
Endurance is built by hope—the joy of anticipation

2 Timothy 1:12 ...and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.

The **hope** God provides anchors a weary, empty, troubled soul in His plan. Beneath difficult feelings, **hope** encourages by giving you reason to persevere with **the joy of anticipation**. Happiness depends on present blessing, which God does not guarantee. **Joy depends on future hope**, which God does guarantee.

1 Corinthians 9:24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one **gets the prize**? Run in such a way as **to get the prize**.²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to **get a crown** that will not last, but **we do it to get a crown that will last forever**.²⁶ Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.²⁷ No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore **we do not lose heart**. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet **inwardly** we are being **renewed day by day**.¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us **an eternal glory** that far outweighs them all.¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Hebrews 12:2 Looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of God.³ Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted.

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Finish Line
The Narrow Road
Feb. 16, 2025

The Narrow Road review:

Matt. 7:13 “Enter through the narrow gate.

- Narrow Road: "Follow Me"
- Beach: We are a new creation
- Forest: A purposeful adventure
- Mountains: Climbing the mountain of relationships and responsibilities, with headwinds
- Valleys: God uses the hard times of life redemptively
- Desert: God takes people to the desert for refining as we learn to find our deepest joy in Him

The necessity of endurance is normative.

Colossians. 1:9 And so, from the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding¹⁰ to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Colossians 1:11 May you be **strengthened** with **all power**, according to **his glorious might**, for **all endurance** and **patience** with **joy**...

Temptation: to be weary, faint-hearted, give up

2 Corinthians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.⁵ For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.⁶ If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of

the same sufferings we suffer. ⁷ And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

⁸ We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to

■ endure, so that we despaired of life itself. ⁹ Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰ He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, ¹¹ as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

■ Galatians 6:9 And let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart. ¹⁰ So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Perseverance illustrated by Paul

■ 2 Corinthians 11:23 Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again.

²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from

■ bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

²⁹ Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin,

and I do not inwardly burn?

³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. ³² In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. ³³ But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

■ 2 Timothy 2:3 Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴ No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. ⁵ Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. ⁶ The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops.

The paradox of maturity

Paul:

■ I Corinthians 15:9-10 I am the least of the apostles ...but by the grace of God I am what I am and his grace toward me was not in vain.

■ Ephesians 3:8 Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace. Though I am the least of the saints, this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

■ 1 Timothy 1:15-16 This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst. But I received mercy—(twice Paul says that)—so that in me, as the worst, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to others.

Maturity: a greater awareness of my sinfulness that leads me to an ever-increasing sense of the wonder of grace. That increasing sense of grace releases me into the lives of people to be examples and mouthpieces of grace.
