

Hope, Patience, and Prayer
Romans 12:12
May 18, 2022

Context

Theme of Romans: The gospel of God (1:16-17)

Chs 1-11 The gospel as the power of God for salvation – The indicatives

12:1-15:13 The gospel and the transformation of life – The imperatives

- 12:1-2 Consecration
- 12:3-8 Humble service
- 12:9-21 Love

15:14-16:27 Conclusion

1. “Rejoice in hope”

Question: What is the Christian hope?

Connects back to the following:

- **5:2**

- **8:16-19, 23-25**

Related to the following:

- **1 Thessalonians 5:8-10**
- **1 Peter 1:13**

An instruction to continually rejoice because of this hope

This requires keeping our minds set on God’s promise of glory, and keeping ourselves from becoming consumed with what is seen and temporal.

When we rejoice in hope, ...

1. Hope keeps us from despair
 - **Psa. 42:5–6** “Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.”

2. Hope soothes the bitterness of affliction (Psa 42-43)

3. Hope disengages us from love of this world (1 John 2:15-17; 3:3)
4. Hope encourages us to serve the Lord
 - **1 Cor. 15:58** “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” (cf. 15:19)
5. Hope comforts us in the prospect of death (1 Thess 4:13)

As believers we have to make a conscious decision to rejoice in hope

The apostle prays for joy and abounding hope in **15:13**

2. “Be patient in tribulation”

NASB “persevering in”

NET “endure in”

The definition of the Greek verb translated, “be patient,” is, “to maintain a belief or course of action in the face of opposition,” and can be translated “endure.”¹

Not a passive putting up with things, but an active, steadfast endurance in serving the Lord (12:11c)²

Tribulation is part of the Christian life

- **Acts 14:21–22** “When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through **many tribulations** we must enter the kingdom of God.”

Question: How does the previous instruction, “Rejoice in hope,” relate to this instruction?

Let’s revisit the following:

- **5:2-4**
- **8:17-18, 25**

¹ BDAG

² Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 447.

Robert Haldane: “Nothing is better calculated to enable us to bear calamities than the hope of a happy result. And what can equal the prospects of the Christian when he has passed through the furnace and been tried as gold? His afflictions are not only necessary for his trial, and honorable to God, but they are for his own eternal advantage. The light afflictions of the righteous, which are for a moment, work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory [2 Cor 4:17]. The trial of their faith is much more precious than that of gold, though it be tried with fire, and shall be found unto praise and honor and glory in the day of Christ [1 Pet 1:7].”³

As believers we are to refuse to be sidelined from serving the Lord by tribulation.

3. “Be constant in prayer”

Question: What does it mean to be constant in prayer?

NASB “devoted to”

CSB “persistent in”

NIV “faithful in”

NKJV “continuing steadfastly in”

The definition of the Greek verb, “Be constant,” is, “to persist in something,” and can be translated, “be busily engaged in,” “be devoted to,” “persevere in.”⁴

The same two Greek words are found in **Acts 1:14; 2:42; 6:4; Eph 6:18; Col 4:2**

Similar instructions:

- **Luke 18:1** “And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.”
- **1 Th. 5:17** “pray without ceasing,”

In order to carry out the other instructions in this chapter, including rejoicing in hope and being patient in tribulation, we must pray.

- *Haldane*: “It is impossible that believers can discharge the various duties which are here enforced, without having their eyes constantly directed to their heavenly Father, and without receiving from Him the will and the capacity necessary for their discharge.”⁵
- *Haldane*: “No duty can be well performed without this.”⁶

One of the reasons why our Heavenly Father ordains tribulations in our lives is to drive us to Him in prayer.

³ Haldane, *Romans*, 567.

⁴ BDAG.

⁵ Haldane, 567.

⁶ Ibid.

Prayer is the means ordained by God for the supply of grace sufficient for every situation and task we face as we serve the Lord.⁷

John Calvin: “Paul...expressly requires [prayer] because our warfare is unceasing, and we are daily attacked by various assaults, which champions even of the greatest bravery are unable to support without an occasional supply of new vigor. Unceasing continuance in prayer is the best remedy against fatigue.”⁸

Haldane: “If a Christian undertakes anything whatever without prayer, he is neglecting his duty, and not acting up to his privileges. In that matter he is not walking with God, whose ears are open to the prayers of the righteous. On occasions, even, when there is not a moment to deliberate, and when an immediate decision is indispensable, there is still time for prayer and for receiving an answer (Neh 2:4, 8).”⁹

The spiritual battle is fought chiefly in prayer.

We as believers are to regularly spend time devoted to prayer, and are to pray throughout the day about the matters we face.

To be constant in prayer, we must...

1. Believe that prayer is vital
2. Exert holy effort

The acronym, ACTS, is a reminder of different aspects of prayer

Conclusion - The gospel is to impact our whole life!

⁷ John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2:132.

⁸ Calvin, in Haldane, 567.

⁹ Haldane, 567-68.