

Stick-To-It-Ness

This is not a word you will find defined in a dictionary but we all know what is meant by such a word.

When young we are all creatures of sudden but short-lived fascinations, it is part of growing up as we are prompted to try this or that to see if we really find enjoyment in various activities. Often we were told by our parents that we lacked “*stick-to-it-ness*”, which too often was true.

God’s Christian Bible, which God inspired so that humans would have the perfect textbook to guide us in living the most fulfilling and joy-filled life, has in it a more correct word for the same trait, “*perseverance*.”

James 1:12 [NIV] “*Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*”

Perseverance means we don’t stop, we keep going, we don’t give up trying.

We don’t get discouraged, upset and quit when we find we are **not** doing everything perfectly in our lives.

The book of James has many guidelines towards living our day-to-day life, which will have trials and failures.

James is telling us that when we develop perseverance we are on the way to becoming the mature person God wants us to become.

The whole concept of perseverance runs contrary to our age and culture.

Today the mentality seems to be “*if it doesn’t come easy and instantly, forget it.*”

How often have we heard, “*I don’t like this new job, or my new boss, so I’m going to quit and collect unemployment benefits.*”

“*Things are getting tense in our marriage, I think we should separate.*”

Even in child-bearing we hear “*It’s too hard, it takes too much of my time to teach my children all that they should understand about relationships in life.*”

This is how many people think today!

If things don’t come instantly people take the easy way out, by running away from their problems.

In contrast, let me assure you that anything worth having in life will not come easily and instantly.

The really important accomplishments require a tremendous amount of personal and spiritual sacrifice and perseverance.

Christ is the perfect example of perseverance.

No other human being ever experienced such merciless, life-long pounding from within and without.

There is in the physical creation all around us examples of an ancient saying, “*that which grows fast withers as rapidly, that which grows slowly endures.*”

Four key areas of perseverance.

1 Perseverance helps us develop the character that God desires in all of us.

The character that is needed for us to qualify for becoming part of the created family of God, the Kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:22 [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, **patience**, kindness, goodness, **faithfulness**,”*

These God-like characteristics are difficult to develop, that is why most people progress slowly in this area.

Some when the going gets tough as a maturing Christian just give up and quit, for they lack the spirit of perseverance that would keep them trying no matter how hard or discouraging the struggle becomes.

2 Perseverance helps us improve relationships

All relationships take effort to make them grow and mature.

Don't just give up on people if they disappoint you in some way. Give them a second or even a third chance if necessary.

Matthew 18:21 [NIV] *“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”*

Even three chances may **not** be enough for some relationships.

3 Perseverance helps us improve our prayer life

Luke 18:1-8 [NIV] *“Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should **always pray and not give up**. He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ “For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care about men, yet **because this widow keeps bothering me**, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming!’“ And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, **who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?**”*

Faith is perseverance in practice.

We need to keep on communicating with God, He will not ignore us.

God's delay in responding to our prayers may be to test our faith, our perseverance?

4 Perseverance helps us reach our goals

1 Peter 2:9-10 [NIV] *“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. **Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**”*

God is calling us to a bright tomorrow, this is our potential.

God gives us a glimpse of what we can become and what we can do.

Philippians 4:13 [NIV] *“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”* The *“Him”* in this verse is referring to Jesus Christ.

God will help us attain this goal He has set before us if we ask Him, and we don't give up on our part of this covenant He makes with us through Jesus Christ His Son.

We all need what perseverance offers us.