

Christian Character – Longsuffering Heb. 12:1-3

Introduction:

Translated as “longsuffering” or “patience”

It is “forbearance” (Strong’s).

It is, by implication, to “patiently endure.”

I. Notice the great witnesses that we are surrounded by (12:1).

- A. We all have witnesses that we can look up to.
 - 1. We have the examples that are mentioned in Heb. 11.
 - a. Noah (11:7)
 - 1) Noah was the only one living that was faithful to God.
 - 2) He patiently endured the flood for a total of 150 days.
 - b. Abraham (11:8-10, 17-19)
 - 1) Abraham was seventy-five years old when God commanded him to move from his father’s house.
 - 2) It was another twenty-five years before the son of promise (Isaac) was born.
 - c. Moses (11:23-29)
 - 1) Moses had great patience when he went to Pharaoh and demanded that Israel be set free.
 - 2) Moses had great patience in order to deal with the people of Israel for 40 years in the wilderness.
 - d. Notice the longsuffering (endurance) that many of the Old Testament characters endured (11:32-40).
 - 2. We have examples of others in the New Testament that are examples of great faith and longsuffering.
 - a. We read of the endurance (longsuffering) that Peter and Paul went through in order to spread the gospel.
 - b. We read of some churches in the New Testament that were known for their patience.
 - 1) Thessalonica (II Thes. 1:4)
 - 2) Ephesus and Thyatira (Rev. 2:2, 19)
- B. We also have others living around us that are examples of great faith.

II. When we notice these examples, we can “run with endurance the race that is set before us...” (12:1).

- A. In order to be able to “run...the race,” we must “lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us.”
 - 1. Remember what Paul said in Col. 3.
 - a. Col. 3:5-9 - Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and

covetousness, which is idolatry. {6} Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, {7} in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. {8} But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. {9} Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

- b. If we are going to be faithful to God, we must put off the sins of the flesh.
 - c. Anything that would keep us from serving God must be removed from our lives.
2. This same idea is given in several other places in the New Testament.
- a. **Col. 2:11** - In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,
 - b. **I Pet. 2:11** - Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul,
 - c. **Eph. 4:20-31** - But you have not so learned Christ, {21} if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: {22} that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, {23} and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, {24} and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. {25} Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. {26} "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, {27} nor give place to the devil. {28} Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. {29} Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. {30} And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. {31} Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.
- B. We must run the race with endurance.
1. We must have longsuffering in order to live the faithful Christian life.
 2. **I Cor. 9:24-27** - Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. {25} And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. {26} Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. {27} But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

III. We can have patience when we look back to Christ and His patience (12:2-3).

- A. We can have endurance and longsuffering when we look to Christ.
 - 1. He is our perfect example in all things.
 - 2. Notice the patience of Christ.
 - a. Jesus had patience in dealing with the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - b. Jesus had patience in dealing with His own apostles.
 - c. Jesus was even patient in His death.
 - d. **I Pet. 2:21-24** - For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: {22} “Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth;” {23} who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; {24} who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness-- by whose stripes you were healed.
- B. God is also longsuffering with us.
 - 1. He was longsuffering with Israel.
 - a. **Num. 14:18** - The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.
 - b. **Ps. 86:15** - But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.
 - 2. God was longsuffering with Noah.
 - a. **I Pet. 3:20** - who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.
 - 3. God is also longsuffering with us.
 - a. **II Pet. 3:9** - The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.
 - b. **II Pet. 3:15** - and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation.

Conclusion:

Rom. 2:6-7 - who “will render to each one according to his deeds:” {7} eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;