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Persevering in Faith

As a younger man, I once made a trip alone in my car of over six thousand miles. I was traveling to Fort St. John, British Columbia, Canada, from Cleveland, Tennessee, USA, and then returning back. I was going to see family and preach, but because I couldn't afford airline tickets I decided to drive my old car. I also couldn't afford hotels so I decided I would just take naps along the way. I knew it was going to be many days of traveling but I was also excited to see the countryside.

It seemed like a great adventure, but I didn't calculate how those long stretches of road could seem to take forever. I was so tired at one place along the highway, while in the Rocky Mountains, I decided to pull over to nap. There was snow along the dark road so as I pulled off to the side I thought it best to just let the car run to keep the heater on and also the lights on to make sure any other vehicles could spot me. I fell asleep so hard that I forgot that I had pulled over. When I woke up, I could hear the engine running, I could see with the headlights on and for a moment it seemed like I fell asleep while driving and was crashing into the woods. Let's just say that I had no problem staying awake after that.

There were parts of that trip that were beautiful and exciting, as well as parts that were so boring that I wanted to sell my car so that I could buy an airline ticket. That trip is how many of us feel on this path that we are on in serving God. Some days are exciting, and some days are not so exciting. Especially when we are believing God for something that hasn't yet come to pass.

That time period between praying for something, and when it comes to pass, can feel as if it may never finish. Romans 8:24-25 says *"For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance."* This word, 'hope', is describing that you and I have the ability to become everything that God promised us. Even though you may not be able to see it with your natural eyes, the truth is what God says. The word 'perseverance' is describing what seems like long stretches of time where it seems like victory will never come. If we don't hold on to the Word of God during these times, then it's easy to become discouraged and to accept our situations.

The Word of God is powerful, and shows the beautiful promises that He has given to us, and as we hold on to these promises, this hope and perseverance, to always continue in faith, is key. Every one of us are believing for something, and discouragement can come when things are not changing fast enough. Every one of us desires for our prayers to be answered immediately, but as you may have discovered, there are some areas of faith that take time to develop.

I have heard discouragement from many wonderful Christians as they begin to get tired of waiting for their prayers to be answered. Most people never question the truth of being born again after they say the sinner's prayer. However, when it comes to other promises such as healing, provision, and family, it's easy to begin to question our faith in God when it seems to take too long. I myself have judged myself too hard and felt like a failure because of unanswered prayer. I told God that I have no faith because my victory hasn't shown up, and this is when the Holy Spirit came as an encourager to remind me that as long as I don't let go of the hope of the gospel, then I am in faith.

My heart is broken by how many Christians feel like they "don't believe", or "don't have faith", because their answer hasn't arrived quickly. IF YOU ARE HOLDING ON TO THE HOPE THEN YOU ARE IN FAITH. Just like my long road trip, there are moments where you can enjoy but also moments where you don't feel excited. Either way, as long as we continue on this road of faith, then eventually we will arrive. Faith is not only the destination of answered prayer, but it is also every little step that takes us there!

The little steps we take during seasons of hope and perseverance are actions that add to our spirit. They may not seem like much, but they are acts of faith. Praying in tongues and confessing God's Word every day will continue you down the path to victory. Galatians 6:7-9 says *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."*

So, let's continue to sow into our spirit man each day so that the harvest will come. Don't quit taking those little steps each day; they are as much faith, as the victory when it comes. Don't accept that you are stuck where you are!! God has given us hope in His Word that nothing is impossible for Him.

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