

PERSEVERANCE

By John F. Hall

The word persevere means to continue in a given course in spite of difficulties. In previous stories, I mention that a person should be content with the “cards of life” they are dealt. In the second half of Luke, Chapter 12, Verse 48, are these words: “Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more.” My talent, humble as it is, is to write true stories about what I have experienced and observed. If it benefits anyone, that is my reward. I do receive appreciation when Jade, Skyler, Lexie, Trish and Mike tell me that they enjoy reading my stories. The satisfaction is similar to an actor receiving applause. I am blessed to have Audrey Lambert (ajlambert.com) put many of my stories on her web page. I appreciate all the hard work that it takes to accomplish that task.

When I started out writing stories, 40 years ago, the purpose was to inspire, to motivate and to entertain. Most people enjoy reading a true story. I felt that if I could help just one person keep their faith and belief in Christ, then I accomplished what I set out to do. I try to put my heart into my stories. But I feel that song writers are best at doing that. Even so, I believe that if you can write about Christ, it is love. I try to convey to my readers that when things get bad, sometimes, just one more day might change things and can make a difference. I think I write best when I have a song in my head. Carnie Wilson, Chynna Wilson and Glen Ballard wrote the song, “Hold On (For One More Day.” In the next paragraph I will show some of their lyrics.

“I know there's pain. Why do you lock yourself in these chains? No one can change your life except for you. Don't let anyone step all over you. Just open your heart and your mind. Is it really fair to feel this way inside? Someday somebody's gonna make you want to turn around and say goodbye. Until baby are you going to let them hold you down and make you cry? Don't you know? Don't you know things can change, things'll go your way? If you hold on for one more day? Things'll go your way, hold on for one more day. You can sustain. Or are you comfortable with the pain? You've got no one to blame for your unhappiness. You got yourself into your own mess. Lettin' your worries pass you by, don't you think it's worth your time to change your mind...” The song by the group Wilson Phillips is meant to motivate a person to hang on.

Perhaps the best example of perseverance is a story found in the Bible. In the Biblical land of U2, which initially occupied the north—western part of Arabia, possibly near the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba, lived a man named Job. At that time in history, he was the richest man in that area. He owned 7,000 sheep, 1,000 head of cattle, 500 donkeys and 3,000 camels. He had a large number of servants. Job was good and faithful to God. Then one day, a messenger came and reported to Job that raiders called Sabeans attacked and killed all his servants, except the messenger, that were ploughing his fields. They stole his oxen and his donkeys. Then another messenger came and reported to Job that three groups of Chaldean raiders attacked, killed all of his servants, except the messenger, and took all of Job's camels. Then another messenger came and reported to Job that a storm

came in from the desert and destroyed his house and killed his 10 children. Job lost everything that he owned. His lively hood, his home and his children were gone.

At no time did Job blame God for the loss of his wealth, his home and all of his children. In his own words, Job said, "I was born with nothing, and I will die with nothing. The Lord gave, and now He has taken away. May His name be praised." Job understood the truth that all of us will face one day. No matter how much we accumulate in this life, be it fame or fortune, it's all just temporary. It is truly towards eternity that our sights should be focused. Against all the false delusions that happiness is found in owning and having things, is the truth that what really matters is how we care about and treat each other.

We live in a society that has a dominant attitude that our worth depends on what we possess, on what we do for a living, and what we achieve in this short life. It is not recognition or wealth that forms the basis of our peace of soul. Rather, it is our faith in Jesus Christ that gives our life meaningfulness. Christ freely gives of His providence, His presence, and His friendship, if only we seek Him. Christ makes our life worthy for its own sake regardless of our accomplishments or our earthly wealth.

As in the story of Job, Christ wants us to persevere in the face of adversity. Job eventually recovered from his losses. He persevered and his faith never wavered. A financial adviser named Doug O'Rear, in giving advice to a surviving spouse, wrote the following, "Everyone has a terminal disease, some are just diagnosed earlier." Many of us will suffer set-back in our lives, our careers, our goals and our health. We can have regrets, we can blame someone, we can scream, or we can simply trust in Christ. Jesus does not want us to quit our faith and stop believing in Him because of the events in our life. He wants us to persevere. Our society, at times, may give us emotional pain. There is probably no greater emotional pain then for a family member or a friend to give us a feeling that we are unimportant and useless. For what ever reason they may want us to believe that our best efforts are a waste with no purpose or lasting legacy. Christ, on the other hand, asserts that our life in this world is worthwhile, that every life has a purpose, that all good things that we do are valuable. Perseverance in our faith and belief in Jesus Christ is really the one thing that will sustain us for all eternity.

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*Read other stories by John F. Hall at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>