

Gathering Question – What is the difference between enduring and putting up with something? Complete this sentence: What I find hardest to endure is _____ because _____. Name some times you have been glad that you didn't quit something.

Endurance

Avoidance! We spend a lot of energy in our lives trying to avoid trial, and why shouldn't we? Trials of any kind are not pleasant. But the Bible teaches us to not only embrace trials but that our trials might become our greatest blessings in the long run. It is adversity that helps us to develop endurance, and endurance is a powerful weapon to have in our character arsenal.

Endurance is that quality that sustains courage. You can have a burst of courage for 15 minutes, but that is not enough to carry you through to the end. You have seen endurance haven't you? We have seen it in the person with a lingering, debilitating disease who has decided to be an encouragement to others in the midst of her pain. We have seen it in the life of a person who is in a difficult marriage and keeps on loving and praying and hoping. We have seen it in people who work with others who are incredibly challenging, but who refuses to throw in the towel and quit.

Endurance gives staying power to discipline. It is important to understand the concept of delayed gratification and to make decisions in advance that will dictate the way you live your life daily. Endurance turns your vision into reality. Without it, vision is not more than a pipe dream.

If you are at the point of quitting right now, count the cost very carefully before you throw in the towel. Quitting is not glamorous. It does not develop your character. God does not call it blessed. And in most cases you might regret your decision to quit for the rest of your life. When you come to the quitting point, turn to God! Allow his strength to crash through the challenge as you build endurance in your life.

Read – Jeremiah 29:1-14

Reflect –

1. Why would the exiles have been tempted to quit their faith?
2. We usually equate endurance with gritting our teeth and doing something very unpleasant. Do you think this letter is talking about endurance or something else? Explain.
3. In order to carry out the instructions in verse 7, what attitude toward their captors would the exiles have needed?
4. In what ways are verses 10ff encouraging? Can you relate in your present situation?
5. In what ways did the false prophets discourage the people?