

Today will be the completion of our current sermon series that's entitled *Our Journey of Perseverance*, with this being *Part 6*.

This series has coincided well with what we had been focusing upon and what we are to focus upon during the period of Unleavened Bread and Passover season, and we've done just that, obviously, and gone right through that period with this series. An awesome series, in that respect. I marvel sometimes at just how God gives us a little bit different focus on different things and molds and fashions us in the process and it's exciting. It's inspiring.

Anyway, we've been focusing on our journey out of spiritual Egypt. Obviously, they had a physical one; we have a spiritual one, and God gave all those things so long ago, even the first Passover that was ever held, and the things that began during the time of Moses that they hadn't known before even. God progressively reveals things, continues to give more and more about His plan and His purpose for mankind and the more He gives the more exciting it becomes.

We live in some very exciting times because we have been given more than any other period of time and that's just because we're so blessed to live at this time. We could have been in some other time but I'm glad it was this time. I'm sure everyone that's ever lived and been called to God's way of life, that they were glad that they lived in their time because everything is unique to each individual and how God works with us, molds and fashions us, and is not preparing us all for the same things in His family, in His Kingdom. So again, it's exciting to know that, to understand that.

Anyway, the level of our perseverance or total lack of it reflects whether or not we are fulfilling the name that God gave to us as being spiritual Israel. Because we've been focusing upon the name of Israel and what it means to persevere, and our lives reflect the level of that perseverance. Because that's what it takes all the way until this is over with, until it's accomplished, until we are spiritual Israel in the sense of being born into God's very family. We are to be a people who reflect living that, living perseverance.

All we have to do is look at our lives and see what we're doing, how we're doing it, answer ourselves those important things that have to do with our commitment, our purpose, our desire for God's way, that it's everything, and whether or not we truly believe that and are striving to live that, a people who strive to glorify God with their lives.

Because I marvel at how that's used in scripture. God's blessed us with more of a focus upon that, what it means that we are a part of glorifying God. Our lives are, and that's because God has had a plan. Over the last 6,000 years He's been working more at that plan in the sense of preparing people for His family and molding and fashioning all of that, preparing things into the

future and during this period of time that mankind has gone through, in the sense of preparing for the first resurrection and His government that's going to be on this earth.

To understand that everyone who was called and who has yielded to that call and has been chosen by God, sealed as it were, and those who continue even now then to push on into the future with the desire to be sealed, the desire for God's Kingdom, a desire to be a part of Elohim, to the Family of God, that the very way we live our lives reflects whether or not we glorify God.

Because He gives the ability to change. It's because of His plan and because of His purpose that as we yield to that process it honors God because it shows, it reveals the power of God to create Elohim. As we yield our self to that process and we become a part of that, whether we be begotten or the time we actually become Elohim, that glorifies God, the power, the might of God to perform exactly what He said He was going to do. That's a choice everyone has then.

God's going to do it and has been doing it, and the majority of that first part of that government has already been established, of the 144,000. That's awesome! And they all glorified God by their lives and will more so once they are resurrected to eternal life in the God Family.

So again here, we have to think about those things and understand how we are able to glorify God and persevere with God and Christ. Because that's a matter of work. It's a matter of dedication. It's a matter that this is the focus, this is what it's all about. They have been doing it for so long, Christ for the past 2,000 years nearly, and God from the very beginning of time, before time was established, if you will.

So, as we've been doing ever since we read this verse toward the beginning of the series, we've been reviewing it each time and I want to repeat it again today because it's awesome what it says, Exodus 15:13. Because this was Christ's primary focus. It was his primary message, the greatest message, if you will, the greatest teaching ever given to mankind on the night that he was betrayed. He gave these things and they can be read about, obviously, in John 14, 15, 16, in through there, 17. We read them at Passover every year.

But it has to do with this verse in **Exodus 15:13—You in Your mercy**, speaking of God and that song of Israel when they had come from Egypt and being led by God. **You in Your mercy have led forth the people whom You have redeemed.** He did something on a physical plane at that time that pictured something far, far greater that would come later on and through time, and has been ongoing even before this, candidly, because that's what He's been doing with those who lived before, with, if you want to talk about Abraham, who was long before that, of the family here, and on through the sons and so forth, of those things that God has been doing and this process of leading different ones through that period of time, and to accomplish the same thing.

Again here, what God has been doing and what He was revealing at that particular time where it says, **whom You have redeemed**. A lot that people went through, whether it be Abraham or others, they had this relationship with God, that God judged them by what He'd given to them. We're judged by what we're able to see, by what we know, by what God has given to us, and at any point in time, and they were. They had a relationship and God was redeeming them, but they didn't understand so much of the process. They just experienced something that was so profound in their period of time.

It says, **You have guided us in Your strength to Your holy habitation**. And so, just focusing on the reality of what all this means, that God is revealing something here that He did with them on a physical plane that didn't even apply to them, in that regard, as to what He had to say. It was all spiritual in nature and what God was going to do, continue to do through time, and magnify through time. And by magnification, I mean because of the Church, because now it was going to become much greater after the time of Christ and the things that took place.

He said, or the song reads, "You have guided us in Your strength." God does it. It's by God's great power. But He give us the ability to be on that journey. What an awesome thing we have the choice, choices of what we're going to do along the way, and yet it's all accomplished by God. But if we're going to be a part of it, we have to live up to what God is doing as well.

God is persevering with mankind, with those whom He calls, and faithful. We rely on that and we learn that. God of love, massive love that it's hard for us to comprehend that kind of giving.

Again here, accomplished by His strength "to Your holy habitation." To Your dwelling. That's exactly what Christ revealed on that night, that it was a matter of everything he did. He said, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." They didn't understand that. They didn't get it, what he was saying, and it took a little while; took until God's spirit began to be poured out. Christ was with them for forty days and he explained a lot that isn't recorded during that period of time after he was resurrected. It doesn't say everything that he said.

But still, they weren't able to grasp fully until the day of Pentecost 31 A.D., and then all these things fit together in their mind. What an awesome thing to have experienced something like that. To have been with him all that time, that 3½ years and those forty days, and then all of a sudden, everything he said came to life, and especially these things, that the reason he was dying was, yes, to be our Savior, to be blessed to be forgiven of sin as our Passover, because that was his purpose, to come as our Passover. But to grasp what that means? To be led to God's holy habitation.

Finally, to be able to see that, to know that, that he revealed that what he did he did because the Father dwelt in him and he dwelt in the Father, and basically, saying then, "Now this is for you. I can dwell in you. The Father will dwell in you and you can dwell in us." His holy habitation, God's dwelling, to abide in, to dwell in, all those things that we have come to grasp and understand that wasn't understood until God established us as PKG, and then He's blessed us with that kind of understanding in a very powerful way.

All because we live at this time. Not because of how good we are or anything like that. It's because of God's mercy and God's purpose to reveal more, to prepare for His Son's coming and a new age.

So indeed, as this series is entitled "our journey" and the calling God has given us is one of perseverance. That means to work and to work hard. It can't be done in a lukewarm spirit. If we'd grasped that during Laodicea, Laodicea wouldn't have happened. But we didn't grasp it and we didn't work at it in the way we should have and had to learn a horrifying lesson of what can happen when we don't persevere. We can begin to let up. We can begin to let down. We can begin to become, as it says, lukewarm, not hot, and not cold. God says, "I wish that you were one or the other. It'd make it so much easier."

That's the way it's been in the Church and working with the Church in PKG. That's a blessing when people are hot, when they're on fire, in a sense, for God's way of life. When there is this in between part, that's a horrible thing to work with. Yet when it's not there at all, it's just cold, not just lukewarm but cold, then that's easier to see and easier to deal with. You don't want this way of life, you're not dedicated to this life, you're not persevering, why be here? You hurt the Body then. You'll pull the Body down.

But so does that middle part and that's the bad part, the hard part to deal with because, as God said, "I wish that you were cold or hot," because that's easier to deal with. But the in between part is the part that is difficult to deal with for God's people even, because sometimes it's hard to understand how such things can happen. But we learn through that, and that's the point of it all.

So, when the children of Israel left Egypt, which was strictly a physical journey, it wasn't easy. It was arduous. It was hard. It was difficult. It really was. It wasn't easy. Going out and collecting the manna as they did and had to do those things and feeding of animal, livestock, things that they had to do that they took with them, not so easy.

I remember going down through Negev Desert, ever how you pronounce it, down from upper Israel, let's say Tel Aviv, and then driving on down, staying away from the Gaza Strip, yes. Anyway, we followed a map to make sure we stayed on the right roads all the way down. There are areas back then you didn't want to stray into, so we made sure we stayed in, basically, occupied Israel, in the sense of occupied with military and so forth. That was to your protection. We went all the way down to the southernmost tip.

But going down through that desert there were places where you would see people out there, individuals with a few goats, whatever it was at times that you would see, some camels at times, but mostly goats and things that they were herding, because vegetation, there just wasn't much of anything out there. After you got further down you didn't even see them anymore. It's just too dry. Nothing grows.

Then as we came back up between on the side next to Jordan, up through there where, candidly, on the other side would be going up toward the Dead Sea, then that area there as you drive up through there and you see the great big, the mountainous areas in the distance where Petra is, where the children of Israel travelled, that's the direction they went. They went on that side of the Dead Sea, if you will, dwelt there for a long, long time, and then God brought them on around the upper part, finally, to cross the river, Jordan.

Anyway, hard. It wasn't easy. It was difficult, the things they had to go through, the things they had to do. Water wasn't plentiful and God had to provide water out there for them because it wasn't there.

So again, we think of what we go through and we learn that very quickly on, this way of life is not easy. It was not designed, because God designed it all... Just like a pattern you follow. Blueprints you follow in construction, you follow things step by step, and you can't proceed to another page or certain pages until you accomplish certain things that are set. Once they're built then you can go on and build upon it even more.

Again, it's a process that we're led through and it takes a lot of work. It wasn't mean to be easy. Especially for us because of what we have to go through in order for our mind to be molded and fashioned and changed to what God wants us to become, what He's offering us.

So again, we're to fully leave Egypt and vigorously walk on the journey that God has given to us, a spiritual one with perseverance which requires hard work, requires dedication, all the things that go along with those definitions.

Again, but not all who have been called have reflected Israel and that's the sad part of it. Not all who have been called—matter of fact, the majority—in the past 2,000 years have not lived the name. They haven't lived Israel. They haven't persevered. Many were called and few were chosen in the past 2,000 years. That should teach a lot, it really should. Because God does not owe His way of life, nor even life, to anyone. But He gives it.

What an awesome thing to have physical life. Just to have physical life, what an incredible thing if we can learn to live it well. Some in the physical world in a physical plane live it fairly well. But when you receive God's way of life you go past that by a long shot. You learn how to live it right, which carries with it incredible blessings and fullness of life that can come in absolutely no other way.

Then that which is spiritual in spiritual life, we really can't grasp it, but god tells us what it is, so far above and beyond anything we could ever experience in this physical life, truly. We'll talk about that as time goes on here. I think it's actually in the next series even more so.

Sad some haven't reflected Israel. They haven't reflected perseverance at all. Every year that truth is exposed. It's always a reality before us. Every year. Every year I've been in Gods Church, since 1969, every year to see people go by the wayside. Every year! Blows the mind, it really does.

It's a failure to grasp the richness of what God has placed before us or the desire we should have in response to that in grabbing a hold of it with all of our being. But our choices sometimes, because they're poor in nature, restrain or keep us from being able to grasp how great it really is, what He's placed there. So, we hurt ourselves in those things.

So anyway, this thing of Israel. Perseverance is something, a focus that we truly need to have, and if we're going to live being spiritual Israel and have consistent perseverance in our lives, we must exercise meaningful patience in our lives. That goes with it, patience. Because it doesn't happen overnight.

That's a hard thing for human beings. It's a hard thing for me day by day sometimes, having patience. Especially today! I remember, it was 14KB we had in speed on the internet, dial up. That seems so long ago but it wasn't all that long ago. It was so slow, but that's all you had. It was faster than anything we ever had before because we didn't have it before, and it was a marvel, you know, the internet and the ability to communicate with people, emails and so forth, and it became a new mode and a faster mode than snail mail and all the other things that you could communicate with people through. Then look at what has happened over time!

But because of this, mankind, as a whole, has misused it, obviously, the kind of technology we have and so forth. But what an incredible thing when it's used right. Yet we can become impatient with it, with things, because every time something new comes along we're wanting something faster. Isn't it a horrible thing if you have, sometimes, even a connection with TV, and all of a sudden, if it has to do with anything to do with the internet, it stops or it has to boot up or whatever? It's like, "This is hideous! This is horrible! I want it now! If I can't get it now, I'm going to change service to someone who can provide it for me because I want it, I deserve it."

I'm not going to ask a show of hands of how many people have ever changed service because things were moving too slow or not well enough. The same thing is true with the internet. You want things quickly. We live by that when we go from area to area, that hope that we have high speed because that's what this requires. You can't have a signal going up on YouTube unless you have a good upload speed. Then we have a back-up, supposed to be a back-up, if that works well, a Verizon hotspot dedicated solely for the sake of Mixlr so that people can at least have the sound. Sometimes that doesn't work well.

So, if you don't have a good signal out there then you can't even have that as a good back-up. So again, we need it. We get used to it and we want it. I want it wherever I go. Thankfully, it's been getting better and better.

But that's the world we live in, and we become impatient if we're not careful to a point where it's not good. Especially, if it has to do with this way of life, to understand we need patience, there are things we need to wait for. To understand especially, if God's molding and fashioning us and it has to do with our spiritual lives, that there is that that is yet to be built,

constructed, molded, and fashioned within us and to wait upon that. That's very much a focus we have to have.

Let's notice one of the last verses we focused upon at the end of *Part 5*, last week. That's in Hebrews 10:36. We'll go ahead and turn there, look at that.

I'll read it again because we already went through this, but it's a good place to take off from here where it says, **Hebrews 10:36—You have need of patience...** That's what the King James says, but it's the word that literally means in the Greek, in this case, there is a word that has just patience, but there's another one that means **patient endurance**. Now, there is more that really goes to that expression, if you think about it a little bit. You mean patience, patience and endurance? Yes. Because that's very much a part of persevering.

Because there is never a point in time in your calling you can not persevere, if we see it, if we grasp it. There are those times that we have failed to do so or don't do so as well as we should, and that's what needs to change and our focus needs to become sharper in that, but in the midst of all that is this matter of patience, to realize this is the way it is in this physical life. Because you can't get from point A to point B in the sense that this is done and completed until it's completed. A lot of that is the length of our life. That's the way it is.

You have to be patient and do it throughout your life and never let up. Because when you let up, you talk about walking on dangerous ground. The majority of people have done that, and you don't want to be one of them. That's the choice God places before us.

So again here, this word. **You have need of patient endurance so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.** So, to do the will of God requires patient endurance. That's what it's telling us. You have to have patient endurance to endure, to go through. It's difficult. It's not easy. To endure something carries the right meaning with it if we grasp that. To endure in this physical life living God's way of life isn't easy in this world today.

It's about to get a whole lot easier for the world because they're not going to have to worry about going to an employer and asking for time off for the Feast or worrying about going in and letting them know when they're first called that, "I'm not going to work on this day anymore. Oh, and yes, and it's after sundown. I forgot to tell you last week, that's at sundown Friday." "Well, you didn't say that! You said Saturday!"

There are people who have had to go through that and go back and say, "I forgot to say it's from sundown to sundown." "Sundown to sundown? We have gone beyond that. We have clocks. We have calendars. And you still go by sundown?" Well, yeah, because we obey God. You don't want to explain all that, but anyway, sometimes we do and they're not real excited about it.

So, in this world it's pretty tough, but to me it's exciting just thinking about what it's going to be like in a new age. Schools? You don't have to worry about taking your children out of school. They're not going to be going on during that period of time. It's automatic.

Government, everything else? It's hard to grasp and imagine a world like that. We really can't fully because we've never seen anything like that. We're just told that's the way it's going to be, and we look forward to it, and for the peace, the joy, the fullness. And one Church? Boy! And not all these crazy religious ideas out there in the world.

You think that even modern science would help some to change some of their ideas, because they're really out there. Now, if you go back a thousand years I can understand why some in a perverted sort of way might think certain things. It'd still be pretty perverted and distorted in thinking but today with science you think, how can anyone really believe some of this stuff? Anyway, the mind of man.

So, this Greek word, again, is from another Greek word that does simply mean "to endure; to await; to stay behind," and "as to wait until there is no need to stay behind any longer," in other words. "To endure" in the context, this context, does mean "a willingness to wait regardless of the hardship," which is very much again about perseverance.

So, let's look a little at how this word is used in scripture and how it's quoted in different places because we all have different Bibles we may tend to use and so the context of that sometimes is a little difficult to pick up.

First, we'll look at an area of context that involved how Herbert Armstrong saw his commission. Matthew 24. We should all know this. He spoke of this very often because it summed up his primary focus.

**Matthew 24:14—And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world as a witness unto all nations...** Now, that's to the degree that God wanted it to be so to be as a witness. To be as a witness doesn't mean it has to be everywhere and everyone. When it says, "all the world," it doesn't even have to mean every nation, in that respect. "All nations," when it says, "all nations; all nations of people," this is an awkward word in the Greek language. But to "all peoples of nations," in that respect, doesn't mean every individual.

Again, so it's a matter of a witness is what it's talking about, in order to establish a witness. Only God can determine what that is, what that witness is to the extent it needs to be. Basically, it came down to what was it? Eight million *Plain Truths* going out a month in many different languages. It wasn't every language by any measure, but larger than any other publication, magazine in the world, in more languages than any other publication, in that regard.

The things that were being accomplished were mindboggling in what favor God gave to it because it was by God's strength and by God's power, but he had to work hard over a long period of time. It started very small running these things off on a little machine, you know, that had messy blue ink and things to work with - if any of you have ever ran those kinds of things. I remember some of those things. In school we had one of those things and print off a school paper type of thing and it was a mess to work with.

Him and Loma, they did it. They put out, started a magazine. Incredible, the things that have taken place. I remember a story in the autobiography where she had mixed flour, wasn't it, and water and to put on the stamps. We have it so hard today. You just peel these little things off and stick them on if you're still using mail. We have to for quarterly reports and so forth.

But anyway, she would mix it up and get the stamps and everything to put them on the paper, things that we don't even think about today. It was a lot of work back then, to put that many out like they did. It grew and grew and grew.

Radio grew enormously. I remember how excited he was at one point in time, and you read through the autobiography, and I think it was four times that they had to stop in flying across, but so excited to be able to fly all across the United States in one day. That's why I can't complain when things don't go really well. But you get used to a certain standard of something. Now, you know, you can have nonstop across the United States in one day. If you have certain delays, it's like we can be impatient with some of those things.

But anyway, that excitement to think you have to stop four different times—I think it was for refueling—and then they would continue on. I don't know if they had to get off the plane at that time. I don't remember the story that well or that period of time, but what an incredible thing to be so excited that you could do these things, and things we just take for granted today that we have.

So, this focus was awesome! Publishing, the radio broadcast, and that was such a marvel, to have radio at that particular time, that the Church was even named after the invention of, the use of, the power of the radio, the *Radio Church of God* until finally it became so large around different nations in the world that it became obvious that no, now it's the *Worldwide Church of God* because now there is TV, and you can't be stuck in the past. Yet there was a powerful message that went out.

What you have to see in all this is that God provided these things, the technology, in His time, exactly when it was to be done for the size and purpose of the Church to do and have a witness at the end of an age and then, finally, to usher in that age. It's a marvel when you begin to realize that God's in charge of all of this, whether in a physical world, and in the spiritual when you talk about the Church, all the things that have happened through time, and especially in the last 70 to 80 years, so much more and so fast.

So again here, as he was talking here, or as he was focused on this, **And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world as a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.** This is leading into the end-time events, not just the end. Because Christ spoke of his time in coming as the end. It was past halfway mark, if you will, it was going down toward the end now, but again, there would be 2,000 years after that. The Church had no idea of that and God didn't let that be known at that point in time, how much time that the Church would exist. All these marvels of things that people have lived through.

The scriptures went on in verse 15. Because he never quoted these. He basically stopped right here because that was his commission; He knew that!

**Verse 15—Therefore, when you shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso reads, let him understand).** And who is ever able to do that? They weren't able to do that in Thyatira. They weren't able to do that during Ephesus. They didn't even have the book of Revelation during Ephesus, as a whole, until the very end of it. Then that was the end of that period of time, after John.

You look at all the different eras and Philadelphia didn't have this. "Therefore, when you shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place..." Didn't know what that was until the end here. Even more so, "Then shall the end come." Didn't happen right away. Herbert Armstrong died in 1986. Not until 1994, the abomination of desolation was established, set up.

Things don't happen right away like we think sometimes, like we want. God lets us focus on other things for different purposes at different times, and we have done that too. We've lived through those things. He's given us partial understanding of why. Not all by any measure; there is much more to come.

It went on to say then after that, **Let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains.** It was like this is all physical! That's basically how it was taken. "Those who are in Judea." See, that would be in Israel, things are going to happen in Israel. They're going to flee because of certain things that happen there because everything has to start right there at that point. We didn't understand. We didn't understand things about the first several Seals of Revelation. On and on it goes.

So, let's look at an abomination Christ gave just before he spoke of these events that would begin to lead up to his very return, his second coming as a Messiah. Verse 12. Let's back up. Because this is what it was all about. They wanted to know, basically, when the Kingdom was going to be established. That's how Chapter 24 begins its focus, if you will.

He said, in **verse 12—Then, even as iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax, or grow,** as it says, what it means, **grow cold.** So basically, it's a picture here of something that's just going to get worse and worse and worse in the world as these things build up, and it happened first and foremost within the Church. But it's happened in the world as well. But it's happened in the Church because so much of this is about the Church. The abomination of desolation. Incredible. Not one stone left upon another, as he started out.

**But whoso shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.** So, within the context here of things as they were progressing in the story of what Christ was giving, he interjected things at points here that leapt ahead, if you will, to the end. Well, what end is he talking about? His coming, the establishment of the Kingdom of God. A beginning but the end of the age of mankind.

So, that's the context of everything there in Matthew 24, the end of the age of mankind, the end of 6,000 years of mankind, not the end of the world and so forth.

"But whosoever shall endure." Now, what's this about? It's about those whom God calls. It's not about the world. It's not about people in the world at this point at all. The focus is in what Christ told them had to do with the Church. It had to do with the people that God would call through time because that's God's primary focus. Because a lot is going to happen as far as the physical world is concerned and they haven't been called to this yet. That's not their purpose yet. Those things are going to take place in a short time here as God begins to go through this process with them, which we'll talk a little bit about in the next series.

**But whosoever shall endure unto the end.** It takes endurance. And sadly, there aren't many around anymore because of what we read a moment ago, the abomination of desolation that was established, and it caused a lot of desolation within God's own Church. There are a lot of people who suffered through that and who were engulfed by that.

There are a lot of them who have been so set against God's way of life that their judgment is already set, because they will not repent. They hate God's way of life. Some of those who were at the head of that abomination of desolation hated the truth, hated God's way of life, want their own way of doing things, were willing to overthrow God's Church in order to accomplish their pursuit. It's not a small thing with God.

They were baptized, many of them receiving the impregnation of God's spirit. The judgment of that is so great, it truly is. Sometimes I think if we could have just grasped, if people could just grasp what they have committed themselves to when they are baptized and receive the impregnation of God's holy spirit, to turn against that spirit, there are some pretty strong things said in scripture about the danger of that and how far that can carry people. That's a dangerous state. Some have just through that process fallen asleep, but some turned fully against it.

Let's turn over to Hebrews 12. So, the way to be saved for those who lived during that period of time, who lived through the Apostasy, was to endure to the end. We've had different ones, a lot of people whom God gave the opportunity to be awakened, who came into fellowship with us. Some it didn't take very long, some stayed around for quite a long time but did not endure to the end. That means to fight to the end whatever the trials are, whatever the difficulties are.

**Hebrews 12:2—Looking unto Joshua, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured being impaled to a pole.** That was a horrifying thing to go through. He knew what he was getting ready to go through. As a physical human being that was so real in his mind, it was like he could feel it before it ever happened, I mean, it was so real. We can't have that. We don't have that in our minds, the ability to see that in that light. But because of God's spirit, because he knew these things to be so true, as far as what he was

going to experience, what he was going to go through, he perspired to the point droplets of blood came through.

We can't comprehend that kind of agony knowing what you're going to go through and suffer in a physical body. Because, you know, pain, suffering like that is not a pleasant thing. It's hard!

**...who for the joy that was set before him endured being impaled to a pole.** This word "despising" is very poorly translated. It just means "to think little of," in other words, "in comparison to something greater." That's what it's talking about here.

Some of the things they translate sometimes are so frustrating because it gives a wrong thinking or a wrong thought toward things that are really stated. Basically, he's saying, **He gave little thought of the shame.** Because he wasn't concerned about that, of being nailed to a pole. Because that was a shameful thing. To be up there with two thieves, he knew what people were saying and going to say. He already knew the scriptures of what was going to be said about him and how they were going to treat him. Being spit upon, it was a mild thing. Because he understood that. The beating, that was another matter of things he knew was going to take place, but all of it he knew was a part of it.

So, to think about those things and the shame because of how people thought, he didn't care, in the sense about what people might think. He was concerned about what God thought. That's what he lived, what God thought, God's will. That's what filled his life to the point he was willing to go through this and suffer what he did. Didn't think anything of it, in other words. It wasn't a second thought about it.

Was he excited to go through it? No, he asked for help. He prayed a lot that night. He went back and prayed several times, long, because when you're confronting something like that and you know it to that degree that it was, that's how your mind is going to work. You're going to want to be closer to your Father, to God Almighty and that's what he did.

**...thought little of the shame and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.**

Because that's what he looked to, to the responsibility, to the importance of what he was doing and accomplishing so that people could be forgiven of their sins because he would fulfill the Passover, and so that as people were able to be forgiven of sin then, drawn to God, they could receive of God's holy spirit into their lives and dwell in God and in Christ and they in them. That meant so much more.

The shame of how people thought about it, it didn't matter. There are many times in your life you have to live that way. You can't worry about what anybody else thinks, what a mate might think, if they don't agree with what you're doing and how you're doing it. Because God comes first, and they need to know that if one isn't called or whatever in that situation. Perhaps relatives, you can't worry about what they think about what you're doing or getting ready to do.

You all remember when you were first drawn, first called and what that's like and what you go through because this is God's way of life. You're going to live it. And hopefully, they will like the change they see in you. Sometimes people don't because they don't want you to live that way of life, they don't want you to think that way because it brings shame to them. Because they look upon it and "Well, you're not going to keep Christmas with the family? You're not going to come down and have a Christmas meal and we're not going to go out for Easter egg hunts with the children," and things like that that are important to people.

To them it's a matter of shame and that's why they don't want someone else doing it, a relative or whatever it might be, a son or daughter or a parent and the feelings they might have. Things get stirred up. Christ warned those things are going to happen when God calls people, and it does.

So, it goes on to say, **For consider him who endured...** It wasn't easy. You endure it. You endure being in this physical body in this physical life until you succeed, until you're sealed, and grab a hold of that which is greater because that's what you count as valuable and meaningful.

So again, **For consider him to endured such,** as it says, **from sinners.** It's not a contradiction... The word "contradictions" is not a part of this in that respect. The translation basically is **consider him who endured such from sinners.** What? The way they looked upon him. Because they were sinners in how they treated him and what they did to him.

**...who spoke against him, unless you become wearied,** because sometimes then if we're not set and focused and working hard and committed to persevering to the end regardless of what anyone else does. This is between you and God! Anyone else that gets in there, if it means the relationship, so be it.

Because that's the relationship that has all meaning that will last into time. Eventually those individuals will have, as a whole, that opportunity when their time is. But when it's your time you have to make incredible choices and decisions and then endure through it all.

Because it's not going to be easy. Things are going to come down on you. You have to say things to people that are uncomfortable when you stand up for this way of life, because of the pulls and because of the way people think. But you can't worry about that. You can't let that consume your life. It's a matter of, how does God think? We want to please God, honor God.

So again, **Endured such from sinners who spoke out against him, unless you become wearied and as the word is, give up.** There are many who have just given up because it's too much for them. It's too much to give up other things and to stand up for God's way of life consistently, persevering at that regardless of the repercussions of whatever might be thrown toward you, at you. You can't have those consume your life. They're of little consequence. Like Christ, little thought in comparison. You can't compare them if we really see this way of life that God is offering and what He's offering.

**Unless you become wearied and give up in your life.** In the life that God has given you because that's what it's about. That's what it means here by "minds," in your life. It happens in the mind but it's about your life, the life that God has given you as a part of the Body of Christ in having the impregnation of God's spirit and you're, as it were, an embryo waiting for a time when you're going to actually be born then into the Kingdom of God.

**James 1:12—Blessed is a person who endures trials...** So, because of what we've just read, there are going to be trials. That's just automatic. When you have hard decisions to make, unpleasant things that have to take place in your life because of hardships that might come your way, because of the way of this world, whatever might come your way that's difficult, whatever is difficult in life, hard in life, you have to endure them because of something greater and always keeping God at the forefront.

**...for when they are tried, "tested or approved,"** as it is. Because something unique happens. When God calls us, we begin to live a life where the choices we make, in that respect, we're tested, we're being tested. What choices are we going to make all along the way? Sometimes and oftentimes in our lives in that growth process we don't make the right choices and we give into self, give into pressure, peer pressure, whatever it might be around us. Then we learn through, if we will, we have the ability then to learn from that. God will help us to learn from that if we'll listen, and He'll correct us. Again, choices then when that happens, whether or not we really will repent and turn to Him.

Again here, **Blessed is a person who endures trials...** When you go through them, when God is your focus, and in that sense endure them because you see something greater, like we just read, and that's what you want.

**...for when they are tried, they shall receive the crown of life.** That's what it's about. It's about something so much greater than living temporary in this physical life. You're not going to take anything with you when you die. Nothing. There is nothing beyond unless God gives you something beyond. This is it. This is it unless God is in it, unless God has something for us. That's just reality.

No one can bring themselves back and no one can take anything with them, though some try, and some have feelings toward some things like that, and different ones through time they put different riches and so forth because they're going to take it with them.

No, they're not. They're not going to take any of that with them. God has something else planned. Whether it's in the second resurrection or resurrected to spirit life, that's the only thing that can beyond, obviously. We learn those things. What an awesome thing. What's more valuable? And yet the vast majority have turned away from that.

**...they shall receive the crown of life** if they endure. Endure, go through whatever is there in order to receive what God has offered us, and willing to fight, willing to put in the effort. That's what it's about, persevering.

...which the Lord has promised to those who love (agape) Him. Then we learn we can't do that on our own. You can't even do that on your own. You can't work that up. It requires God's help. It requires God's spirit living in us to be able to experience that kind of mind, that kind of love. We learn that in God's Church. Nobody can work it up. Nobody has it of themselves except that God is in it.

What an awesome thing it is that He'll give us of His holy spirit in order to love Him. That has to do with the truth He gives to us. Then we make choices along the way, and then with His spirit and as we communicate those things to Him, we reveal to Him through those things we love Him, we love His way of life, we love His law and the peace that it gives to human beings if they can embrace it and live it. The more that people embrace it and live it the more they're blessed. But to really embrace it, you can't do it without His help, without being called.

1 Peter 2. So, next here this word is used in an example of something that can easily be an occasion where such a trial or test can happen in one's life. Good example here.

It says in **1 Peter 2:20—For what credit is it...** Now, it says, "glory" but that's not the word. Basically, it's a better translation to say "credit." So, basically, it's saying you're doing certain things and so **what credit is it to you**, in essence, so it's giving this example, **when you are corrected for your faults...**

So, have we ever been corrected for our faults? Well, sometimes people will correct us whether we're ready to receive it or not, and oftentimes that happens in life. And yet oftentimes, if somebody will say something of a certain nature, we have a very difficult time.

Because that's our nature. Every one of us has that nature where it's hard to receive correction. But when we're called, hopefully, we are at a point where we will stop and think about what someone might have had the guts, the ability to say to us, to consider what they said.

I think of the time the individual throwing the rocks at king David and his captain wanted to lop off his head, in essence, and David said, "No." Because he was like, "Look at him, who he is, and you're speaking to him that way?" It wasn't done. So, instead of taking his life he said, "No, because perhaps there is something here from God that I can learn from."

To have that kind of mindset that there is something here that I need to change, that I could look at to improve in my life, in my relationship to God, that was more important to him than taking the other individual's life and then feeling haughty that "I am over you, and you should never talk to me like that." That wasn't what was important to David. David was concerned about his relationship to God. That's the way we should be in different things.

Sometimes or oftentimes, we can take things and do think things and think about it for a while when somebody said something, because even then so often we're just not ready to receive it, and then go and think about it and the balance of it and what is right and wrong in God's sight

and then oftentimes if we're of a right mind we'll repent because we want to be right with God. Because that's what it's about.

This is what it's talking about here. **What credit is it to you if when you are corrected for your faults you endure it?** What if a boss says, "How many times have I told you this," or "have you been told and here you're doing it again? How often should you keep doing this part of the job or doing the job at all if you're not going to do it right?" "Okay, it means my job if I don't do it right."

Now, this happens in life and we should take it patiently. If you want to keep working there you want to make sure you change. If you're doing something the boss doesn't want you to do, even if there is a better way - even if you're right about something and maybe you could even do something a little faster, a little bit better, but you better do it the way they told you because they're paying you to do it that way!

There are a lot of people who have lost their jobs over things like that even when they're right. But when you're wrong and you're doing it wrong, that's what this is first focusing upon, **what credit is it to you if, in this example, you're corrected for your fault, doing something wrong, and you endure it?** Whoop-tee-do. What does that say about you? You did what you should do. You better endure it. If you want to keep working there, if you want to keep being an employee then what is it to endure it? You better take it, otherwise, sayonara, good-bye.

**But if when you do well and suffer for it, you're doing the right thing—and people have experienced this—and you suffer for it, you endure it...** It's not about taking it patiently, although it requires patience. But if you endure it. It's about enduring it. Because that's hard. It's reflecting here this was hard to do and yet you've done well, but you endure it, and you address it accordingly, **that is grace with God.**

Now, that's awesome what it said. That's what it's saying here. That's what the word is. Not "acceptable." It's not the word "acceptable" at all. It's the word "grace" that's used in other places as grace. This is what grace is all about, it truly is. Given sermons on this in times past long time ago. I don't know if I've addressed it for some time, but this is what grace is all about with God. It's a matter of understanding there is suffering you go through to do something in a right way. You endure because of God, for God's way of life and you take it patiently, you endure as you go through it.

It's a beautiful thing. This is credited to you, in essence, by God, because a trial and a test you go through God's way, handling it properly, not responding back in a wrong way, you just take it. Humble yourself. It's about humbling yourself. That's God's way in this physical life as human beings with God's spirit.

Hebrews 10, let's go on, build a little more on what we've been focusing on here. **Hebrews 10:36—For you have need of patience.** That's what it says in the King James, but it's the word **patient endurance.** Now, they're both used together, patience and endurance. ...**patient**

**endurance so that after you have done the will of God you may receive the promise.** So, doing the will of God, there is not a limit of time on that. There is not a time where we can do God's will and then not do God's will, though that's what we do as human beings because we're weak, and that's where we have to repent.

But it's a matter of always desiring to do what is right before God, doing God's will, living this way of life God's way **that you may receive the promise.** So again, that's living up to the name Israel in perseverance. **For yet a little while, and he who is coming will come and will not delay,** will not wait any longer.

Now, this, this applies to us more than ever before if you want to look at it as far as a timeline or a timing of events. It's applied to all people who have been called by God, in one respect, but because the time comes as you persevere and patiently wait until the end, that time comes, people die and, you know, you come to understand that's your time.

But to live on, to live through a period of time and to continue, to understand where we live in time as far as Christ's coming and God's Kingdom being established, that's awesome.

So, as it says here, **For yet a little while, and he who is coming will come and will not delay,** not wait any longer, in other words.

**Verse 38—Now the just shall live by faith. But if anyone draws back...** Again, that's our history. So many have gone that route.

"The just shall live by faith." That's all of us. If we're going to live what is right before God, which is what it means to be just here, to live right before God because it's what God says is right. That's living by what God has given us as truth. Because He gives us the ability to believe what is true, but whether we live it or not, that's a choice.

But that's what faith is. Faith is living what God has given us to believe. If we choose to live what God has given us to believe then we're living by faith because it's a matter of God's in the picture in those choices and decisions we make.

**...if anyone draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in them.** So, if someone lets up, doesn't persevere, God can't work with that, has no pleasure in that. The vast majority that have ever been called, God has had no pleasure in them because they haven't responded to what was offered them. They had the choice. What a horrible thing.

If you want this, you really have to fight for it, every age of people. It's going to become easier for people in the future, but even there, there will be sermons given that are apropos to their time.

**Verse 39—But we are not of those who draw back to,** as the word means, **destruction.** Because that's what happens. If we draw back we're going to go through some horrifying things, truly are. Second death? I mean, a second life. We're going to die for sure once, and then if we can be so blessed, if we haven't turned against God, become set in something else,

which has happened to too many of those who were called and went backward, turned away from God.

Because some minds turn away from God when they've done those things. It's their time, their choice. Not all. Some are going to be, plenty of those who are going to be resurrected in the second resurrection and have opportunity to live the hundred years then. That's when there will be gnashing of teeth and it's like, "How could I have been so stupid? So stupid! Now I got to live in a hundred years."

I don't know, but that to me is like a horrible dream, a horrible nightmare. I don't want to live in this body more than once. If you have the choice once is enough.

**But we are not of those who draw back to destruction but to those who believe to the saving of our life.** What an awesome thing that God gives to us, offers us.

**Romans 15:1.** There's a lot given here that's so meaningful. **We then who are strong ought to or owe it,** as the word means, **to bear with the weaknesses of those who are unable.** That's what it's saying. Now, it's quoted in a pretty miserable way in many respects, in the sense of translated, I should say. It's translated in a very poor way.

**We then who are strong...** You have to be careful in how you receive things like this. Well, we should know where we are spiritually in our lives and if someone is struggling with something that we wouldn't struggle with because we've gone through certain molding and fashioning, and there's a mind and an attitude we ought to have toward other of God's people. That's what it's talking about.

There's a way of thinking toward others whom God has called and to understand we've all been in this at different times for different periods, and those who are younger are younger and those who are older are older, and hopefully, those who are older are more mature in that respect too and not still struggling with what it's like when you were first called. But you know, we all have different things we go through in life to get where we're going. There's a confidence, in that respect, that someone should have in how this is dealt with here in what's being spoken of.

**You who are strong owe it...** It's not "ought to." That's not a proper word. It means "owe it." This is what you owe to a matter here as far as your understanding, as far as where you are spiritually.

**...We who are strong owe it to bear with the weaknesses of those,** as it says here, **who are...** and it's not a matter of looking at something and saying, "Well, that individual is just weak..." Well, maybe they are where they are at this point because of what they've gone through and they aren't where you are yet, so be careful how you use this thing of looking upon others. It should be a matter, a desire you want to see them succeed. And if you can be just an example, that's what we should be, a strength, to be there for others. Not to criticize, not to tear down, not to push aside, but always to include, in that respect, as far as a family is concerned.

So again here, **We who are strong owe it to bear when someone is weak.** That's what it's talking about when someone is at a moment of weakness in their life. Every one of us has that in times in our life. There are times we slip. There are times because of something we may be going through, that we are experiencing a moment of whatever pressure might be there and don't deal with something as well as we should or could, let alone the other things that are bigger in life that sometimes take place because of where we are, and we've gone through certain things so many times that it's not as big for us, and so, we're not hard on someone else.

Again here, I wish I could think of exactly how this is stated. Let me turn there because I want to make sure I read this the way it's stated. I wish I'd brought the Old King James with me but let me grab this one here because just the way it's written sometimes causes people to look at it in the wrong way, to think or respond in the wrong way.

"We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Well, what does that mean? I really hate it, the way it says in the Old King James. But again, it doesn't address things the way it should be, and it's not even stated in the way that it was written. But anyway, so it's telling us to bear with the weaknesses of those who are, as the word is, it's not the word "weak." Basically, it means "without power," "unable to do something."

So, there are times when individuals haven't grown to a certain point where they're able to deal with a certain matter. They've never had to address it perhaps, whatever it might be. But to be able to have that kind of empathy, that kind of compassion to look upon something. There's often times you have to stand back even and let someone go through something, to experience something. You can't stop things from happening in life.

Even within the ministry we have to learn those kinds of things. We don't control people's lives. We should never strive to control people's lives. We should learn that throughout the Church. You can't control people's lives. So often we strive to control choices and decisions that people make and there is a huge mistake in that.

God does not control our lives. He lets us make choices. Now, He will work with us at different times, mold and fashion us in order so that we can come to make better choices and better decisions, and we're going to fall on our face at different times until we've gone through the trials and learned what we needed to learn and become convicted of what is right.

So, there is this mindset that we need to have toward one another to realize that someone in this particular situation is going through this and hasn't quite learned that particular thing yet. Sometimes you just back away and then you're there for them.

You're not there to tear them apart, say, "I told you so! What did you think was going to happen?" What kind of a response is that, of inclusion and bringing someone? Because there is a time people need mercy. There's a time when people need help and encouragement, and so sometimes just being there.

Anyway, this is a sermon in itself and I don't have time to go through that. But basically, it's understanding that someone at that particular moment doesn't have, for whatever reason, they're without power, they're unable to deal with this. They're going to learn something hopefully. That's the hope. That's the desire.

**...and not to please ourselves.** In other words, as to take the easier way out by rejection. Sometimes that's how people deal with others, they just put them aside, reject them. "That's how I can deal with it, and you know, you just do these things," and it's like, "Okay," and judge them accordingly, not give them opportunity to change and to grow. We're not to do that as family, to family members.

Or simply speaking against them. Sometimes I've known it in the Church, I've seen these things so much in times past, and thankfully, this is not a relevant spirit like it used to be as much, where people would find fault with one another, tear each other down, tear others down. That's the opposite of what it's telling us to do here. That's not the purpose of things, to tear others down, to find fault in one another. That's to please ourselves.

Or to try to control a situation because you know what the outcome is going to be, so instead of letting them go through it and making their own choices you try to control the situation. No, you don't.

**Let every one of us,** again, the Greek word here means, **fit together.** It says "please" but it's a word that means "fit together," as in this case how we can influence or make us **fit together better.** That's really what it's talking about.

We're a body. We're a family. So, our desire should be upon God's Family and how can we best influence the family. That gives a totally different focus on things. Rather than judging or being harsh on people or trying to control matters—some people tend to be more controlling than others. That's why I hate this thing of being passive aggressive in order to control certain situations. If someone is just aggressive you maybe can slap them! No, I'm just kidding. But passive aggressive can be really dangerous; it's hard to deal with.

So, we all have different personalities, different things we have to come through, and we should recognize that in one another and be able to work with that.

**Let every one of us fit together, neighbor.** We think of neighbor. We might think of someone that lives next door or two doors down, and that's not how the word is used. The Greek word has to do with, and it could be in the sense of how this word, what this word means, but it's a word that means "those who are near." Well, who is near? Well, my neighbor next door. No, it's about the Church. And who is near? Well, those where we're living. This is where we're tried, wherever you are, where you have fellowship. That's where your area of learning is, you have opportunity to learn and grow and mix with others who are not the same as you.

Because God doesn't call us who are all the same. We don't all think the same. On the contrary, we think drastically differently in many ways. We have many different backgrounds

that we come out of, many different experiences in life. Sometimes that can be a challenge for relationships because you don't know how to deal with that because you never experienced life in the same way. Then as you get to know someone you begin to, "Ah, now I understand." Duh. It helps us to draw closer together in love and care for one another because we've all suffered.

If you've lived for any length of time you've suffered in this life. When you learn about God's way of life and you see what human beings do and what selfishness does, we suffer, and sometimes, some really horrible, hideous things that are very difficult for the mind to conquer and overcome.

There are a lot of horrible things that happen in this human life that people don't tend to focus upon, a lot of things that are hidden behind the scenes that make us who we are, all of our life that we have to deal with in the mind. We don't all deal with the same things. But as we learn about ourselves, as God reveals what we're like because of the experiences we've had that haven't been good, before our calling especially, and then maybe during our calling there are things we've experienced.

And most of my life now has been in the Church, since I was 19, and most of my training has been what not to do. This isn't of God. Within the Church, within the ministry, most of my teaching about the ministry was that isn't how you work with people. That isn't what I read in the Bible. This isn't how Christ said we're to live, how we're to be.

That we're to be upon some kind of a stage and all the congregation down there and we're eating on china and they're eating on regular plates, or whatever it might be, but we've got china and we've got people serving us with towels wrapped over their arm because they have to be even dressed a certain way in order to serve us because we're special.

Think, that's putrid. I mean, just downright makes you want to barf. But some couldn't learn from that. Some didn't learn that this isn't right. Some got swallowed up in it and they thought that's what they were supposed to do. There was a trend at one time where people were buying china because this is what we need to do, have people over and we have to learn the better things of life as well.

Well, there's truth in some of some things but it's not done that way. God blesses us with growth in how to do things better in every facet of life and to appreciate things that are of quality. Herbert Armstrong used to talk about and basically tried to encourage people to save up a little bit more for something of a little bit better quality, not always something that was necessarily the cheapest. Now, sometimes we can't afford anything else but what is the cheapest and there is an expedience to shopping wisely and all the things that go along with that.

But sometimes, just like with tools - I'm using that as an example for myself - I have tended to get things that barely did the job. My wife is trying to work with me to say, "Get something that's good, that's going to last," basically. She has bought some things or encouraged me to

buy certain things. She has bought me some things that have been awesome! But my nature was I wouldn't have necessarily purchased them. But now I love them! Some things last a lot longer. Because you find yourself going out then and getting something again because it just doesn't work right. And on and on it goes.

There are so many things in life we have to learn about one another, the richer things of life in relationships and how to do it. That's what this is about. It's about a desire. It's about understanding we are a family and what it takes to work in that direction.

We're not to please ourselves. It isn't about having the easy way out. It's about sacrifice. It's about doing things that aren't going to be natural for you. Because even to live this, it requires more of God's spirit to do it well, to do it right. Because if one is not careful they do this in a wrong way. They think they're better, stronger, better than others, "So, you do it this way," and more of a controlling thing. That's totally opposite of what is being said here.

**Let every one of us, I love it, fit together, those who are near.** What can we do to fit together? The greatest thing we can do is to be an example of what is right, to live it. ...**for good, to edification**, which means "to build." It's about building. God is building, Christ is building the family, the Church.

**For even Christ did not do what would only be pleasing to himself; but as it is written, The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.** He did it for everyone else, for all mankind. Incredible! That kind of love, we cannot grasp fully. We get to experience such a little portion of it. It's God's love.

**Verse 4—For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through patient endurance and comfort of the scripture might have hope.** So, this thing of patient endurance in this way of life that God has given to us is a powerful thing. But it's necessary in order to persevere and not give up, not to let down.

**Now the God**—notice this—**Now the God of patient endurance**, same word, patient endurance. Because God reflects Israel; the word is about God, His perseverance with His purpose and His plan with mankind, with us. But it's motivated by love because of what He sees, because of what we can become.

**Now the God of patient endurance and**, as the word is, **comfort** (encouragement) **grant you to be like-minded one toward another.** It's always about relationships, fellowship, fellowship with one another, fellowship with God, fellowship with Christ. But we learn it in the Church with one another.

...**according to Christ Joshua...** as he did and as he taught. **So that you with one mind and one mouth glorify God.** So, if we live this, the more we live this, the more it glorifies God. Because we don't have to stay the way we are or were. We're to constantly be changing and God working with this mind.

That means we're repenting all along the way because as we see something more clearly and see something we're doing wrong we ask God to forgive us and know that we're forgiven, and He gives us help. We cry out for His spirit so that we can think better toward one another and how to do better toward one another. That's pleasing to God. He wants us to be one Body, of one mind. Awesome, what that means.

**Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.** Because it's about God and God's creation and what God is doing and nothing else is more important. To be a part of that we're exceedingly blessed, we truly are.

James 1. We'll just go through one more area of scripture before we close out this particular section or this series.

But to understand that perseverance requires not just patience but patient endurance. A lot of that endurance, you know what it is? It's with this, with ourselves. Because the ability of seeing our weaknesses, that's tough, it's not easy. Because that requires a lot of repentance along the path, along the journey, in order to persevere. We just keep working at it and chipping away because God wants us to chip away everything that doesn't look like Him. A lot of chipping. You'll never be able to chip everything away, but you've got to keep at it, perseverance, patient endurance.

**James 1:1—James, a servant of God and of our Lord Joshua the Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, Greetings. My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials.** Don't we do that? Just jump up and down. Hurrah! Exciting when something bad comes along, when something that doesn't go well comes along. But we learn through that. That's how we can learn. Incredible, how we fight that so often as human beings.

But in the Church, God works with us to see those things in a different light. Whatever it is, whatever hardship we go through, it doesn't matter what it is, it's to be seen in the light of what God is doing in our lives and we learn from that. We can grow in that.

It's a marvel what God has given to us as human beings, weak, physical human beings, to live through, to experience. Because those are the things that make us address the harder things in life. But so often we'd rather not have to face trials because it's easier; we'd rather please ourselves. It's so much easier not to have to suffer. It's so much easier if you don't have to endure certain things in life. But that's not God's way. Because change can't come about unless we go through it, so that's why we have what's referred to as the fiery trials.

That's why I love the example about sacrifices, and they're fiery sacrifices, the fire, and what they teach, that we have to live that. Truly. That means you have to give up things, you have to sacrifice in order to do something God's way. You have to fight against self first and foremost, and that's the hardest part of all. It has to be honest before God with self.

That's where genuine repentance comes in then because it's a willingness to acknowledge what we are. We're just not too good, period. Well, we're not good at all as far as our nature is by

itself. But what is good, that's what we hold onto because that comes from God. That's what we rejoice in, the growth, what we see, God's spirit, what we see, the changes that have taken place. And those, that's what's good.

**My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into different trials knowing that the trying of your faith works, or as the word is in context here works to produce patient endurance.**

Because that's exceedingly valuable to our spiritual lives. Patient endurance, you can't set a price on that. That's required as a part of perseverance.

**But let patient endurance have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing.** Beautiful, what it's saying here.

**If any of you lacks wisdom...** I love this, what it's saying here because it's like, who does this include? Every one of us. That's the point. We all lack wisdom. Where does wisdom come from?

That's why I love the Proverbs and to understand then as God revealed to us more and more in the Church that when it talks about the word, the Word that was made flesh, the Word, the mind of God, the very being of God is wisdom. Everything that proceeds from God, the mind of God, the being of God is what wisdom is and that we can grow in that, to understand that we lack that mightily so. We can always grow in more wisdom, more of unity of God's mind.

**If any of you lacks wisdom, let them ask of God,** because that's where it comes from. So, we want that. We desire that. The more we see that, so when we go through various trials and we see mistakes that can be made and hardships that can be made harder if we make the wrong choices and then we ask God for intervention, for help to be able to see what we need to see, to have the soundness of mind.

**...who gives to all generously without rebuke, and it shall be given to them.** God doesn't chasten us for the things we seek to do right before Him. He doesn't hold things against us. Incredible!

**Verse 6—Yet, let them ask in faith.** So, to ask God is a matter of believing God, to know and have a confidence that what we're asking for, God wants to give us. That's one of the greatest things He says when He talks about wanting His holy spirit in our life. You have to ask for that every day because from that proceeds God's love, God's mind, the being of God, the wisdom.

**But let them ask in faith, without wavering, for anyone who wavers is like a wave in the sea that is driven and with the wind tossed around.** We shouldn't be like that, being tossed around all the time in our lives and going from one side to another.

I love that example from Johnny. I think of that, what he mentioned, that basically this thing about the only time we're really going down the middle of the road is when we're careening from one ditch to the other, and then when we're in the middle then we're going the right way. But that doesn't last long.

So, we're ever learning in life. There is some humor in that in our lives of how we live, but we're always going from one thing to another in one respect, but in another there are things we are to be learning along the way, too, so that we're anchored more to the center of the road. That's the desire, not to be careening and going down in the ditch as often in our life and growing to where we're on the road, on that journey, persevering, and staying on it, God's way of life.

**A double-minded person is unstable in all their ways.** It's not what God wants. He wants us to be single minded toward Him, toward His purpose in our life.

So, this next verse here is an awkward translation, again, but by most translations I'm going to just give what it's saying: **Let the person who humbles themselves rejoice in that they are exalted.** In other words, meaning, lifted up by God. That's what we should rejoice in. Not striving to do it ourselves, feel better because of what we do.

You know, we can't do anything right without God, without God's help. We should never take things to our self. And yet human nature, even within the Church can be that we can lift ourselves up and think ourselves important, better than others perhaps around us in the world, and sometimes better than others within the Church. Whenever that's there that's so wrong in the thinking in the mind. It has to be repented of.

**Let the person who humbles themselves rejoice in that they are exalted.** In other words, that God lifts us up. The glory that comes from God, in essence, whatever God gives us it's beautiful. Whatever we strive to give ourselves, not so beautiful.

**Verse 10—but the rich,** or being filled with pride, the prideful, **in that they are made low.** Rejoice in that. So, when you find yourself being humbled by a matter, thank God. That's what it's saying.

So, rejoice when God gives us what He does and know it comes, everything that's right and good comes from God, the glory, the honor goes to God and Christ. When we go through a situation where we're humbled because of something we're going through, again, thank God, because pride is adversarial, is of the mind of a being that God wants us to learn from, learn of how wrong, how harmful, how evil that is, to be filled with pride, because it works against God.

...**but the rich,** in other words, in how we see ourselves, if we feel good about that then we don't see what we're lacking. "For everyone who lacks wisdom?" So, we always have growth to make. We always have change to make.

**But the rich in that they are made low, because they,** in other words, the rich, **pass away—disappear quickly,** that's what it's basically talking about, **as the flower in the field.** Beautiful, what God says.

We have to learn, have to desire to be humbled, be of a humble spirit, especially when it comes to relationships within the Body, to understand what God has given us and fight with it for all of our being, to persevere in this way of life. That's what this series has been about, to persevere for what God has placed before us.

Because what an awesome thing to understand what He's offering us. No more drama in life. No more pain and toil in life, in the sense of what we've experienced in this physical life outside the Church and in the Church. Because there you really begin to learn and be educated about what this carnal life is all about and how everything about carnal life needs to be fought against and conquered and overcome in order to receive that which is lasting with peace, real fullness of life, real joy, real family. Awesome, what God offers us!