

Do Not Give Up!

Excerpt from Sparkling Gems of the Greek: Rick Renner

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." [James 1:2-4]

Sometimes it's Tough!

In the earliest years of the Church, the believers faced unremitting persecution. Every day they were confronted by hostile powers that were arrayed against them. Culture, pagan religion, government, unsaved family and friends - all these forces were arrayed against them, putting constant pressure on them to forfeit their faith and return to their old ways.

Even if you are facing great challenges today, it doesn't *begin* to match the pressure these brothers and sisters felt. I don't want to make light of the struggles you're going through, I but the truth is, very few people alive today have faced the level of intense opposition that these early believers faced.

Seen Any Lions Lately?

Think about it - do you personally know anyone who has been thrown into the arena to be mauled and eaten by hungry lions? Do you know anyone who has been burned at the stake for his faith? Or can you think of any friends of yours who have been forced into imprisonment because of faith in Jesus Christ?

Now, these scenarios do happen today to believers who live in anti-Christian parts of the world and we definitely need to hold them up in prayer. Let's not forget about them, nor should we forget about those who suffer for the Gospel in countries that are blessed with freedom.

Some Startling Facts!

It is a statistical fact that since the year 1900, more than 29 million believers have died worldwide for their faith in Jesus Christ. In fact, large numbers of people currently die for Jesus every single day. By the time we get up, get dressed, and arrive at work to clock in for the day, someone, somewhere, has already laid down his life for the Gospel.

This puts a different light on the problems we face in the free world. Our problems are related to relationships, finances, family issues, health issues, and other problems of a personal nature. The stress that believers experience in free parts of the world is often related to having too much work to do; being under pressure due to the intense nature of their jobs; or trying to figure out how to handle their busy schedules. Although no one in their neighborhoods or local churches is currently being fed to hungry lions, the stresses and pressures these believers feel can nonetheless be very severe.

So no matter where you live or what you're facing, remember that it's essential to have the right attitude toward high-pressure situations!

Patience: The Queen of All Virtues!

The Early Church called 'patience' the "queen of all virtues."

They believed that if they possessed this one virtue, they could survive anything that ever came against them. It's this same virtue that is sustaining believers today living in godless regions of the world - and this virtue is exactly what you need to victoriously outlast the pressures and ordeals you may be dealing with today.

James was writing to believers who were undergoing the kind of hardships described above. He told them: "**But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.**"

Continued...

Word Study:

"But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

The word 'Patience' is the Greek word 'hupomeno' - a compound of the words 'hupo' and 'meno'. The word 'hupo' means 'under', as to be 'underneath something'. The word 'meno' means to 'stay or to abide'.

You could say that the word 'meno' means to remain in one's spot, to keep a position, to resolve to maintain some territory that has been gained. It is the state of mind that says, 'This is my spot, and I'm not moving!'

The determination inherent within the word 'hupomeno' is clearly seen when it was used in a military sense to picture soldiers who were ordered to maintain their positions even in the face of fierce combat. Their order was to 'stand their ground and defend what had been gained'.

To keep that ground, they had to be courageous to do whatever was required - no matter how hard or difficult the assignment. Their goal was to see that they survived every attack and held their position until they had outlived and outlasted the resistance. These soldiers had to defiantly stick it out indefinitely until the enemy realized they couldn't be beaten and decided to retreat and go elsewhere.

Thus, the word 'hupomeno' conveys the idea of being steadfast, consistent, unwavering, and unflinching. It is the attitude that declares, "I don't care how heavy the load gets or how much pressure I'm under, I am not budging one inch! This is my spot, and I'm telling you right now that there isn't enough pressure in the whole world to make me move and give it up!"

A More Accurate Rendition:

Although the King James Version translates this word 'patience,' a more accurate rendering would be 'endurance'. One scholar calls it 'staying-power', whereas another contemporary translator calls it 'hang-in-there power'. Both of these translations adequately express the right idea about 'hupomeno'. This is an attitude that never gives up! It holds out, holds on, outlasts, and perseveres.

Revelation 1:9 uses the word 'hupomeno' when it refers to 'the patience of Jesus Christ.'

In Second Thessalonians 3:5, this word is also used in the phrase, 'the patient waiting for Christ', which could be translated, 'The patience of Jesus Christ - that attitude that hangs in there, never giving up, refusing to surrender to obstacles, and turning down every opportunity to quit.'

This word illustrates the patient endurance Jesus demonstrated during His trial, scourging, and crucifixion. Even though the assignment was the most difficult task ever given to anyone, Jesus stayed with it all the way to the end.

Keeping all this in mind, James 1:4 could be interpreted:

"But let patience have her perfect work. I'm talking about the kind of attitude that hangs in there, never giving up, refusing to surrender to obstacles and turning down every opportunity to quit...."

The Early Church called patience the "queen of all virtues" for good reason. They knew that as long as they had this character quality working in their lives, it wasn't a question of if they would win their battles - it was only a question of when they would win their battles.

'Hupomeno' - that is, endurance, staying-power, hang-in-there power - is one of the major weapons you need to outlast any difficulty or time of stress and pressure that comes your way.

Do Not Give Up *continued...*

If you're going through some rough circumstances at the moment, be encouraged! It's a fleeting and temporary condition that will soon change! It's time for you to get your eyes off your challenges and to stop fixating on your problems. Make up your mind that you are going to stand your ground and hang in there. It won't be long until the problems flee - and when they do, you'll be so glad you didn't give up!

PRAYER FOR TODAY

Lord, forgive me if I have rejected or abandoned the means that you provided me to escape this trial. I repent and I ask you to show me where I missed it, and what I need to do to get back into your perfect will. I know that the key to escape is the knowledge of you and your Word. I ask you to teach me, and to lead me to others that can help me learn the things I need to know.

From this moment on I purpose to do whatever it is you would have me do, go wherever you would have me go and learn the things I need to learn in order to stand in faith and walk in victory!

Lord, I also ask you to help me stand my ground and defend what I have gained, no matter how difficult it might be to do this. I know that with your supernatural help I can outlive and outlast the resistance. With Your Spirit's power working inside me, I know I can defiantly stick it out indefinitely until the enemy realizes he cannot beat me and decides to retreat!

I PRAY THIS IN JESUS NAME!