

How is “assurance” related to “perseverance”? A Series on Understanding Assurance: Part 3

The two Greek word groups of “kartereō” and “hypomenō” are translated into the verb “persevere” or its noun “perseverance.” With these two Greek terms, the meaning of “persevere” is given subtle nuances and depth that might otherwise be lost in English.

The Greek word “kartereō” means “be strong”, “steadfast” or “persevere”.

“Kartereō” can be found only in Hebrews 11:27. In this discussion of Moses’ faith, the writer of Hebrews draws attention to a persevering faith that endures because of the expectation of seeing God. Moses’ faith was not based on an invisible abstract idea; it was based on the reality of actually seeing God and having a genuine relationship with Him (Ex 33:11; Num 12:7-8).

By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured (**kartereō**), as seeing Him who is unseen. (Heb 11:27)

The noun form of “kartereō”, *proskarterēsis*, is only found in Ephesians 6:18 and is translated as “perseverance”. In this passage where Paul encourages Christians to pray in supplication for themselves and the saints, it is in the context of the armor of God and struggles Believers will have with demonic forces as he personally experienced (Acts 13:6-11; 16:16-18; 19:11). Here perseverance has the overtone of constancy and alertness, in part in preparation of spiritual battle or its engagement.

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance (**proskarterēsis**) and petition for all the saints, and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. (Eph 6:18-20)

With the “kartereō” word group, perseverance is given a sense of capacity to endure affliction without getting upset or losing alertness during periods of lull. It is in the context of a divine relationship and one’s confident appraisal of its facts.

The Greek verb “hypomenō” means “be patient”, “persevere”, “endure” or “be steadfast.” Correspondingly, the Greek noun “hyponomē” means “patience”, “steadfastness” or “endurance.”

The Greek verb “hypomenō” is used in several instances. When Jesus used the term in association with salvation, some interpreters see perseverance as a requirement for salvation (Matt 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13). However, this would contradict Jesus statement of salvation by faith alone (John 3:16).

You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured (**hypomenō**) to the end who will be saved. (Matt 10:22)

In His instructions preparing His disciples for evangelizing to the Jews, Jesus warns them of persecution by government and religious officials and this hostility towards His message would include divisions within the family.

In this context, perseverance refers to a patient endurance rather than an active resistance to hostility.

But the one who endures (**hypomenō**) to the end, he will be saved. (Matt 24:13)

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You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures (**hypomenō**) to the end, he will be saved. (Mark 13:13)

In His Olivet Discourse, where Jesus speaks of the coming apocalypse and the coming of the Son of Man, He warns of the persecution of the faithful because of their faith in Him. “Believers” will succumb to false prophets and wickedness. Jesus speaks of perseverance as a time of testing. How well do you really know God and His work through His Son? Do you really trust your belief in the gospel? How genuine is your faith?

Perseverance reflects a commitment to a belief of something true that is so strong that the sacrifice is willingly made. Jesus statement, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life” (John 5:24) is viewed as a statement of fact. And it appears to be those who do not have a genuine faith who fall away.

Whereas eternal security is provided by God and its assurance provisionally guaranteed by Jesus, perseverance is the volitional act of the Believer. It appears that only those with a genuine faith will have the certitude to patiently endure (Matt 24:13; Mark 13:13). And in the case of the disciples, Judas Iscariot did not have a genuine faith and could not persevere.

In their letters, the apostles expand the concept of perseverance beyond faith to include the life and character as God’s people. They exhort Believers to persevere in doing God’s work.

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering (**hypomenō**) in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. (Rom 12:9-13)

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures (**hypomenō**) all things. (1 Cor 13:4-7)

But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured (**hypomenō**) a great conflict of sufferings, partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. (Heb 10:32-35)

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 (**hypomenō**) the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured (**hypomenō**) such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprovved by Him; For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.” 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 12:1-7)

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Blessed is a man who perseveres (**hypomenō**) 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. (James 1:12)

Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We count those blessed who endured (**hypomenō**). You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord’s dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful. (James 5:7-11)

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure (**hypomenō**) it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure (**hypomenō**) it, this finds favor with God. (1 Pet 2:18-20)

Perseverance not only reflects one’s certainty of God, His character and covenant fidelity but an understanding of the implications of the gospel; it rests upon the foundation of Jesus Christ’s assurance of salvation. The patient endurance of a Believer reflects his deep appreciation of God’s saving grace and develops his godly character.

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