

## Keep On Trying...

**Intro:** Probably every man has a can of WD-40 somewhere in his garage or workshop. Today it's a household standard, used for everything from curing squeaks to removing sticker labels off jars, etc.

Do you know where WD-40, that trusty fix-it-all solution in a spray can, got its name? It was the product of Rocket Chemical Company, a tiny San Diego company seeking to develop rust-prevention solvents and degreasers for use in the aerospace industry. The inventor was a lab chemist in the company by the name of Norm Lawson. He who was trying to invent a chemical compound that would displace water on metal so as to prevent rust. In his lab notebook he wrote in 1953, "water displacement, 40<sup>th</sup> attempt." After 40 tries he had succeeded in making a chemical that would do the job. Thus it got the name, "WD (water Displacement)- 40, perfected on the 40th try."

### The Need to Keep On Trying!

I was especially intrigued by the final phrase—"perfected on the 40th try." I wonder sometimes how often we fail to accomplish great things because we quit too soon!?

The truth is, every failure is, in one sense, a learning opportunity. Thirty-nine failures taught Rocket Chemical how not to make the desired product; but persistent effort resulted in success. What if Lawson had quit on the 39<sup>th</sup> try?

There are many spiritual applications of the principle. Maybe the best word in Scripture for "keeping on trying" is the word "patience" or "perseverance." It is found all over the NT and reminds us to keep trying, even when we think we may have failed repeatedly.

*Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness; (2 Pet. 1:5-6)*

Perseverance translates the Greek noun "hupomene." It refers to steadfastness, constancy, endurance, "the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings." (Thayer) The KJV translation "patience" might also be suitable if we think of it as the ability to endure life's challenges.

### When do we need perseverance?

Our lives give us many occasions to display perseverance.

*We need perseverance as we face the trials of being a Christian.*

**In times of personal loss, grief, temptation, and pain.**

We get no exemptions because we are Christians. Instead we are encouraged to endure them with faith.

*Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (Jam. 1:12)*

*As Christians we will also be tested:*

### **In times of persecution and mistreatment**

Paul expressed his joy in the Thessalonians' endurance:

*Therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. (2 Thes. 1:4)*

He urged the Romans to meet the challenges of life:

*rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer (Rom. 12:12)*

Peter likewise acknowledged that relationships can be the source of pain and difficulty.

*For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. (1 Pet. 2:20)*

### **In hardships incident to teaching**

Paul describes his experiences in seeking to teach the word:

*but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, (2 Cor. 6:4)*

And he expressed appreciation for Timothy who followed his example:

*But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, (2 Tim. 3:10)*

### **In doing right**

We not only need endurance in overcoming problem; we also need endurance to live an obedient life.

*And the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance. (Lk. 8:15)*

And it is in persevering in doing what is right that we have hope of God's reward.

*to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; (Rom. 2:7)*

## **How can we develop this perseverance?**

*By understanding the role of trials in our spiritual life.*

### **Our trials are a means to develop greater endurance**

We cultivate strength by overcoming resistance.

*knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. (Jam. 1:3)*

### **Our trials can be the means by which we are disciplined by the Lord**

*It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? (Heb. 12:7)*

We need not assume that every problem is punishment for wrongdoing; but we can affirm that God allows us to experience difficulty in order to strengthen us that we might share His holiness.

**Our trials develop personal character**

*And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; (Rom. 5:3-4)*

Enduring in tribulation, Paul says, brings growth. All of us will have to admit this, namely, that we have grown more in times of pain than pleasure.

***By focusing on our ultimate goal of heaven***

When we focus on God's promises we are able to hold out in times of trial.

*For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. (Heb. 10:36)*

*But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. (Rom. 8:25)*

I like this line from Spurgeon who was trying to encourage people not to quit before reaching their destination: "By perseverance the snail reached the ark!"

***By praying for strength to endure***

Paul acknowledged that he regularly prayed for the Lord's people throughout the Roman world. Colossians 1 records one of those prayers:

*strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; (Col. 1:11)*

By Paul's example we can learn the importance of praying about all the things we want to see in our lives.

***By observing the faithful endurance of others in the Scriptures***

*For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (Rom. 15:4)*

Paul said this in connection with a passage in which the psalmist speaks of how he had endured the reproaches of others. Having applied the passage to Jesus, he then urges the Romans to see the benefit of learning from the example of others.

The Hebrew writer in Hebrews 11 described what people of faith had to endure to receive their reward; and then he exhorts his readers:

*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb. 12:1-2)*

**Conclusion: We can develop perseverance. With God's help we can conquer our trials; live joyfully and peacefully amidst that which causes others to go to pieces. Get started or continue your start in becoming a more patient person.**

**Perseverance brought about a simple household compound; but spiritual perseverance will yield something far greater—an eternal home with the Lord.**