

Endurance, Part 1

by Van Knolton

Recently while studying **Hebrews** in Bible class the teachers compared the Christian walk to that of running a marathon and in that it takes *endurance* to complete either one successfully.

Hebrews 6:11-12 (NKJV) states *“And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”* How can one show **diligence until the end** without **endurance**? Over the next few articles we’ll look at endurance from a very narrow scope to see a few things we can individually accomplish to increase our endurance and in the process help others along the Christian walk. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines endurance as: “1) the ability to do something difficult for a long time; 2) the ability to deal with pain or suffering that continues for a long time; and 3) the quality of continuing for a long time.”

Have you ever heard someone say that they regretted giving something up or how they sure miss doing something that they used to do that they gave up when they became a Christian? I have heard some people who used to drink alcohol say “sometimes I really miss drinking” as they have the look of lost pleasure in their eyes. Let us consider the case of Lot’s wife.

In a recent ladies’ Bible study the ladies covered the example of Lot’s wife and how she “*looked back.*” According to Genesis 19:26, [NKJV] *“But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.”* Was it simply that Lot’s wife wanted to see what the angels had told her would happen; did she not trust that God would fulfill what He promised would happen? We may have several answers but let’s consider the word “*looked*” for our purpose. According to *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* “**looked**” is defined as “to look intently at; by implication to regard with pleasure, favor or care.” This says that Lot’s wife looked back toward Sodom, and by implication, regarded it with pleasure, not in seeing it destroyed, but thinking back with pleasure to what she just gave up to escape. Lot’s wife was turned into a pillar of salt at the outset of her journey.

Likewise if we begin our journey along the Christian walk with regret of what we “gave up to become a Christian” we have lost our endurance outlined in Hebrews 6:11-12 [NKJV] *“And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”*

Let us consider a second example of the Israelites and their exodus from Egypt. As Moses led them from the bonds of Egypt they heard the word of God and began their journey having seen God’s power on Pharaoh and the Egyptian people. They further saw God’s power when he parted the Red Sea allowing the Israelites to cross on dry ground and then as the Red Sea destroyed Pharaoh’s army. But almost immediately after they became hungry and murmured and complained to Moses *“And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger”* Exodus 16: 2-3 [NKJV].

As we walk along our Christian journey, let us remember that we must continually develop our endurance by not looking back at what we left but let the word of God guide our feet along the path he has provided for us. For as we look back we think that we have the ability to chart our own way and forget the words of God through the prophet Jeremiah 10:23[NKJV] *“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walks to direct his steps.”*

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