

Faith is Endurance

Key Verse: *“Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*
—Hebrews 12:1,2

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 12:1-11

in conjunction with our faith. Paul reminds us of this, but also points out that the endurance required of the

IN THE KEY VERSES OF our lesson we see that the Apostle Paul is exhorting us to look back at the experiences of a great “cloud of witnesses,” those “Ancient Worthies,” who lived prior to the First Advent of Jesus. We should consider what they endured and how faithful and loyal they were to God. So great was their trust in God that they have also come to be known as “Heroes of Faith.”—Heb. 11:4-39

Although these worthy ones of old possessed great faith, we are told that they “received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” (Heb. 11:39,40) However, we should gain inspiration from their example in order that we might continue to strive for the greatest attainment of faith possible in running the Christian racecourse.

Much endurance is necessary

child of God is really a “light affliction.” “Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”—II Cor. 4:16-18

The church will be the temple of God, perfect on the heavenly plane, and recipients of the divine nature. The glorified Jesus has promised, “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God.” (Rev. 3:12) Therefore, each prospective member of this temple, begotten as a New Creature in Christ, must have God’s Holy Spirit dwelling in their heart and mind even now. We can thus have the peace of God residing in us even as we endure the difficult trials and experiences of the narrow way.

Let us now examine an important verse from our Selected Scripture. “Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” (Heb. 12:3) Our mind is the special battleground for each of us because of the flesh’s resistance to sacrifice, and its tendency to be “wearied and faint.” This fallen and weak will of the flesh, the “old man,” is in constant conflict with the will of the “new man,” the new mind. The key to victory of the New Creature over the old flesh is to be found in studying, comprehending, and appreciating our Lord’s course, his example and teachings, and then to follow as closely as possible in his footsteps.

We should rejoice that our Lord Jesus has invited us to walk in his footsteps, and to endure as he did. In this cup of trials, testings, and even persecution, God has also blended the joys of our future hope. Thus, we can echo these words: “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, . . . Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven.”—Matt. 5:11,12 ■