hard? Yes, it is. I could easily give up and say this is of no use, but I won't because I want to improve, even if it hurts. I want my endurance to grow stronger.

Endurance Produces Spiritual Maturity

Romans 5:4-5 tells us that endurance produces proven character or spiritual maturity. Then proven character results in hope and confident assurance of eternal salvation.

God doesn't take us out of the situations, but He goes with us through them. He knows we are hurting, so He comforts us. He helps us have patience in the midst of the dark nights, and that gives us the experience of endurance.

After we have gone through whatever difficulty or ordeal while

holding tightly to God's hand, we have the hope that is confident assurance. That happens when we begin to grow up in God, to learn from Him instead of blaming Him.

Part of walking with God is really experiencing the joy of knowing we are His. I've learned that there is nothing more glorious, more beautiful, more satisfying, more fulfilling, more enlightening than being smack dab in the middle of God's will.

Endurance Uncovers God's Will

Hebrews 10:36 really sums up the entire purpose of patient endurance. "You need the strength of endurance to reveal the poetry of God's will and then you receive the promise in full."

Trials, temptations and difficulties will bring endurance and strength. When we are coming through the difficulties, our endurance muscle grows stronger, and then God begins to reveal the glory, beauty and poetry of His will for our lives. Each revelation is always something that makes me love Him even more. It's in these times that we have no doubt we will receive His promise in full.

The godly virtue of patient endurance is what will help get us through this life staying true to do what God wants us to do: to follow His will for our lives no matter how far off or difficult that seems.

What Is God's Will for You?

I know part of God's will for me is to stay true to my commitment to live free from processed sugar and gluten. It's also to continue sharing this message with all who need to hear it.

Are there days I want to quit? Yes, there are. Those days are much fewer than when I first started this journey because the

eating healthy has become my habit, a lifestyle change. Everything I do toward this goal hits at the heart of God's will for me. I can't fulfill the destiny God has for me unless I employ the patient endurance it takes to be committed to run this long distance race.

I don't presume to know your issue or what kind of transformation you need. All I know is that each of us need this virtue of patient endurance to stay true to God through any difficulties or setbacks that come our way and to go forward toward God's will for us.

What is His will for you? One thing is to learn patient endurance. What if we don't endure? That isn't an option for a sold-out Christian.

Find the Spirit-Led Transformation course with action steps and challenges by joining Overcomers Academy [here](#).

For more on this topic, listen to this episode of *Sweet Grace for Your Journey* on Charisma Podcast Network, *Patient Endurance*.

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