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Prudence, Patience and Perseverance in a Pandemic

We need all these 3 elements to survive the pandemic namely prudence, patience and perseverance. **The word “prudent” has been used in Scripture to be wise or discreet or even careful in handling practical matters, which is especially necessary during this pandemic in making decisions. A prudent person exercises sound judgment and is more than just common sense.** Prudence is not just an abstract concept; it is intensely pragmatic. Consider Prov 12:23, “*A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.*” Amos says in Amos 5:13, “*Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.*” We sometimes react when someone attacks, falsely accuses or even insults us, but we need to pray for godly prudence and discretion to deal with it correctly in the will of God. Silence can be golden at certain times when we refuse to be tempted to respond in haste or anger. We need to learn to restrain ourselves with temperance in all circumstances even as we stay at home these 2 months or more with our loved ones where conflict situations in home may be intensified or made worst.

The Prudent in All Situations

Some of us hold responsible positions in our workplace, school or in life and we need to be alert and mindful in making decisions for safety, hygiene and in social distancing and the wearing of a mask. Pro 27:12 says, “*A prudent man foreseeeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.*” Note also Pro 14:15, “*The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.*”

The ant is a good example of a wise creature for us to emulate as it is diligent and works all summer so that it can survive during the winter. It “*prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest*” (Prov 6:8) as a prudent way to survive in diligence and industry. This is basically what Solomon meant when he wrote Prov 10:5, “*He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.*”



The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.
- Proverbs 14:15 (KJV) -

In a spiritual sense, a prudent Christian will seek God and confess and repent of all his or her sins and turn to God for pardon, not trusting in self or the world. It is foolish to trust in yourself because *“each of us will give an account of himself to God”* (Rom 14:12) whether you believe in God or not since *“we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad”* (2Cor 5:10) for Christ is *“ready to judge the living and the dead”* (1 Pet 4:5).

Are you ready to give an answer for everyone *“will give account for every word they speak”* (Matt 12:36).



(see <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/christiancrier/2015/08/18/what-does-prudent-mean-a-biblical-definition-of-prudent/>)



Prudence is knowing and making the right decision for each situation presented to us even in the midst of a health crisis. For instance, one who makes a decision not to wear a mask or maintain a safe distance in spite of the current health situation is being imprudent and thoughtless. But what prudence requires is decision, most of the time a right decision. How does one become prudent? This has both a practical and theological answer when we seek the Lord.

If one is imprudent, one may make a random decision which he or she may regret later. **A prudent man prays and weighs the situation and responds accordingly to the situation, the law of the land, the teachings of scripture, and finally the prompting of the Holy Spirit and act accordingly.**

The spiritual exercise of keeping up daily prayer, study and meditation on scripture during this circular breaker will prepare one to respond accordingly to other situations if needed. “It has been said that prudence means the studied seriousness and...the brave boldness to make final decisions. It means purity, straightforwardness, candour, and simplicity of character. It is the grace of direct and mediated divine guidance from heaven.” Prudence is acting in truth and good faith with due responsibility too.



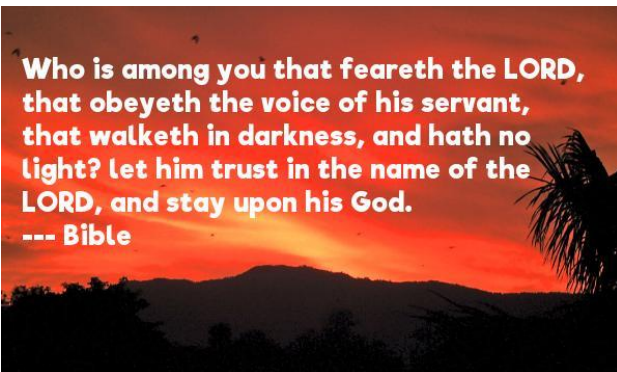
Prudence for a Christian requires a deep study and understanding the Word of God, knowing and applying it in our lives in every situation even in this pandemic. It is wise living that is governed by the fear of God that affects our decorum and demeanour. The Holy Spirit will guide us to seek counsel from God, to act in the right manner and at the right time. It starts with the focus on Christ and His goodness and the basis of a strong and abiding relationship with God. He counsels us and guides as we move along in doing the things of this world. We must be diligent, alert, patient or mindful and deliberate in our thinking or action in normal and perilous times, not cunning or self-centred or arrogant which is displeasing to God.

The Need for Perseverance

Perseverance is another quality we need and it is more than endurance— more than simply holding on until the end and not giving up and making progress. Is there something in your life for which you need to develop perseverance right now as we go through this pandemic? Keep your intimate relationship with Jesus Christ strong through the perseverance of faith. Be like Job who said, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15).



Persevering faith is not some weak and pitiful emotion, but is strong and vigorous confidence built on the fact that God is our refuge and strength (Ps 46:1). Even though you cannot see Him right now and cannot understand what He is doing through this health crisis, you know that God will carry you through one day by His sovereign grace which is sufficient for us. Disaster, failures, sickness or pestilence can occur in our lives and we need the spiritual and mental composure that comes from establishing our faith on the eternal truth that God is our Lord whom we can trust. Faith is the supreme effort of your life—throwing yourself with abandon and total confidence upon God alone (Isa 50:10).



The Bible has much to say about perseverance in different contexts. Clearly, the Scriptures teach that those who “overcome” and persevere in the faith will inherit eternal life by the will of God (Rev 2:7). This truth is also expressed in Col 1:23 where we see that people will be holy, blameless, and above reproach “if they continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel.” So all Christians should be in agreement that those who are ultimately saved are those who persevere and continue to believe and live out the gospel in their lives.



The concept of perseverance is not only for salvation; there are biblical exhortations to persevere in the race of the Christian life. Paul reminds Timothy to watch his life and doctrine closely. He is to persevere in them, to be a blessing to his hearers (1 Tim 4:16). Timothy’s character was godly and his doctrine was sound and scriptural. Paul exhorted him to persevere in them as it is right for all Christians—perseverance in godly living and believing the truth with genuine conversion (Jn 8:31; Rom 2:7) and even more so through this global long-standing pandemic. As **Spurgeon says,** “By perseverance, the snail entered the Ark”.

The Christian who perseveres in godliness and the spiritual disciplines will be led by the grace of God. The perseverance in the Christian life will be God-enabled to continue to press on even more. The psalmist reminds us that there is great reward in persevering in



the Christian life (2Jn 8). In keeping God's commandments, there is "great reward" for our souls (Psa 19:11); peace of mind, a clear conscience, and a witness to the world to the saving of souls.

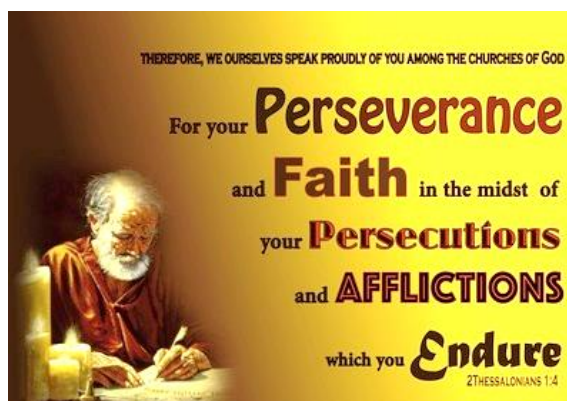
We are to persevere "under testings and trials" because those who do so will be blessed and will receive the "crown of life" which God has promised (Jas 1:12). **Just as the true believer will be eternally secure in his salvation, his faith will also persevere in affliction, sickness, pandemic, persecution,**

and the other trials of life that befall any believer. Paul says that if we desire to live godly lives in Christ, we *will* suffer persecution (2 Tim 3:12), but the faithful will persevere in the end, kept by the power of the Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our salvation and who will keep us "strong to the end," persevering so we will be "blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:8).

(see <https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-perseverance.html>)

Consider *perseverance* and *endurance* biblically. Read Heb 12:1-3. This is our key passage for the whole study. Notice that the imagery used here suggests an athletic contest in a big stadium with many witnesses. The Greek word translated "endurance" or "perseverance" literally means "an abiding under; to abide." In other New Testament verses, it is translated "patience." Patience may be passive, that is, **endurance** under the general trials of life, Christian service or discipline. **Patience may also be active (perseverance) which involves persistence in well-doing, fruit-bearing and running the appointed race despite trials and distractions of life.** (*Vines Complete Expository Dictionary*, p 462-463)

Although the words *endurance* and *perseverance* may be used interchangeably with patience, *perseverance* carries the connotation of whole life experience and is active. It is staying power in the midst of danger or trial or crisis. It gives us a long-term perspective. Heb 12:1-3 speaks of our focus on Christ as we run this race of life with perseverance, looking unto the Lord. Perseverance involves a choice to be focused and deliberate too.

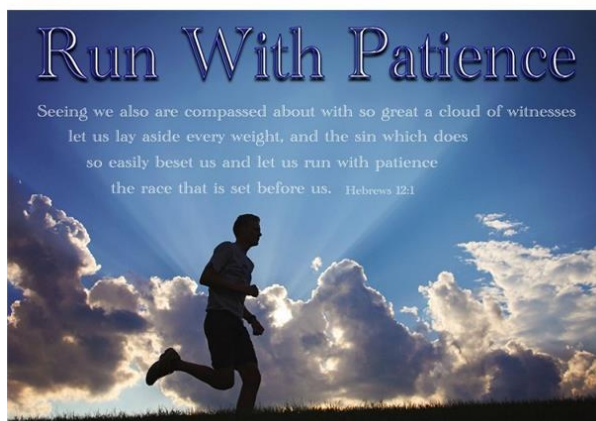


(see <https://bible.org/seriespage/introduction-what-perseverance>)

The Power and Place of Patience

We live in a world where we will face difficult and troubling times like this coronavirus crisis (Jn 14:1, 16:33). Some trials and tribulations come from living in this fallen world and are common to all man. Some trouble is the unique variety that afflicts a child of God living in an unbelieving world for our faith or witness. Some of our trials are internal as the Lord allows it (ie fears, depression etc); we yearn to grow in grace, fighting evil without and within us. Whatever the struggles we face, we need a secured lasting hope in Christ in order to "hang in there" patiently over a lifetime of growing in grace In the Lord i.e. without hope, people give up. **The Christian life is not only be empowered by faith; it must also be sustained by the hope and grace of God.**

The Liability of Impatience



We live in a world of hectic lifestyles, busyness and speed. Many cannot wait when they have to stay in a long queue in supermarkets as we go through this circuit breaker and many cannot wait for it to be over to go back to work or school. Impatience is a common malady with Singaporeans on the roads. Instant solutions, instant noodles or quick fix to a problem, is often what we insist on. The virtue of patience is not appreciated in the secular world. The Bible however, encourages the nurturing of a patient and gentle spirit, a willingness to be

still and just wait expectantly and predictably before the Lord. **The word 'endurance' in Heb. 12:1,2 includes the element of patience. We are to be persevering and at the same time patient in the long race of life ahead of us.**

Let us be careful to attend to our daily duties reading the bible, and be patient (Jas 5:7, 10), establish your hearts (v8), grudge not one against another, (v9). Consider well the meaning of these two points:

- **Be patient** – bear your afflictions without murmuring and your injuries without revenge; and though God should not in any manner appear for you immediately, wait for him and do not fret. Let your patience be built out of longsuffering during trials. When we have done our work, we have need of patience to stay on in faithful service and not give up easily. **This Christian patience is not a mere yielding to necessity, but is a humble acquiescence in the wisdom and will of God, with an eye to a future glorious recompense.** Be patient to the coming of the Lord. And because this is a lesson Christians must learn, though ever so hard or difficult to them, as we are called to be patient. (Psa 37:6,7,34)
- **Establish your hearts** - Christians are to be patient, to establish their hearts and not to grudge the authorities or one against another. We are to look to the example of the diligent farmer: he works hard and waits for the precious fruit of the earth and patiently longs for it, until he receives the early and latter rains. Think how short our waiting time may possibly be: The coming of the Lord draws nigh (v8). We are encouraged to be patient by the example of the prophets (v10). Note that Noah and his family waited for 120 years for the global flood to come and built the ark. Joseph endured false accusations and prison sentence. **Moses had 40 years training in the Midianite desert and Jeremiah was preaching before and during the Babylonian captivity of 70 years. Can we not wait upon the Lord to see us through this circuit breaker and the whole health crisis which may take years?**



We are to live by faith in God, in a life of full dependency and waiting upon the Lord, for Christ is trustworthy as the object of our faith. We are to live in total reliance upon the Person of the crucified and risen Christ through this health crisis. We step out by faith in the objective truth of His written Word, trusting Him for the ability to do what He wills, and entrusting Him with the results of our lives and actions and through this global pandemic as well. (Bob George, *Growing in Grace*, p. 86)

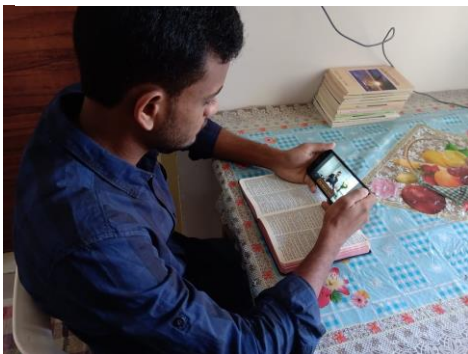
Conclusion

We need all these 3 elements to survive the long standing global pandemic namely prudence, patience and perseverance. We also need wisdom from above and prayer with persistence or importunity by the grace of God too. Let us practise Ps 27:14, “*Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.*” Patience and prudence carries with it a lot of WAIT as we seek the will of the Lord through this calamity. Isa 40:31 says we can be like the eagles and soar again if we wait upon the Lord. **Let us learn to be still and wait patiently and prudently upon the Lord through this whole health crisis and come forth as gold one day to serve Him with greater devotion and love and effectiveness.**



Jack Sin

Pray for our children who will be going back to school and our missions in India, Myanmar and Batam. (Below: Rajesh, son of Preacher Praveen from Covenant BPC, Bangalore listening to our Sunday message.)



Thank God that Pr Yap Kim Chuan (seated: second from right) is discharged and recuperating at home. Pray for his full recovery from the recent stroke.

Memory Verse

Dan 7: 18 But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

Announcements

1. We thank God for many who are participating in our Facebook Live streaming worship service which will continue till further advice.
2. Rev Jack Sin speaks today on “The Interpretation of a Revelation from God” (Daniel 7:1 - 28).
3. Rev Peter Goh speaks next Sunday on “A Vision of the Past, Present and Future” (Daniel 8:1 - 26). Pastor Jack will be preaching at the live recording worship service of Emmanuel BPC at 930 on the same Sunday.
4. Chinese Fellowship meets on Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom. Kindly contact Pastor or Angie for the zoom link if you are keen to join.
5. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom.
6. The Church Session meets via Zoom meeting on Fri 29 May.
7. From 2 June, worshippers who would like to come to church for private prayer, subject to the limit of 5 persons per household, may inform Pastor.
8. Pray for the translation and preparation for the book on the Christian Perspective of COVID19 and biblically related themes in Spanish and English as the Lord leads.
9. Those who would like to serve the Lord in any area in the church, please see the Pastor or the Deacons.
10. Those who have a testimony to share may submit to Pastor for the weekly.
11. Pastor is still available for counselling via WhatsApp, Email or Mobile.
12. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mailed to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**

- APRIL 2020 -

- 5th Christian Scholar Conquering Compromise (Dan 1:1-21)
- 10th* **Good Friday Night Service (8pm):** 4 Persons and the Deadly Victory of the Cross (Matthew 27:20-54)
- 12th **Resurrection Sunday (10am):** Why We Fear Death No More (1 Corinthians 15:1-21, 51-58)
- 19th Lessons from a Royal Dream (Daniel 2:17-49)
- 26th Fighting Fire – God’s Way (Daniel 3:1-30)

- MAY 2020 -

- 3rd An Earthly King exalts the Heavenly King (Dan 4:19-37)
- 10th* Handwritings on the Wall Explained (Dan 5:11-31)
- 17th The Prayerful Prime Minister (Dan 6:1-28)
- 24th The interpretation of a revelation from God (Dan 7:1-28)
- 31st A Vision of the Past, Present and Future (Dan 8:1-27)

- JUNE 2020 -

- 7th The Supplication of a Godly Saint (Dan 9:1-24)
- 14th* Deep Eschatological Insights (Dan 10:1-21)
- 21st The End Times Revealed (Dan 12:1-13)
- 28th **Gospel Sunday:** The God I cannot ignore (Rom 1:1-16)

SOVEREIGNHOPE
bible - presbyterian ministry

APR - JUN 2020
WORSHIP PROGRAMME

- THEME -

EXPLORING AND
APPLYING
PROPHETIC LESSONS
IN OUR LIVES
(STUDIES IN THE
BOOK OF DANIEL)

- EVERY SUNDAY -

WORSHIP
SERVICES
AT 10AM

- CONTACT -

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