

THE NEED FOR PERSEVERANCE

We must choose to obey God's command to grow. (2 Pet. 3:18) But we must believe we are capable of growth with God's help. Another crucial element in spiritual growth is perseverance, or endurance... (1 Cor. 15:58). The Hebrew Christians needed encouragement to continue. (Heb. 10:36)

WHY WE NEED PERSEVERANCE?

Spiritual growth takes time. It takes time to learn the Word of God, to learn what is expected of us and to learn what area of service that we are capable of doing. It takes time to develop a Christ-like character also.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH REQUIRES REPETITION...

Repetition is one of the best ways to learn and grow in the faith. It takes repetition to overcome mistakes. They are common when we start anything. That is why we are called "babes" in the New Testament. We can expect to stumble frequently as we learn to walk in the faith. Repeated efforts help to determine whether we are suited for a particular task. Many of our mistakes are due simple to inexperience. Or one may be better suited to serve in other ways. Repetition helps to improve our skills. If we are not persistent, we will never grow!

SPIRITUAL GROWTH CAN LOSE GROUND

We can regress by simply failing to grow. This was the case with the Hebrew Christians (Heb. 5:12). When we regress, we are going back into the world. Some were described as entangled in "the pollutions of the world" (2 Pet. 2:20-22).

Like physical health, spiritual health requires persistent exercise or we will go back into spiritual sickness.

BUT HOW DO WE MAINTAIN PERSEVERANCE - WE MUST DISPLAY SELF-CONTROL DAILY...

There is a close relationship between self-control and perseverance (2 Pet. 1:6). Self-control must be exercised one day at a time. We can't handle the failures of yesterday and think about all the days to come. The problems of one day are enough to try to control.

We learn to display self-control daily as we: Engage in daily habits that lead to our goals (e.g., Bible reading and prayer). Take the small steps that lead to our destination (e.g., serving in our function). Keep trying again and again after apparent failures. Perseverance is exercising self-control one day at a time, day after day.

ASSOCIATE WITH LIKE-MINDED INDIVIDUALS:

We are striving for similar goals, through similar habits. We understand the need for perseverance in their lives. We don't get discouraged - who will encourage them? (e.g., Heb. 10:36-39) This is why frequent assembling with other Christians is so important.

If spiritual growth is to occur, a good beginning is not enough. Progress in the past is not sufficient (Heb. 10:36-39). It takes continuing each day and not looking back or ahead.

Charles