

Persistence!

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Have you ever been called, “a persistence cuss”? Well this might seem like a negative statement or a little cruel in its nature, but God is looking for men and women who are just what that statement embodies. People who are persistent in love, faith, trust and obedience to God. Persistent in the purpose of the Kingdom. Now we also identify this description with our enemy the devil as related in 1 Peter 5:8. The Apostle Peter paints the picture of our enemy quite clearly, “*he (the devil) goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour*” – this sure sounds also like a persistent cuss, but in God, our **Persistence wears out resistance!**

To persist is to continue steadily and firmly in the pursuit of a course commenced. To be obstinate without harm, to go on in spite of opposition, to remain unchanged, fixed, to continue. Oh yes the devil goes about pretending to be a roaring lion, **BUT HE IS NOT A ROARING LION.** Jesus pulled his teeth, power and authority a long time ago, and gave to us His church all authority and power over him. It is time we settle that issue once and for all in our lives. Now back to I Peter 5, look at verse 9, “*resist him steadfast in the faith,*” God gives us instructions that are definitely, “persistence based” in nature. Resist, and keep on resisting and resisting – keep on persisting against our arch enemy.

HOW DO YOU PERSIST IN GOD?

Ephesians 6:10 says, “Finally my brethren be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” It is by His might that we have our strength, by the boundless might that He provides. In Him, we put on the whole armor of God, we put on the new man, we stand our ground, we persist. Persist in our faith, in our thoughts, in our words, our deeds and our lifestyles.

So really now, how do we stand our ground, how do we persist in God?

WE AGREE WITH GOD AND WITH GOD'S WORD.

This agreement is critical to our living a victorious life in Him. Amos 3:3 says *how can two walk together unless they agree.* We have to agree with God and what He said. Let’s cut to the bottom line issue. Matthew 19:26 states, “*But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”*” To be equipped to persist in the things of God we have to settle our agreement with God by asking ourselves, **do I really believe what this verse says? Again, do I believe what God has said?** Do I really believe the Word of God? Until you and I settle this tug of war, we will not be free from doubt and fear. We will struggle with things God did not intend for us to struggle with. Jesus paid the price for us to be free and live in victory everyday of our lives. Absolute agreement and absolute belief in God's Word is the cry of this day.

WATCH WHAT YOU SAY

Many will ask, are our words really that important. **YES, YES!** If Jesus when tempted by the devil only responded by speaking the Word, surely we must do the same. Our words are containers of life or death. Our words create the atmosphere of our life and draw either blessing or cursing. Every aspect of our life is based on what we choose to do, say, think, or believe. Our words are important. Do we as believers persist in speaking fear, doubt, unbelief, and negativity. We do know that what we speak is what we believe!

Instead we must speak persistently faith, trust, confidence, power, authority because we believe what God has said. There is a big difference between a truth, and the truth. Jesus said in John 14:6, “*I am the way, the truth and the life.*” Are we living our lives by speaking the “facts” given to us by mere men, giving those words more authority than the word of God? No, no, no – we must choose to hear and speak **the truth** of God's word as our final authority. Jesus said the words that I speak they are spirit and they are life. Men speaking without God do not give you words of life. When we speak words not of God, it does not draw life. Our words are declarations and proclamations of what will come about. We must watch what we let come forth from our mouths.

OUR LIFESTYLE REFLECTS WHAT WE BELIEVE

Our lifestyle, our way of living and doing should agree with God. Doing right because it is right, not just, because it is popular or not popular, or religiously or politically correct. *“When we are doing right, we are not doing wrong.”* Refuse to allow the devil or anyone to lead you into a place of wrong by their words, negative attitudes, thoughts or deeds. **Spiritual problems cannot be solved with natural means.**

One of the devil's main tools of destruction is to get us, **“to be overwhelmed”, to be defeated!** This position is best described by this statement. *To greatly turn upside down that which was right side up.* At this point, our problem becomes bigger than our God. Our point of need has passed by with no hope of resolve. Our belief of any supernatural action of God has seemingly vanished. Our faith having been thoroughly tested and then we are overcome by the onslaught of the enemy and circumstances. This position is not of God. God did not cause it or does He delight in its continuance. God never intended for us to live in a place of being overwhelmed. The word of God always has our answer, the Word is our answer.

We find King David in this condition in Psalm 55:4-6, “My heart is severely pained within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me. 5 Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, And horror has overwhelmed me. 6 So I said, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest.” David had many opportunities to be overwhelmed, he even entertained running away, “I would fly away if I had wings” We cannot run from the problem, it goes with us. We must face our problems, head on, not running away.

David was a man after God's heart. We find his answer, our answer in *Psalm 61:2, From the end of the earth I will cry to You, When my heart is overwhelmed; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*” What do we get from this verse? First, he cried out to God, not to anyone else, not seeking allies, or sympathy, but he went to God first.

When he was overwhelmed, when the trouble was at its highest point, he went to God. His cry was, lead me to the rock, which is higher than I, the rock is Jesus. The rock is the Word of God, our highest authority. There is nothing higher, no other word, statement, action, deed, or opinion. The Word of God will drive out and overcome our being overwhelmed. There is always victory in the Word, in Jesus.

A BIBLICAL WRAP-UP

The word of God proclaims that we are victorious, overcomers, conquerors, full of power and authority, living full, whole, prosperous lives in and through Jesus our Lord.

Now if this does not describe your life, or you are coming up short in some areas, then you need a change. Think about this for a moment - - - persistence is something that most of us are already doing. BUT, we are doing it aimed or focused in the wrong direction, persistently living our lives without God's intervention or help. Persistence is the same force, but the outcome is dependant on the focus of our persistence.

In Genesis 37, we find the story of Joseph, *a man of persistence.* I will summarize the story here, but I challenge you to take time to read the story for yourself again.

God gave Joseph a dream, and Joseph never let go of that dream. Have you had a dream and let go of it. PICK IT BACK UP AGAIN – let God bring it about. God is waiting on you. Joseph's heart was right with God and man. Joseph showed forth his character time and time again in his journey to the fulfillment of the dream God had given. Joseph was **obedient** to God and natural authority, he was a **dreamer** and never let go. Joseph **believed**, he trusted God. He was and had the heart of a **servant**. He exemplified **patience**, he was **faithful** to God, to man he kept his word at all times in all situations. He **honored** God above all, and lastly Joseph never **compromised** his life in God. From a pit to the palace, a shepherd boy to second in command of a nation - Joseph painted a perfect picture of **PERSISTENCE**.

Let Joseph's life show us that we too, can have our dreams fulfilled. We too are men and women of God, living the uncompromisingly life in Him. Let your faith increase in God as you have heard the word in this newsletter. May your persistence in Him be **“energized.”**

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