



Lights and Perfection, Inc.

Go and make disciples!

E-votional 12

Endure Suffering

2 Timothy 4:5 (ESV),

*As for you, always be sober-minded, **endure suffering**, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*

Last week we touched on the part of this passage that said, “*always be sober-minded.*” The truth within this context is related to false-teaching. Therefore, the need to keep a close watch and be sober-minded. This week, we are talking about the next part of the passage that says, “*endure suffering.*”

Why did Paul see fit to add this in after speaking of keeping a sober mind? Well, Paul knew first-hand about suffering for the sake of the Gospel. Most of Paul’s suffering came from false-teachers and those that opposed his message. The reality is that the Gospel is truth and anything that does not line up with it is false. For this reason, Christians have been given the name of bigots or those who have closed-minds. People are not always willingly ready to accept the truth in the Gospel. For this reason, Jesus Himself said in John 15:18 (ESV), “*If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.*” The reason for this is that when we are being effective for Christ we are acting as salt and light in this world which exposes sin and darkness. How many of you enjoyed when you were confronted with your sin or darkness?

Now, it is necessary to walk in love as Christ loved us and not in a way that makes people hate us. However, when we walk in the truth of Jesus Christ and are led by His Spirit and power we are going to be called to live according to the word of God. The truth of God’s word is not widely accepted by the majority. But we are called to walk in it and in a way that expresses love. 1 Peter 2:23 (ESV), “*When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*” I am sharing all of this as it relates directly to the idea of enduring suffering. Jesus was cursed and did not curse in return. In other words, He did not plead His own case but simply walked in the truth and entrusted His life to the Father who was fulfilling a

purpose. Do we want God's purpose or our own?

I am reminded of a time while I was yet in prison. There was a man who opposed anything that had to do with Jesus. This man was very violent and angry and filled with hate. One day, there was a Christian television program on in the prison dayroom. All in all, there were only about three men in there watching this program when this man who opposed Jesus came into the room and said some very hateful and vile things, words that ought not to be repeated about Jesus. From there he forcefully changed the television program while cursing Jesus. I remember the Holy Spirit left from within my heart as I shouted Hallelujah! And proceeded to leave the room quietly. The man followed me out to my bunk area and began to threaten and revile me. (I was absolutely terrified inside) A courage and boldness came over me as I looked directly into this man's eyes and said, "I love you brother." He looked stunned, to say the least, and then replied a little shaken by what just took place, "well, I don't love you." All I could say to this was Hallelujah!

Over the period of a few months every so often the Lord would put it into my heart to bless this man with something and declare to him that it was Jesus who put it into my heart to do. During this time, I could visibly see this man's hard heart begin to soften when one day he reached out to me with a question about God. He asked if it was possible for God to speak to us in dreams. I said of course.

The point of this testimony goes to illustrate just what endurance and the power of love can do when faced with direct or even indirect opposition. The truth is that many of us do not face as severe of persecution as the early church did. However, we still face challenges and choices every day that test our Christian character and conduct. No matter what we are facing we are never called to retaliate. The question becomes, is our life more important than the ones we are trying to reach with the Gospel?

Jesus gave the best example of enduring suffering. We have this example of grace and love that endured suffering for the joy that was set before Him. This joy had to do with saving the world. However, we see clearly that if He did not endure suffering and go to the cross we would not be saved. So, the answer to the question of, "is our life more important than the ones we are trying to reach with the Gospel?" When we operate in this same example given to us, to love, we are in effect saying, Jesus, I trust that you know what You are doing, and I choose to believe You have a purpose. This is not easy, but we have an abundance of grace if we would just come boldly to the throne and receive of His fullness.

Lord, we ask with all our heart, that You would give us all a heart that is so on fire for You, that we look beyond our temporal circumstances and into Your eternal

purposes that You set forth in Christ Jesus. Give us such a boldness so that no matter what comes our way we will not be shaken but will continue to entrust our souls to You and endure for the sake of Your purposes. Fill us with Your great love and cause us to be faithful witnesses to You. Keep our hearts pure and undefiled with child-like faith in Jesus name. Amen.

In Christ's Love,
Chris and Jeanne
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