

PATIENCE & PERSEVERANCE

- Perhaps the **two biggest mistakes** in our walk with the Lord are to:
 1. **Rush ahead** of the Lord – i.e. a **lack of patience**
 2. **Give up** prematurely – i.e. a **lack of perseverance**
- ⇒ Instead we need to do as told in Isaiah 52:12 – *“the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.”*
- The Bible tells us often to **“wait on the Lord”** – but **nowhere** does it say to **hurry!**
 - ⇒ *“Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!”* (Psalm 27:14)
 - ⇒ *“Those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.”* (Ps 37:9)
 - ⇒ *“But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”* (Isaiah 40:31)
- To **wait on the Lord** requires **patience** – one of the **fruits of the Spirit**
 - ⇒ *“By your patience possess your souls.”* (Luke 21:19)
 - ⇒ *“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”* (Romans 15:4)
 - ⇒ *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”* (James 1:2-4)
- Patience is **not** just sitting around **doing nothing**
 - Instead, the Greek word we translate as “patience” actually means **“hopeful endurance”**
 - ⇒ Or, another way of defining it is **“expectant waiting”**

EXPECTANT WAITING

- This kind of **patience** is akin to **waiting on tables** – with **God as our customer**
 - In this mode, we **stand by** keeping a **close watch** on **God's table**, waiting to **take His order** the moment that **He is ready**
 - ⇒ **We must immediately** come to His table and **find out what He wants**
 - ⇒ And then **we burst into action** to ensure that **His order** is implemented **quickly and effectively**
- Another analogy that describes this kind of **expectant waiting** is that of a **commander of a military unit** in war time waiting for the **General's orders to spring into action**
 - As the **troops wait**, they do not sit **idly by** twiddling their thumbs
 - ⇒ Instead, they spend their time in **constant training** for the upcoming action and in **maintaining their equipment**
 - ⇒ This is called a **state of readiness** that takes a lot of work to **maintain** even as they await their **marching orders**
- So too do we need to **maintain our readiness** even as we **wait on the Lord** for our marching orders
 - That's why we must keep our **armor of God** in tip-top shape and remember to **put it on every day**
 - ⇒ And that's why part of our **armor** is *“having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace”* (Ephesians 6:15)
- We have to keep ourselves **trained and ready** at all times
 - How do we do this? By keeping in **prayer, in the Word, in fellowship with Jesus as well as other believers** – and **out of sin!**

PERSEVERANCE

- The Greek word for **patience** is often translated as **perseverance** in different translations
 - “*But if we hope for what we do not see, we **eagerly wait** for it with **perseverance**.*” (Romans 8:25, NKJ)
 - “*But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with **patience** wait for it.*” (Romans 8:25, KJV)
- There is, of course, a close relationship between having **patience** and **persevering**
 - But there are some **important differences too**
 - ⇒ We can be **patient** in waiting for something to happen, but we might **not persevere in prayer**
 - ⇒ To **persevere** means to **continue doing something** despite all external forces (e.g. circumstances, the devil, etc.) that are trying to **discourage us from doing so**
- The Scriptures about putting on the **armor of God** (Ephesians 6:13-18) concludes with a **call to perseverance**, using an entirely different Greek word here that means “**persistence**”
 - “... ***praying always** with all prayer and **supplication** in the Spirit, being **watchful** to this end with all **perseverance** and **supplication** for all the saints*” (Ephesians 6:18)
 - ⇒ This verse, by the way, is the only one to use this particular Greek word
- There is only one other Greek word in Scripture which is translated “**persistence**” in the NKJ version (translated “**importunity**” in KJV)
 - **Importunity** is defined by Webster as “**entreating persistently**”

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF PERSISTENCE

Read Matthew 15:21-28

- In this example, a **Caananite woman** (i.e one who is **not Jewish**) seeks the **Lord's mercy** and **healing for her daughter's** demon possession
 - Jesus, however, *“answered her not a word”*
 - ⇒ How often doesn't this happen to us too – we **pray** and receive **no answer**, so we shrug our shoulders and **give up**
- However, this woman **did not give up** – instead, she **persisted** and kept *“crying out after us”* (NIV)
 - Jesus then stated the reason that He had not answered her: *“I was not sent except to the lost sheep of Israel”*
 - ⇒ The mission **given to Jesus by His Father** was only to **minister** to the **Jews**
 - ⇒ He later **commissioned the disciples** (and, by extension, all believers) to then *“preach the gospel to all nations”*
- Still, the woman **persisted** – and, most significantly, did so even as she *“worshiped Him”*
 - So Jesus finally answered her entreaties – but still not favorably
 - ⇒ In talking about the *“children's bread”* Jesus was referring to His mission of **preaching the gospel** (the bread of life) to **God's children** (the Jews) and that He shouldn't take anything away from that mission
 - The woman responded, however, that even *“the little dogs* (i.e. Gentiles) *eat crumbs which fall from their master's table”*
 - ⇒ This **persistent act of faith** eventually caused Jesus to **change His mind** and give her that which she asked for!!!

Read Luke 18:1-8

- Here's another example of **persistence**
 - This woman sought “*justice from my adversary*” from a **judge** who “*did not fear God nor regard man*”
 - ⇒ However, due to the woman's **persistence** the judge **gave into her request** in order to avoid becoming “*weary*”
- Jesus then goes on to say that if this is what an “*unjust judge*” does, think how **much more** God will do for the “*elect*” (i.e. born-again believers)
 - But only if they “*cry out day and night to Him*”
 - ⇒ And then Jesus goes on to **relate faith and persistence**, implying that if we **give up and don't persist** then we **lack faith!**

Read Luke 11:5-13

- Here, right after giving us the “**Lord's Prayer**” in response to the disciples' request to “*teach us to pray*” Jesus gives us another example of **persistence**
 - In this example, a man is trying to get some **bread** (i.e. God's Word) from a friend who has already retired for the evening and is **not interested** in getting up again
 - ⇒ Yet, “*because of his persistence*” the friend (i.e. God) “*will rise and give him as many as he needs*”
- Then right after this, the LORD gives us His **well-known call to ASK**
 - “Ask, and it will be given to you”
 - “Seek and you will find”
 - “Knock and it will be opened to you”