

# Endure

## Hebrews 10:32-39

We often start projects with great eagerness, but soon become weary and give up. We then live with the guilt of not finishing for the rest of our lives. We needed endurance to finish the project.

Some people consider the Christian life to be like a hundred-yard dash requiring just a brief burst of energy. The Christian life is a race that lasts one's lifetime and requires strict training. A true child of God will endure to the very end. The writer to the Hebrews says, *“Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us”* (Heb. 12:1). Paul exhorts Timothy to endure hardship like a soldier (2 Tim. 2:3-6).

True Christianity means to follow Jesus and whenever necessary, suffer with him. Jesus calls us to deny ourselves, take up the cross daily, and follow him. Why a cross? Because the world will do to us what it did to Jesus because we belong to him. In Hebrews 10:32-39 the author speaks of our need for patient endurance during severe trials. He encourages his readers by telling them to remember Christ's sufferings for them and their own past sufferings. To know God and to hold on to their confidence. To recognize that endurance comes through suffering, and to continue doing God's will. No one wants to suffer, yet we must.

### 1. Remembering Past Faithfulness

The first point is found in verses 32-34 *“But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.”*

These Hebrew Christians were in danger of rejecting Jesus for Moses, of rejecting the gospel for the rituals of Judaism-to avoid suffering.

To help them remain firm in their faith, the author now exhorts them to remember their own past faithfulness and suffering for the gospel. He exhorted them similarly in Heb 6:10: ***“God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help.”*** In their past they loved the gospel and sacrificially helped God’s people who were suffering for the gospel. Now he exhorts them to remember this past faithfulness (Heb. 10:32).

Remembering the past helps us in the present. I remember as a new Christian I saw the saints loving God and one another and joyfully being a servant for the sake of Christ. We are ever-mindful of the words of Jesus to the saints to the church at Smyrna: ***“Be faithful even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life”*** (Rev. 2:10), and those of Paul to Timothy: ***“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will reward to me on that day-and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing”*** (2 Tim. 4:7-8). These memories make it easier to serve God.

## **2. Knowing God**

The second point is knowing. We must know God, know the Scriptures, and know doctrine so that we can joyfully endure suffering and persevere in the Christian life. The Hebrew Christians joyfully accepted the confiscation of their property because they knew they had better and lasting possessions. Christians endure suffering through knowledge, not feeling. They exercise their minds to know the true gospel and their God. They are inspired to endure sufferings because they know that even now, they have better and everlasting possessions. They know who God is, who man is, and the nature of the world and the devil. They know there is a heaven and a hell.

Those without this knowledge will not last long in the Christian life. Jesus tells us, ***“The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them”*** (Matt. 13:11). Knowledge of God helps us to hope, to believe, and to endure our sufferings with joy.

Unbelievers are incapable of knowing God through unbelief. But Christians are those who have received the full knowledge of the truth (cf. Heb. 10:26). So, Paul writes, *“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the glory of God in the face of Christ”* (2 Cor. 4:4-6).

What is the result of knowing God? *“Not only so, but we also rejoice in our suffering, knowing that suffering produces patience, patience character, and character hope”* (Rom. 5:3). As Christians, we are not confused when we’re faced with trials, persecutions, and suffering. Our knowledge of God understands this: *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance”* (James 1:2-3). God has a plan and a purpose. He has chosen us to be holy and blameless, and he is going to achieve that by whatever means he chooses to use.

### **3. Do Not Throw Away Your Confidence**

The third point is found in verse 35: *“So do not throw away your confidence.”* The writer encourages his readers that because God had saved them and they had already suffered so much for the gospel, they should not foolishly throw away their confidence. Rather, they should persevere, fearlessly holding fast to their confession, because they were closer to their salvation than when they first believed. True Christians shall persevere to the end.

The writer had already spoken of this in Hebrews 3: *“But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house, and we are his house, if we hold on to our encouragement and the hope of which we boast . . . We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly to the end the confidence, we had at first”* (vv. 6, 14). Now he exhorts them to not cast away their precious confession of Jesus.

This gives them confidence to come to the throne of grace with a good conscience to receive mercy and to find grace. They must not quit their Christian walk because of suffering and the enticement of sin, or be like Esau, who sold his birthright for a cup of soup.

My grandkids have confidence in approaching me because it's their right to call me "Papa." So also we have confidence toward God and his Son Jesus Christ: *"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God"* (John 1:12-13).

God is our heavenly Father. Listen to Paul: *"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the full rights as sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit that calls out, 'Abba, Father'"* (Gal. 4:4-6). The word "Abba" in Aramaic means "Daddy." That is why Jesus taught us to pray, "Our Father,". This intimate relationship is our confidence.

#### **4. We Need Endurance**

*"You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised"* (v. 36). Modern people do not have much patience. We pamper our children and they grow up without patience. But here the author is telling us that we need endurance to live the Christian life.

I've known many parents over the years that do anything they can to keep their children away from difficulties. I've seen Fathers lie to protect their children from being put in a difficult situation of their making. I once read a story that makes this point very well.

An 8<sup>th</sup> grader was in a science class where they had each been given a cocoon that one day would produce a butterfly. The teacher had a timeline on the wall and the students each waited for the day to arrive so they could take a picture of the cocoon and the emerging butterfly.

The evening of the emergence the young 8<sup>th</sup> grader watched as movement began just as the teacher said it would. The youngster watched and a bit of the butterfly emerged. The child watched in fascination and then the butterfly slowed its struggle to free itself. Fearing for the tiny creature the child took a knife and cut the cocoon and then saw the butterfly sort of flop out on the desk. The student smiled but quickly realized something was not right. The butterfly was wet and shriveled and was moving very slowly until it stopped in death. What this student did not know was that the butterfly **MUST** struggle to remove all the moisture from its body and wings. The cocoon acted like a wringer to get that moisture out as the butterfly struggled. Removing all this moisture in the struggle is what allowed the butterfly to fly about effortlessly. In “going to the rescue,” the student had ensured that the butterfly would not thrive and become strong.

So too we must allow our children to struggle with some of the problems that they come up against. We should not come to the rescue in every problem they encounter. They will thrive and become strong if we allow them to struggle against “all odds” at times.

God does that with us at times too. He could swoop in and always make the way clear and effortless, but we would then begin to think of him as a rescuer to be called upon **ONLY** in the times of trouble. Not a Father, a Redeemer, a Friend.

These struggles that we face, work through and overcome are what make us stronger in the Lord and in this life. **“Lord give me endurance till the end so I may live with you eternally.”**