

DISCUSSION:

4. Endurance. James 1:3.

A. **What is endurance?** The Greek word is *hupomone*. “*Hupomone* is translated patience in the Authorized Version. But it does not mean patience in the sense of simply bowing the head and letting the tide of events flow over one. It means not only the ability to bear things, but the ability, in bearing them, to turn them into glory. It is a conquering patience. *Hupomone* is the ability to deal triumphantly with anything that life can do to us” (William Barclay). *Hupomone* is “an active, vigorous endurance, not a passive, resigned acceptance of all that happens. It is used, for example, to describe the soldier in a keenly contested conflict who battles on undismayed. He does not allow the difficulties of the moment to rob him of strength and purpose; he fights on unflinchingly ... endurance is a positive acceptance of life with all its difficulties, not a passive acquiescence in things as they are ... [it] does more than put up with life’s hardships; it grows and develops as it struggles against them .. [it] sees problems positively—as valuable tests that refine it and prove its worth” (Leon Morris).

B. **Why do we need endurance?**

- 1) **Because as free moral agents we need the hard training of life to increasingly become the blessed beings God wants us to be.** “A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it had and it could go no further. Then the man decided to help the butterfly, so he took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time. Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly. What the man in his kindness and haste did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening were God’s way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon. Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If God allowed us to go through our life without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been. And we could never fly” (author unknown, adapted). “Have you ever seen a blacksmith work with a piece of iron? He holds it in the fire to soften it up and make it pliable. That is exactly why God permits the testing of our faith by temptations and trials. He wants us to acquire patience, to acquire pliability. If you and I are constantly out of the fire of affliction, we become stiff and useless. God wants to reshape us according to His image” (Zodhiates).
- 2) **Because joy is not found by eliminating things that make us suffer. Rather, joy is found by learning to rob such things of their power to make us suffer.** “Patience serves as a protection against wrongs as clothes do against cold. For if you put on more clothes, as the cold increases it will have no power to hurt you. So in like manner you must grow in patience when you meet with great wrongs, and they will then be powerless to vex your mind” (Leonardo da Vince, God’s Treasury of Virtues, p. 175). “I do not know if you have ever traveled on a boat which is empty, which has no cargo. The motion is terribly rough and the seamen dread it. But when the boat is loaded, it goes along smoothly. That is the goal of trials in the Christian journey. They help us get settled on the sea, furious though it may be, and move us smoothly on to our destination” (Zodhiates).
- C. **Why do we need trials to produce endurance?** It takes lots of practice to develop *hupomone*. “There is no such thing as preaching patience into people unless the sermon is so long that they have to practice it while they hear. No man can learn patience except by going out into the hurly-burly world, and taking life just as it blows” (Henry Ward Beecher, God’s Treasury of Virtues, p. 159). “There is a story of a man who prayed earnestly one morning for grace to overcome his besetting sin of impatience. A little later he missed a train by half a minute and spent an hour stamping up and down the station platform in furious vexation. Five minutes before the next train came in he suddenly realized that here had been the answer to his prayer. He had been given an hour to practice the virtue of

patience; he had missed the opportunity and wasted the hour” (Leonard Hodgson, God’s Treasury of Virtues, p. 159).

D. Discuss the two ways of viewing Revelation 3:10.

E. Why James 1:4?

- 1) Luke 8:13-15.
- 2) “The word translated ‘work’ here [‘result’ NASB] is the Greek *ergon*, which indicates that endurance should be active, not passive. James wants to correct a great misapprehension about the word *hupomonee*, ‘patience.’ We have seen that this word ‘patience’ actually means ‘to bear under.’ It gives us the picture of someone who is under a terrific load. James says, as you are bearing the terrific load, don’t remain stationary; move about, exercise your energy. There should be no passive endurance in the Christian life. The Christian should be aggressive, and, in spite of the burdens of life he is carrying, he should move forward to the goal that is set before him” (Zodhiates).
- 3) We aren’t gaining strength just to be strong. We are gaining strength so we’ll have the energy to become mature and complete, lacking in nothing.

5. Blessed. James 1:12.

APPLICATIONS:

1. **Get smart.** James 1:5-8. “Wisdom, as used here, may be defined as good judgment which is necessary in order to bear the trials and remain true to God; it is the ability to make the proper decisions when trials come upon us” (TALC, ‘58). Examples: James 1:9-11; Luke 22:28; “‘My dear boy,’ said a father, ‘take a word of advice from an old man who loves peace. An insult is like mud; it will brush off much better when it is dry. Wait a little, till he and you are both cool, and the thing will be easily mended. If you go now, it will be only to quarrel!’” (Zodhiates).
2. **Get real.** 1 Timothy 6:9-10; James 1:13-20. See also 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16; 2 Peter 2:9A.
3. **Get going.** James 1:21-25. Examples: James 1:26, 27 ff.