

Romans 12:10-13 Commentary

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Romans 12:10 Be [devoted](#) to [one another](#) in [brotherly love](#); [give preference](#) (to [one another](#) in [honor](#) ([NASB: Lockman](#)))

Greek: [te philadelphia eis allelous philostorgoi, te time allelous proegoumenoi.](#) ([PMPMPN](#))

Amplified: Love one another with brotherly affection [as members of one family], giving precedence *and* showing honor to one another ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Let us have real warm affection for one another as between brothers, and a willingness to let the other man have the credit. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: In the sphere of brotherly love have a family affection for one another, vying with one another in showing honor (Eerdmans)

Young's Literal: in the love of brethren, to one another kindly affectioned: in the honour going before one another;

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS

Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION

God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	God's Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith

Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work "[Jensen's Survey of the NT](#)"

BE DEVOTED TO ONE ANOTHER IN BROTHERLY LOVE: te philadelphia eis allelous philostorgoi...proegoumenoi (PMPMPN):

- Jn 13:34,35; 15:17; 17:21; Acts 4:32; Ga 5:6,13,22; Ep 4:1,2, 3; Col 1:4; 1Th 4:9; 2Th 1:3; He 13:1; 1Pe 1:22; 2:17; 3:8,9; 2Pe 1:7; 1Jn 2:9, 10, 11; 3:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18; 4:11,20,21; 5:1,2)
- Brotherly love - Job 1:4; Ps 133:1)

NET Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another with mutual love, showing eagerness in honoring one another.

CSB Romans 12:10 Show family affection to one another with brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor.

ESV Romans 12:10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.

NIV Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Spurgeon in commenting on Ro 12:10-13 notes that "Paul writes at full length upon the doctrines, but he is very concise and pithy upon the precepts, for things of daily practice need to be short and easy of remembrance. Let us learn each one of these weighty sentences by heart and put them all in practice.

Be devoted - The original Greek order ([te philadelphia eis allelous philostorgoi. te time allelous proegoumenoi](#)) is different than most of our translations = "**in the love of brethren** (te philadelphia), **to one another** (eis allelous) **kindly affectioned** (philostorgoi): in the honour going before one another".

Wuest retains the order and conveys the sense rendering it "In the sphere of brotherly love have a family affection for one another, vying with one another in showing honor."

Paul places **philadelphia** first in the Greek sentence for emphasis.

Be devoted (only use in Bible)([5387](#)) (**Philostorgos** from **philos** = friend + **storge** = natural family love or tender affection; cherishing one's kindred, esp parents or children) pertains to love or affection for those closely related to one, particularly members of one's immediate family, in this case referring to God's family composed of all believers in Christ Jesus. Notice that philostorgos is an adjective not a verb and so many translations add a "**be**" before the adjective so that it makes sense in English.

Philia is affectionate love between friends and **storge** refers to the tender affection among family members. **Storge** speaks of instinctive affection, like that which parents and children feel toward one another (see a more detailed discussion of the antonym **astorgos** used in Ro 1:31-note). **Storge** is "an attachment sealed by nature and blood ties," and is especially represented by a mother's innate love, benevolence, and devotion toward her children. Paul is saying that the relationships among Christians should involve intimacy, understanding, and acceptance. The idea is to be devoted to other Christians with a family sort of love, not based on personal attraction or desirability (cf. 1Thessalonians 4:9-note).

Vincent on philostorgos - Only here in the New Testament. From **steegeo** to love, which denotes peculiarly a natural affection, a sentiment innate and peculiar to men as men, as distinguished from the love of desire, called out by circumstance. Hence of the natural love of kindred, of people and king (the relation being regarded as founded in nature), of a tutelary god for a people. The word here represents Christians as bound by a family tie. It is intended to define more specifically the character of brotherly love, which follows, so that the exhortation is "love the brethren in the faith as though they were brethren in blood" (Farrar). ([Romans 12 - Vincent's Word Studies](#))

Barclay - The word Paul uses for affectionate is **philostorgos**, and **storge** is the Greek for family love. We must love each other, because we are members of one family. We are not strangers to each other within the Christian Church; much less are we isolated units; we are brothers and sisters, because we have the one father, God. ([Romans 12 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

Brotherly love (5360) (**philadelphia** from **philos** = beloved, dear, friendly + **adelphós** = brother) means "fraternal love", brotherly love (kindness), love of the brethren. Brotherly love normally referred to the love members of a family held for each other (this was the way it was used in secular Greek) and would not normally be used to describe the love between members of different families.

In the NT **philadelphia** is used to describe the love that believers possess for one to another, for even though they were members of different natural families, they were united in Christ and were recipients of family love originating from the Father Who had bestowed His great love on His spiritual children (1John 3:1, cp note 1Peter 1:22). Philadelphia manifests itself in acts of kindness (Ga 6:10).

Philadelphia describes a love which calls for an affection for one another like that one expressed between natural family members (see Romans 12:10-note where **devoted** or "loving warmly" = philostorgos from philos = beloved, dear + storge = family love, the love of parents and children). Remember that Christianity forged a radical relationship in Christ wherein believing Greeks and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians, Scythians, slaves and freemen, men and women were now all one in their Lord (cp Gal 3:28, see Col 3-note, Eph 4:3ff note). Such a diverse cultural community would have continual need for emphasis on **love of the brethren**. As Christians we have become brothers and sisters in the community of faith and Paul refers to them as **brothers** (sisters is clearly implied) some nineteen times in 1 Thessalonians alone. Our love is not just a passive disposition of fondness but manifests itself in overt acts of kindness toward the brethren.

Phileo love (word study) is the love of belonging, of friendship. It is a love we have for brothers because of our likenesses. (Greek for **brothers** = adelphos = literally "from the same womb") The Greek word for friend is philos, and it is related to the word for filial love, phileo. This root is seen in such English terms as "philanthropy" (benevolence or, literally, the love of man), and "philology" (the love of words).

A **friend** is one for whom you have filial love. Early Greek literature used the word philos to describe the followers of a political leader. Later it came to mean the clients of a wealthy man, or legal assistants. When the Romans embraced the language they extended the word to include friends and relatives. It is much like the "official family" of a political person, governor, or President. In ancient usage the word "**friend**" had much deeper implications than our casual usage. Aristotle indicated that a person might be called on to sacrifice his life for that of a friend. According to that famous Greek philosopher: "To a noble man there applies the true saying that he does all things for the sake of his friends" (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, IX, p. 153). This concept of friendship lays the basis for the New Testament use of this word.

It was this affectionate relationship in the early Church among Christian converts, in spite of their diverse status and varied backgrounds, that amazed the pagans.

Brotherly kindness must be cultivated (diligently) for it entails difficult duties, such as a willingness to bear one another's burdens and to forgive shortcomings and failures.

More Than Socializing - Church can be a great place to get caught up on the latest football games, golf scores, family news, health concerns, or just to visit with friends. A cup of coffee together, a warm handshake, a friendly pat on the back are all part of the social interaction we need as human beings.

All of this is good, but New Testament fellowship goes much deeper than merely socializing when we get together at church. It takes place when we consider how we can lift up, build up, and brighten up our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Bible clearly says that we are to "serve one another" (Gal 5:13), forgive as we are forgiven (Ephesians 4:32-note), and "bear one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2). From the first century, believers have gathered in Jesus' name to "consider one another in order to stir up love and good works" and to exhort one another (He 10:24, 25-note).

Christian fellowship takes place when we offer encouragement to our friends, pray for them, and confess our sins and weaknesses to one another. These are the elements that make fellowship genuine.

What about your church? Are you merely socializing? Or are you practicing true Christian fellowship? —Dave Egner [Our Daily Bread](#))

We Christians have a kinship with
All others who believe,
And from that bond of faith and love
A mutual strength receive. —Hess

Christian fellowship builds us up and binds us together.

Why is this exhortation so vital for believers to put into practice? Because the visual display of this quality of love in the body of Christ is the primary means by which the world recognizes us as followers of Christ (Jn 13:35 cf 1Jn 3:10-**note**, 1Jn 3:17-19-**note**). We must love each other, because we are members of one family. We are not strangers to each other within the Christian Church; much less are we isolated units; we are brothers and sisters, because we have the one father, God.

Christians are eternally members of one family, one body and truly have a "sibling relationship" with one another. Thus we are exhorted to develop the close and affectionate relationship that should exist among brothers and sisters who are blood relatives. The blood that binds us to one another as believers is even more precious than that binding secular families together.

The use of both of these words together (**philadelphia, philostorgoi**) does two things. First, it magnifies the importance of understanding the church as a family. In most cases the local congregation is like the immediate family, and the church universal is the extended family. Second, it intensifies the need to consciously seek to develop toward one another the tender affection and devotion appropriate among brothers and sisters. How are we doing as a church in America? The world is "dying" to see this quality of love exhibited.

Charles Colton once wrote that...:

The firmest friendships have been formed in mutual adversity, as iron most strongly united by the fiercest flame.

In other words, "A friend in need is a friend indeed."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon counted among his friends George Mueller and Hudson Taylor. On friendship Spurgeon said,

Friendship is one of the sweetest joys of life. Many might have failed beneath the bitterness of their trial had they not found a friend.

GIVE PREFERENCE TO ONE ANOTHER IN HONOR: te time allelous proegoumenoi (PMPMPN):

- Ge 13:9; Mt 20:26; Luke 14:10; Php 2:3; 1Pe 5:5)

Outdo one another in showing honor. (ESV)

Give preference (4285) (proegeomai from **pró** = before + **hegeomai** = lead way, think) means literally to lead the way before and so to show deference to the other person. This is the only use of this verb in Scripture.

Proegeomai is in the **middle voice** which indicates that the subject initiates the action (showing preference) and participates in results of that action. The idea is that believers are to continuously which reflect the **present tense** = this is to be our habitual practice, our lifestyle before a critically watching world, and a lifestyle **possible only** as we are filled with/controlled by the Spirit, relying not on our adequacy, but His adequacy [2Cor 3:5-6-note], His enabling power [**dunamis**] [Eph 3:16-note], just as did our Lord when He lived as a Man [cp Lk 4:14].

Christ followers are to continually, supernaturally **give preference to one another**, something that simply does not come naturally!

The idea of the **middle voice** is for you yourself to take the lead (**hegeomai** = to lead the way) and show genuine appreciation and admiration for fellow believers by putting them first (Php 2:3-note) and to be willing and even desirous for them to receive honor. Quite a contrast with the world's way (Torrey's Topic **Selfishness**) and therefore a mindset or lifestyle that serves as "salty salt" (cp Mt 5:13-note) in a world that is given over to blatant selfishness in these last days (2Ti 3:2-note - note what "heads the list" of evil attitudes and actions! It's the "**big I**", not surprisingly the middle letter in sln!)

If the we are walking in the truth of the first part of this verse (and walking in the Spirit) and are truly "devoted to one another in

brotherly love," it will be (supernaturally) "easy" to give preference to one another in honor. The virtue here is Christ-like humility, not thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think (Ro 12:3-note). It is doing

"[nothing](#) (try this by relying on Self, not Spirit!) from [selfishness or empty conceit](#), but with [humility](#) of [mind regard one another](#) as [more important](#) than [yourselves](#)"..."not merely" [looking out](#) "for your [own personal](#) interests, but [also](#) for the interests of [others](#)." It is having "[this attitude](#) in [yourselves which](#) was [also](#) in [Christ Jesus](#)" (Php 2:3, 4-note)

To honor the other person is one way of holding in check the innate human tendency to honor oneself unduly. If we are focusing on others, it is somewhat more difficult to focus on ourselves. Our example of course is Christ (see Php 2:5, 6, 7 -note Php 2:8-note Php 2:8-notes 1Pe 2:21-note)(Torrey's Topic "[Example of Christ](#)")

Vincent - Proegeomai occurs only here. It means to go before as a guide. Honor is the honor due from each to all. Compare Philemon 2:3; 1Peter 2:17; 1Peter 5:5. Hence, leading the way in showing the honor that is due. Others render anticipating and excelling. ([Romans 12 - Vincent's Word Studies](#))

One another ([240](#)) (**allelon**) means each other and speaks of a mutuality or sharing of sentiments between two persons or groups of persons. **Allelon** is a reciprocal pronoun which denotes that the encouragement and edification is to be a mutual beneficial activity. As each submits, encourages, loves, etc, the other members benefit. This is the God's description and prescription for a body of believers.

One another is a common NT phrase (especially in Paul's letters) with most uses relating to the building up of the body of Christ. As such the "**one anothers**" in the NT would make an excellent Sunday School study (or topical sermon series), taking time to meditate on each occurrence, asking whether it is being practiced (in the Spirit-note) in your local church and seeking to excel still more (cp Php 1:9, 10, 11 -notes; 1Th 3:12-note, 1Th 4:1-note, 1Th 4:10-note). Below is a list of the NT uses of **one another** (be sure to check the context for the most accurate interpretation).

Ro 12:10, 16; 13:8; 14:13, 19; 15:5, 7, 14; 16:16; 1Co 6:7; 7:5; 11:33; 12:25; 16:20; 2Co 13:12; Ga 5:13, 15, 26; Ep 4:2, 25, 32; 5:19, 21; Php 2:3; Col 3:9, 13, 16; 1Th 3:12; 4:9, 18; 5:11, 13, 15; 2 Th 1:3; Heb 3:13; 10:24, 25; James 4:11; 5:9, 16; 1Pe 1:22; 4:8, 9, 10; 5:5, 14; 1Jn 1:7; 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12; 2Jn 1:5

See related resource - Short study of "one another" in Scripture

Honor ([5092](#)) (**time** from **tio** = pay honor, respect) refers to the worth, value or merit of some thing or some one. **Time** is a valuing by which the price is fixed or an estimation of the value of a thing. Finally and most importantly in the present context, **time** is our attitude towards another person which is commensurate their value (as God sees them). **We honor** that which is precious to us.

See Related Resources:

- [Honor - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Honor - Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature](#)

To honor someone is to show genuine appreciation and admiration for the other individual. Believers who are being transformed by the renewing of their mind should be becoming more and more sensitive to showing respect, to acknowledging the accomplishments of others, to demonstrating genuine love by not being jealous or envious. These are the marks of a sincere faith which is maturing. Such a one in fact is to take the lead in the carrying out of these actions. If we have truly presented ourselves as a living sacrifices, we should be growing in these graces (and they can only be carried out by His empowering grace).

How am I doing this week with others?

Especially with my mate?...my children? ...my employer or employee?

Paul, why did you have to start "meddling"?

ILLUSTRATIONS OF BIBLE TRUTH - by **Harry A. Ironside** - **HONOR TO WHOM HONOR IS DUE** -

"Be not ye called Rabbi" (Mt 23:8). "In honour preferring one another" (R. 12:10).

On one occasion when in London, I was walking home from a meeting; part of the way I was accompanied by the Marquis of Aberdeen (who had presided) and the Lord Bishop of Norwich (who had been one of the speakers). Being an American, and unaccustomed to titles, I felt embarrassed as to how I should address men

of their position. I expressed my perplexity, and the Marquis replied, "My dear brother, just address us as your brethren in CHRIST. We could have no higher honor than that." This was surely to enter into the spirit of what the LORD JESUS taught.

We are told to give honor to whom honor is due. On the other hand, the servant of CHRIST is to seek the honor that cometh from GOD only. The first passage delivers from rudeness and that pride which apes humility, as it refuses to recognize the gifts which CHRIST has given to His Church. The other is a rebuke to all self-seeking and fleshly ostentation on the part of those to whom the LORD has entrusted any special ministry for the edification of His Church.

Romans 12:11 not **lagging behind** in **diligence**, **fervent** in **spirit**, **serving** the **Lord**;

Greek: [te spoude me okneroi](#), [to pneumati zeontes](#). (PAPMPN) [to kurio douleuontes](#). (PAPMPN)

Amplified: Never lag in zeal *and* in earnest endeavor; be aglow *and* burning with the Spirit, serving the Lord.

Moffatt: "Never let your zeal flag, maintain the spiritual glow, serve the Lord"

NLT: Never be lazy in your work, but serve the Lord enthusiastically.

Phillips: Let us not allow slackness to spoil our work and let us keep the fires of the spirit burning, as we do our work for God.

Wuest: with respect to zeal, not lazy; fervent in the sphere of the Spirit, serving the Lord

Young's Literal: in the diligence not slothful; in the spirit fervent; the Lord serving;

NOT LAGGING (lazy, sluggish, slothful) BEHIND (shrinking from) IN DILIGENCE: te spoude me okneroi:

- Ex 5:17; Pr 6:6, 7, 8, 9; 10:26; 13:4; 18:9; 22:29; 24:30, 31, 32, 33, 34; 26:13, 14, 15, 16; Eccl 9:10; Is 56:10; Mt 25:26; Acts 20:34,35; Ep 4:28; 1Th 4:11,12; 2Th 3:6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; 1Ti 5:13; Hebrews 6:10,11)

Lagging (3636)(**okneros** from **okneo** = to be slow, delay, hesitate) an adjective which means shrinking from or hesitating to (timid to) engage in something worthwhile, possibly implying lack of ambition.

TDNT - Okneros describes a. those who are slow to act through hesitation, anxiety, negligence, or sloth, and b. things that awaken suspicion, dislike, or fear. In the OT it is used for the slothful (Pr 6:6, 9) who let inconveniences stop them (Pr 20:4) or never move on from the will to the deed (Pr 21:25).

Don't be slow, tardy, slothful, lazy in your **diligence** (interesting mix of words isn't it?)

Here are the other 2 uses of **okneros**

Matthew 25:26 "But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, **lazy** slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed.

Philippians 3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no **trouble** to me, and it is a safeguard for you.

Okneros - 12 uses in the Septuagint where it is repeatedly translated "sluggard" a word which describes a habitually lazy person, one who is habitually indolent. - Pr 6:6, 9; 11:16; 18:8; Pr 20:4; 21:25; 22:13; 26:13, 14, 15; Pr 31:27;

Diligence (4710) (**spoude** from **spseudo** = to hasten, make haste. See also cognate verb **spoudazo**) is a noun which means to do something hurriedly, with intense effort and motivation, with haste, in a hurry. (Lk 1:39).

Denney - Spoude denotes the moral earnestness with which one should give himself to his vocation. In this Christians are not to be backward: Acts 9:38. ([Romans 12 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

Spoude speaks primarily of an attitude which is associated with or leads to an action. Do one's best, doing so with intense effort and motivation. In this sense **spoude** describes a quality of genuine commitment such as zeal, eagerness, earnestness, a striving after something. **Spoude** is eagerness to do something, with the implication of readiness to expend energy and effort.

Spoude describes an active concern for others - a devotion, care, goodwill (2Cor 7:11)

Vine - Spoude primarily "haste, zeal, diligence," hence means "earnest care, carefulness," 2Cor. 7:11-12; 8:16 (rv, "earnest care," in each place). **Merimna** conveys the thought of anxiety, **Spoude**, of watchful interest and earnestness.

BDAG

1) swiftness of movement or action, haste, speed. It is used with the preposition **'meta**" = with meaning in haste, in a hurry

2) earnest commitment in discharge of an obligation or experience of a relationship, eagerness, earnestness, diligence, willingness, zeal - Often. in Greco-Roman literature and ins. of extraordinary commitment to civic and religious responsibilities, which were freq. intertwined, and also of concern for personal moral excellence or optimum devotion to the interests of others

Whatever is worth doing in the Christian life is valuable enough to be done with enthusiasm and care (Jn 9:4 Gal 6:10, Hebrews 6:10; 11-note; Eccl 9:10-[Spurgeon note](#); 2Th 3:13) Sloth and indifference not only prevent good, but allow evil to prosper (Pr 18:9 ; Ephesians 5:15; 16 -note).

See Torrey's Topics "[Diligence](#)", "[Idleness & sloth](#)"

Cranfield says, Paul is warning us against "that attitude which seeks to get by with as little work and inconvenience as possible, which shrinks from dust and heat and resents the necessity for any exertion as a burden and imposition"

Spoude - 12x in 12v - diligence(4), earnestness(5), effort(1), hurry(2).

Mark 6:25 Immediately she came in a **hurry** to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

Luke 1:39 Now at this time Mary arose and went in a **hurry** to the hill country, to a city of Judah,

Romans 12:8-note or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with **diligence**; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Romans 12:11 not lagging behind in **diligence**, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

2 Corinthians 7:11 For behold what **earnestness** this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. 12 So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the offender nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your **earnestness** on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God.

2 Corinthians 8:7 But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all **earnestness** and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also. 8 I am not speaking this as a command, but as proving through the **earnestness** of others the sincerity of your love also.

2 Corinthians 8:16 But thanks be to God who puts the same **earnestness** on your behalf in the heart of Titus.

Hebrews 6:11-note And we desire that each one of you show the same **diligence** so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end,

2 Peter 1:5-note Now for this very reason also, applying all **diligence**, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,

Jude 1:3 Beloved, while I was making every **effort** to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

Spoude - 14x in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - Ex 12:11, 33; Deut 16:3; Judg 5:22; 1 Sam 21:8; Ezra 4:23; Ps 78:33; Jer 8:15; 15:8; Lam 4:6; Ezek 7:11; Dan 2:25; 10:7; Zeph 1:18; Here are some representative OT uses of spoude...

Ex 12:11 'Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in **haste**—it is the LORD'S Passover.

Ex 12:33 And the Egyptians urged the people, to send them out of the land in **haste**, for they said, "We shall all be dead."

Diligence - Charles Spurgeon Illustration

FERVENT IN SPIRIT: to pneumati zeontes (**PAPMPN**):

Mt 24:12 Col 4:12, 13 1Pe 1:22 4:8 Rev 2:4 3:15, 16)

Jesus speaking about the last days says why this attitude is so necessary...

Matt 24:12 "because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold.

Epaphras is a good example of a man "fervent in spirit"

Col 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondsman of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

Fervent (2204) (**zeo**) is a verb that literally means to be hot (boil, of liquids; or glow, of solids - Lxx uses literally in Ezek 24:5), bubble, boil. It was used to describe water boiling or of metal glowing with heat. To seethe.

In NT, **zeo** is only used figuratively meaning to be fervent, to burn with desire or exhibit passion. In a negative sense it can connote rage. To express spiritual fervor, eagerness and enthusiasm. **BDAG** says **zeo** is speaks figuratively "of emotions, anger, love, eagerness to do good or evil, to be stirred up emotionally, be enthusiastic/excited/on fire."

Zeo pictures a person so enthusiastic about his or her tasks that they can hardly contain their excitement. Their desire to accomplish God's work (works prepared before the foundation of the world as described in Eph 2:10-note) with excellence and enthusiasm is constantly boiling inside, creating a Spirit filled (controlled and empowered) diligence regarding their divine assignment.

Liddell-Scott (summarized) - (1) to boil, seethe, of water, Homer.; the kettle boils, II. (2). metaphorically to boil or bubble up, of the sea, Herodotus.; of passion, like Lat. *fervere*, Aeschylus., Sophocles. (3). c. gen. to boil up or over with a thing, Plat.. II. Causal, to make to boil

Vincent - Fervent, which is formed from the participle of the Latin *ferveo*, to boil or ferment, is an exact translation of this word, which means to seethe or bubble, and is therefore used figuratively of mental states and emotions.

Septuagint (LEH) - to boil, to seethe, to be fiery hot Ezek 24:5; to boil, to seethe (metaphorically of rage) 4Macc 18,20

Zeo - used only 2x in NT and 3x in Lxx - 4Macc 18:20 (here **zeo** describes "negative" fervor = "in his burning rage" tortured sons and daughters); Job 32:19; Ezek 24:5 (literal use = "bones are boiled"). Here is the other NT use...

Acts 18:25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being **fervent** in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John

Comment: Apollos was well informed about the story of Jesus, and he yearned to make Him known to his fellow Jews. Luke used **zeo** to describe his fervor to tell others about the great rescue mission of the Deliverer Jesus. Lord, may Apollos' tribe increase in our day of too often "business as usual" church and Christianity! Amen. You may respond - "*But that's not my personality,*" you object. Paul isn't speaking of personality; he is speaking of spirit. The fervent life of Christ's servant is lived more like Apollos and less like Casper Milquetoast." (Woodrow Kroll).

Zeal (Webster's English definitions) - eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something : fervor (fervor implies a warm and steady emotion); an intense emotion compelling action; ZEAL implies energetic and unflagging pursuit of an aim or devotion to a cause preaches with the zeal of the converted>; Passionate ardor in the pursuit of any thing. Excessive zeal may rise to enthusiasm. In general, zeal is an eagerness of desire to accomplish or obtain some object, and it may be manifested either in favor of any person or thing, or in opposition to it, and in a good or bad cause.

Fervent (Webster's English definitions) - from *ferveo*, to be hot, to boil, to glow; Hot; boiling; as a fervent summer; fervent blood. Spenser. Wotton. 2. Hot in temper; vehement. They are fervent to dispute. Hooker. 3. Ardent; very warm; earnest; excited; animated; glowing; as fervent zeal; fervent piety. Figuratively exhibiting or marked by great intensity of feeling. FERVENT stresses sincerity and steadiness of emotional warmth or zeal (fervent good wishes).

The idea of **fervent** is with respect to the spirit, "boiling" (in a figurative sense of course). Paul is saying literally "to boil in spirit." This phrase suggests having plenty of heat to produce adequate, productive energy, but not so much heat that one goes out of control

(Acts 18:25; 1Cor 9:26; Gal 6:9).

Be "hot" for Jesus...just don't burn everyone up everyone around you. (Torrey's Topic "[Zeal](#)"). Christ is our example (Ps 69:9; Jn 2:17). The idea is that believers are to continuously (present tense = this is to be our habitual practice, our lifestyle before a critical, watching world)

Zeal should be exhibited in spirit Romans 12:11, in well-doing Gal 4:18; Titus 2:14-note, in desiring the salvation of others Acts 26:29; Romans 10:1(note), in contending for the faith Jude 1:3, in missionary labors Romans 15:19(note); Romans 15:23 (note), for the glory of God Nu 25:11,13, for the welfare of saints Colossians 4:13 (note), against idolatry 2Ki 23:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 (Modified from Torrey's Topic "[Zeal](#)")

In the context of Christian service "fervent" means "to be full of energy, to be on fire with zeal and enthusiasm." It is a warning against settling into comfortable, shallow ruts in our spiritual lives. The idea is that believers are to continuously (present tense = this is to be our habitual practice, our lifestyle before a critically watching world) be "hot" for the things of the Lord.

The idea of the Greek word **zeo** is not of being overheated to the point of boiling over and out of control but, like a steam engine, of having sufficient heat to produce the energy necessary to get the work done. That principle is reflected in the life of Henry Martyn, the tireless missionary to India, whose heart's desire was to "**burn out for God.**" which is exactly what he did in 6 years! Read his short albeit convicting testimony of one who was truly "fervent in spirit"...

Henry Martyn ([click](#) for longer biography) was born in 1781, studied at Cambridge, and became Senior Wrangler. (That is, he won the Cambridge University annual mathematics problem-solving competition, and was accordingly recognized as the University's best undergraduate mathematician. "Wrangling" is a British University expression for solving mathematical problems.) He had, moreover, a considerable facility in languages. Under the encouragement of [Charles Simeon](#), he abandoned his intention of going into law and instead went to India as a chaplain in 1806. In the **six remaining years of his life**, he translated the New Testament into Hindi and Persian, revised an Arabic translation of the New Testament, and translated the Psalter into Persian and the Prayer Book into Hindi. In 1811 he left India for Persia, hoping to do further translations and to improve his existing ones, there and in Arabia. But travel in those days was not a healthy occupation, and he fell ill and eventually died at Tokat on October 16, 1812. (The American Calendar commemorates him on 19 October.) He was buried by the Armenian church there, with the honors ordinarily reserved for one of their own bishops. His diary has been called "one of the most precious treasures of Anglican devotion."

'Tis not for man to trifle; life is brief
And sin is here.
Our age is but the falling of a leaf,
A dropping tear.
We have not time to sport away the hours;
All must be earnest in a world like ours.
—Horatius Bonar

SERVING THE LORD: to kurio douleuontes (PAMPN):

- Ep 6:5, 6, 7, 8 Col 3:23, 24 1Co 7:22 Titus 2:9, 10 Heb 12:28

FOCUSED

FERVENCY

Eph 6:5 Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, **as to Christ** (THE LORD); 6:6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as **slaves of Christ** (THE LORD), doing the will of God from the heart. 7 With good will render service, as **to the Lord**, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive **backfrom the Lord**, whether slave or free.

Col 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, **as for the Lord** rather than for men; 24 knowing that **from the Lord** you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

Serving ([1398](#)) (**douleuo** from **doulos** = slave or one who is in bondage or bound to another, in the state of being completely controlled by someone or something) means to be in bondage or in the position of servant and to act accordingly, dutifully obeying the master's commands.

One who lives as a **doulos** to His Lord, is a bondservant who is surrendered wholly to His Master's will and devoted to Him to the disregard of his own interest. Paul exhibited this mindset and was not his own but understood he had been bought with the price of the blood of the One Whom He loving served. He recognized that he was now the property of the Lord Jesus Christ and were to be exclusively His slave. No man can serve two masters (Mt 6:24-note). We were all once slaves of **Sin** by our birth into Adam's likeness, but now we are privileged to be slaves of Christ by our new birth. As His slaves we are allow our will to be "swallowed up" in His perfect will.

We are to continuously serve our Master (**present tense** = our habitual practice, our lifestyle). Our Lord gave us His example of not coming to be served but to serve and give His life for many (Mk 10:45, follow His lead = 1Cor 11:1, 1Jn 2:6, 1Pe 2:21).

This exhortation to serve the Lord as a slave refers not so much to our external obedience as to our inner spiritual attitude of submission (see notes on filled with the Spirit -Ephesians 5:18ff-note) to the Lord as our "Kurios", our absolute Owner, Master, Possessor, the One Who has all rights over us and can use us as He will. As Paul stated earlier those who are now dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus are to be "obedient from the heart" (see Ro 6:16,17-note; Ro 6:18- note)

Lord (2962) (**kurios**) means lord, master, owner or the one who has absolute ownership power. Jesus is referred to some ten times as Savior and some seven hundred times as **Lord**. Supreme in Authority. **Kurios** translates Jehovah (LORD in OT) in Septuagint (LXX) 7000 times.

Martin Luther puts "**Lord**" in an interesting perspective noting that "The life of Christianity consists of possessive pronouns. It is one thing to say, "Christ is a Saviour"; it is quite another thing to say, "He is **my** Saviour and **my** Lord." The devil can say the first; the true Christian alone can say the second.

Romans 12:12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer(NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [te elpidi chairontes](#). (PAPMPN) [te thlipsei hupomenontes](#). (PAPMPN) [te proseuche proskarterountes](#). (PAPMPN)

Amplified: Rejoice *and* exult in hope; be steadfast and patient in suffering *and* tribulation; be constant in prayer. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: Be glad for all God is planning for you. Be patient in trouble, and always be prayerful. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Base your happiness on your hope in Christ. When trials come endure them patiently, steadfastly maintain the habit of prayer. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: rejoicing in the sphere of hope; patient in tribulation; with respect to prayer, persevering in it continually (Eermans)

Young's Literal: in the hope rejoicing; in the tribulation enduring; in the prayer persevering;

REJOICING IN HOPE: te elpidi chairontes (PAPMPN):

- Ro 5:2,3; 15:13; Psalms 16:9, 10,11; 71:20, 21, 22, 23; 73:24, 25, 26; Proverbs 10:28; 14:32; Lamentations 3:24, 25, 26; Habakkuk 3:17,18; Matthew 5:12; Luke 10:20; 1 Corinthians 13:13; Philippians 3:1; 4:4; Colossians 1:27; 1Thessalonians 5:8,16; 2Thessalonians 2:16,17; Titus 2:13; 3:7; Hebrews 3:6; 6:17-19; 1 Peter 1:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; 4:13; 1John 3:1, 2, 3)

See study of [The Dynamic Relationship of Biblical Hope and Joy](#)

Paul has linked hope, tribulation, and perseverance in Romans 5:3-5, and, he links hope, perseverance, and prayer in 8:24-26.

Notice the Phillips paraphrase - "Base your happiness on your hope in Christ. When trials come endure them patiently, steadfastly maintain the habit of prayer."

Martyn Lloyd-Jones - **Tribulation, hope** and **prayer** always go together in the New Testament and it is a very good way of testing ourselves to ask whether they always go together in our experience. They should.

Rejoicing (5463) (**chairo** - see related word - **chara**) means to be "cheer" full, calmly happy or well-off. **Chairo** implies and imparts joy. **Chairo** is used in a whole range of situations in which the emotion of joy is evoked. To be in a state of happiness and inner sense of well being (often independent of what is happening when the Source is the Spirit!). **Chairo** means to enjoy a state of

gladness, to be delighted.

Rejoicing is **present tense** which pictures us as living life with a habitual attitude of inner joy and outer rejoicing, something not possible naturally but only possible supernaturally as we are enabled by the Spirit (cp one aspect of the Spirit's fruit - Gal 5:22-note, enabled by the Spirit even in tribulations - 1Th 1:6-note, a product of prayer - Ro 15:13-note).

William Newell - Our **hopes** are bound up with our **Lord's Coming**, in prospect of which we should constantly be filled with exultation. (Ed: **Are you? Is this your day to day experience? It can be in Christ! It is our Father's desire for His children to be continually filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit.**) ([Romans 12 Commentary](#))

Wuest paraphrases it "**rejoicing in the sphere of hope.**" In the "atmosphere" of hope is the idea. Like a fish needs water to thrive, **joy** needs **hope** to be alive. In other words when a believer's **hope** is fresh and full and focused on Jesus Who Himself is our **Hope** (1Ti 1:1), this believer's **hope** will be like a rain falling on a barren heart, bringing forth the fragrant flower of **joy**. Indeed, **hope** fixed on the good that God will do to us in the **future** is a sure foundation for Christian joy in the **present**. This present **joy** is independent of present circumstances (which may be cheery or dreary), for it is a supernatural **joy**, a joy that can still survive in the dark night of a believer's soul. Such glorious **joy** is based not on our feelings, but on the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-note). Such joy can also be the fruit of prayer, so if your hope is low, ask a brother or sister to intercede for you with Paul's prayer...

Now may the **God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, **that you may abound in hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Ro 15:13-note)

Meditate on the Biblical truth about **Hope (See The Blessed Hope)**, remembering that our sure and steadfast hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. Trust the Spirit to take that truth and renew your mind, and bring forth supernatural fruit of joy manifest in the act of **rejoicing**.

Cranfield writes that...

this joy has its source not in this present age to which he is not to be conformed, nor in his present circumstances, but in that which is still future, which he grasps by hope. But this hope is not the sort of hope which disappoints (cf. Ro 5:5); since that which is hoped for is altogether sure and certain, this hope means present joy. For 'although believers are now pilgrims on earth, yet by their confidence they surmount the heavens, so that they cherish their future inheritance in their bosoms with tranquility'. (A critical and exegetical commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. London; New York: T&T Clark International)

Sanday - The Christian hope is the cause of that Christian joy and cheerfulness of disposition which is the grace of Christian love: cf. 1Cor 13:7 'Love...hopes all things.' (Sanday, W., & Headlam, A. C.. A critical and exegetical commentary on the Epistle of the Romans)

Johann Bengel - True joy is not only an emotion of the mind and a benefit [privilege], but also a Christian duty, Ro 12:15. It is the highest complaisance in God. He wishes us to rejoice and to spend our spiritual life joyously.

*A sorrow shared is
But half a trouble.
A joy that's shared is
A joy made double.*

Hope (1680) (**elpis**) (See also elpis -2 and the Believer's Blessed Hope) is a desire of some good with the expectation of obtaining it. It is the opposite of despair. Paul reminds Timothy that ultimately "Christ Jesus, who is our hope." ([1 Timothy 1:1](#))

**Hope of future salvation
stimulates present joy.**

Rob Morgan - When we can't **rejoice** in circumstances, we can **rejoice** in the anticipation of what God's going to do with them, in them, through them, despite them, and because of them. On cloudy days the sun still shines as brightly as ever in the center of the solar system; and when we **rejoice in hope**, we're saying, "Despite current conditions, the Son is shining for me as brightly as ever with healing in His rays."

Spurgeon, preached a sermon on Ro 12:12 ([Romans 12:12 Constant, Instant, Expectant](#)) in which he said the first two phrases—**rejoice in hope and be patient in affliction**—are powerful antidotes against poison, but they must be taken with prayer. "Joy and patience are curative essences," he said, "but they must be dropped into a glass full of supplication, and then they will be wonderfully efficient."

As noted with **joy** above, **hope** is also a product of **prayer**...

Now may the God of hope fill you with **all joy** and peace in believing (the qualifier so to speak), that you may abound **in hope** (How?) by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Ro 15:13-note)

Observe the pattern in this prayerful passage...

BIBLICAL HOPE

Source: God of Hope

Power: Holy Spirit

Prayer: For filling

Result: Overflowing hope

John Trapp - **Hope** makes absent joys present... and beguiles calamity as good company doth the time....This life would be little better than hell, saith Bernard, were it not for the hopes of heaven....(Hope) holds head above water, this keeps the heart aloft all floods of afflictions, as the cork doth the line, as bladders do the body in swimming.... He who sees visions of glory, and has sure hopes of heaven, will not be overcome by a shower of stones; he that is to take possession of a kingdom will not lose hope in a foul day. Hope *unfailable* is grounded upon faith *unfeigned*, which is seldom without a joy *unspeakable* and full of glory (1Pe 1:8KJV-note, cp James 1:2-3-note)

John Stott says that "*Christ ones*", followers of the Messiah, those who are true believers "should be the most positive people in the world. We cannot mooch round the place with a dropping, hang-dog expression. We cannot drag our way through life, moaning and groaning. We cannot always be looking on the dark side of everything, as negative prophets of doom. No, "we exult in God." (see Romans 5:1-note) Then every part of our life becomes suffused with glory. Christian worship becomes a joyful celebration of God and Christian living a joyful service of God. So come, let us exult in God together! (John W. Alexander, ed., *Believing and Obeying Jesus Christ* - Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980)

Remember that this **hope** is not "*I hope so*" but is "*a hope sure!*" In other words, for a saint Biblically based, Spirit wrought **hope** is an absolute certainty of future good, that God will do good to us in the future and thus this hope comes "pre-packaged" not only with a desire of divine good but with the sure expectation of obtaining it. That's a state of mind which will keep you stable when the circumstances of your life scream otherwise! And so Paul exhorts us to be continuously rejoicing, for our past sins are paid in full and our future gain is fully certain! Christ has redeemed us and purchased our salvation on the cross in the past (see Ro 5:1, 2-note), His Spirit is presently sanctifying us (progressively setting us apart more and more from the world and unto our Lord, making us holy - see 2Cor 3:18-note) (Gal 5:16-25)-**see notes**;) and one day soon He will lead us to future eternal glory (see Colossians 1:26, 27-note; 1Jn 3:2-note, 1Jn 3:3-note).

Calvin says Paul is warning us not to become content with earthly joys but to

raise our minds to heaven, that we may enjoy full and solid joy.

The reality of our certain hope should bring continual joy independent of our current circumstances. (Torrey's Topic **Hope**).

Hope is the Christian's lifeline (along with communion in prayer) to his glorious future. As stated above the opposite of hope is despair as the story of an American prisoner tragically illustrates.

A certain American prisoner held in North Viet Nam, led to believe that if he cooperated with his captors he would be set free, had done quite well despite two years in captivity. With this vision before him, he even became the leader of a prison thought-reform group. However, the day his vision dissolved and he realized he was being deceived, he curled up on his bunk, refused nourishment, and was dead in a couple of weeks. When faith in his vision was removed, he could no longer cope. (Hughes, R. K.. *Acts : The Church Afire*. Page 341. Crossway Books)

Robert Haldane comments that "Here, in the midst of exhortations to attend to various duties, they are commanded to rejoice in hope (Ed note: It is not literally an imperative or command). Hope is founded on faith, and faith on the Divine testimony Hope, then, respects what God has declared in His word. We are here exhorted to exercise hope with respect to future glory, and to rejoice in the contemplation of the objects of hope. What can be better calculated to promote joy than the hope of obtaining blessings so glorious in a future world? Were this hope kept in lively exercise, it would raise believers above the fear of man and a concern for the honours of this world. It would also enable them to despise the shame of the cross. The objects, then, of the believer's hope are the spiritual and celestial blessings which are yet future, to which his eyes should constantly be directed, and which are calculated to fill him with the greatest joy. It is not the prospect of terrestrial possessions in which he is to rejoice, but of a house eternal in the heavens. 'In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' It is that glorious communion with Jesus Christ of which the Apostle speaks, when he says, 'Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.' It is

that state in which believers shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is. As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness.' It is the hope of righteousness for which, through the Spirit, believers wait, Gal. 5:5. This hope is founded on the unchangeable promise of God—on His promise accompanied by His oath—on the blood of Christ with which He has sealed His promise—on Him who was not only dead, but is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for His people. This hope, then, is both sure and steadfast, and entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner, even Jesus, is for us entered.

Alexander Maclaren

Now, we all know—from the boy that is expecting to go home for his holidays in a week, up to the old man to whose eye the time-veil is wearing thin—that hope, if it is certain, is a source of gladness. How lightly one's bosom's lord sits upon its throne, when a great hope comes to animate us! how everybody is pleasant, and all things are easy, and the world looks different! Hope, if it is certain, will gladden, and if our Christianity grasps, as it ought to do, the only hope that is absolutely certain, and as sure as if it were in the past and had been experienced, then our hearts, too, will sing for joy. True joy is not a matter of temperament, so much as a matter of faith. It is not a matter of circumstances. All the surface drainage may be dry, but there is a well in the courtyard deep and cool and full and exhaustless, and a Christian who rightly understands and cherishes the Christian hope is lifted above temperament, and is not dependent upon conditions for his joys.

The Apostle, in an earlier part of this same letter, defines for us what that hope is, which thus is the secret of perpetual gladness, when he speaks about 'rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.' Yes, it is that great, supreme, calm, far off, absolutely certain prospect of being gathered into the divine glory, and walking there, like the three in the fiery furnace, unconsumed and at ease; it is that hope that will triumph over temperament, and over all occasions for melancholy, and will breathe into our life a perpetual gladness. **Brethren, is it not strange and sad that with such a treasure by our sides we should consent to live such poor lives as we do?**

But remember, although I cannot say to myself, 'Now I will be glad,' and cannot attain to joy by a movement of the will or direct effort, although it is of no use to say to a man—which is all that the world can ever say to him—'Cheer up and be glad,' whilst you do not alter the facts that make him sad, there is a way by which we can bring about feelings of gladness or of gloom. It is just this—**we can choose what we will look at.**

If you prefer to occupy your mind with the troubles, losses, disappointments, hard work, blighted hopes of this poor sin-ridden world, of course sadness will come over you often, and a general grey tone will be the usual tone of your lives, as it is of the lives of many of us, broken only by occasional bursts of foolish mirth and empty laughter.

FEELINGS WILL FOLLOW OUR THOUGHTS

But if you choose to turn away from all these, and instead of the dim, dismal, hard present, to sun yourselves in the light of the yet unrisen sun, which you can do, then, having rightly chosen the subjects to **think** about, the **feeling** will come as a matter of course.

You cannot make yourselves glad by, as it were, laying hold of yourselves and lifting yourselves into gladness, but **you can rule the direction of your thoughts**, and so can bring around you summer in the midst of winter, by steadily contemplating the facts—and they are present facts, though we talk about them collectively as 'the future'—the facts on which all Christian gladness ought to be based. We can carry our own atmosphere with us; like the people in Italy, who in frosty weather will be seen sitting in the market-place by their stalls with a dish of embers, which they grasp in their hands, and so make themselves comfortably warm on the bitterest day. You can bring a reasonable degree of warmth into the coldest weather, if you will lay hold of the vessel in which the fire is, and keep it in your hand and close to your heart. **Choose what you think about, and feelings will follow thoughts....**

Brethren, I believe that one great source of the weakness of average Christianity amongst us to-day is the dimness into which so many of us have let the hope of the glory of God pass in our hearts. So I beg you to lay to heart this first commandment, and to rejoice in hope. ([Romans 12:12 Sermon](#))

Steven Cole

Romans 12:12a, "rejoicing in hope." Does that describe you, especially when you're going through a difficult trial? According to the U. S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, about nine percent of those in the

United States report that they suffer from current depression (within two weeks of the survey), with four percent suffering from major depression (www.cdc.gov/Features/dsDepression). And believers are not exempt. Some godly saints, such as Martin Luther, Charles Spurgeon, and the hymn writer, William Cowper, have suffered from severe depression. Probably some of you are depressed right now. But since joy and hope are the opposite of depression, we all should try to understand what the Bible teaches about how we can have such joy and hope, especially in the face of difficult trials.

Before we look at what the Bible says, let me say that the causes of depression can be very complex. It can stem from various diseases, from physical conditions (such as post-partum depression in women), from grief over loss, or from our genetic brain chemistry. Psychiatrists do not understand exactly how brain chemistry or anti-depressant drugs work. If you suffer from inexplicable depression, the first thing you should do is get a medical checkup, to see if a doctor can determine the cause.

Regarding anti-depressant drugs, my view is that if you need them to get out of the pit so that you're able to function somewhat normally again, then take the drug as you would any other medication if you were sick. But once you're stable, unless you absolutely need the drug to remain depression-free, I would advise weaning yourself off the drugs under a physician's supervision.

But having said that, I have a caution: If your depression stems from some known sin, taking an anti-depressant so that you feel better and moving on with life without dealing with your sin is spiritually and emotionally damaging. God designed things so that our sin has negative emotional effects to get our attention. The proper response to sin is not to take a pill, but to repent and seek to please Him.

Depression is often an emotional indicator that you are living to please yourself, not to please God. Those who are severely depressed to the point of being suicidal are not thinking about pleasing God or about the effect their action would have on others. Rather, they are focused on how to get out of their pain, with no regard for pleasing God or serving others. So when you're battling depression, seek to please God beginning on the thought level.

The first man born in sin disobeyed God and became jealous of his brother, who obeyed God. When Cain sinned, he became depressed and angry (those emotions often go together). God didn't prescribe an anti-depressant. Rather, He confronted Cain with his sin and told him to counter it with godly behavior (Gen. 4:6-7): "Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.'" God's prescription for Cain's depression and anger was obedience.

The Bible often (as in our text) says that believers are to be full of joy and hope, even in the midst of severe trials. Joy is not a minor theme in the Bible. The Psalms are full of commands to praise the Lord and rejoice in Him. Joy is promised to all that walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Paul wrote Philippians when he was in prison and other believers were attacking him. That short book is brimming with joy in the Lord. He writes (Php 3:1), "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you." In case we missed it, he repeats (Php 4:4), "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"

To help you understand this important matter, let me mention three things that biblical joy is not and then show how to get it. By the way, no one has written more capably on this than John Piper. All of his books deal with it, but I especially recommend **When I Don't Desire God: How to Fight for Joy** [Crossway]. As he often says, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." Our joy is all about glorifying our merciful God and Savior.

First, biblical joy is not a matter of personality or temperament. Some by nature are cheery and optimistic. Others are naturally more gloomy and pessimistic. But biblical joy comes from walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, not by natural temperament. Those who are naturally more melancholic will have to fight harder to attain biblical joy. But those who are naturally cheery should not assume that they have biblical joy, unless they know that their joy comes from dependence on God and His promises.

Second, biblical joy is not a matter of happy circumstances. Paul could rejoice in prison and in the face of many trials because his joy was in the Lord, not in circumstances. In the Psalms, the psalmist is often in horrible circumstances, sometimes despairing of life itself, but when he puts his trust in the Lord, he ends up praising and thanking Him and literally singing for joy.

Third, biblical joy is not a phony, superficial happiness that smiles on the outside when the heart is

hurting on the inside. Just three verses after our text, Paul tells us to “weep with those who weep.” He doesn’t say, “Tell those who weep to buck up and smile!” There is a time for grieving and sorrow. Paul described himself (2 Cor. 6:10) “as sorrowful yet always rejoicing.” The shortest verse in the Greek New Testament is 1 Thessalonians 5:16, “Rejoice always.” The shortest verse in the English New Testament is John 11:35, “Jesus wept.” There is no contradiction. Biblical joy is a solid undercurrent that is not affected by the surface storms of life.

Then how do we get this joy? Paul says here that it comes from hope. And hope comes from focusing your mind on the sure promises of God for the future. The Bible tells us that we can set our minds on certain things that are true of us in Christ (Col. 3:1-4-note):

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Either Jesus and Paul were liars and you can chuck the entire Christian faith, or they spoke the truth. Jesus promised to come back and complete our redemption, so that we will share His glory. Focus on that truth, even if you don’t feel like it! Feelings eventually follow your thoughts. Set your mind on the hope of eternal glory and joy in the Lord will follow. ([Romans 12:12 Joyful, Prayerful Perseverance](#))

PERSEVERING IN TRIBULATION (crushing, pressing circumstances): *te thlipsei hupomenontes* (PAPMPN)

- Ro 2:9, 5:3, 8:35, Jn 16:33 Rev 1:9, 2:9,10,22, 7:14, 1Th 3:3 Heb 10:33) (Ro 2:7; 5:3,4; 8:25; 15:4; Psalms 37:7; 40:1; Luke 8:15; 21:19; Colossians 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 3:5; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 3:10; Hebrews 6:12,15; 10:36; 12:1; James 1:3,4; 5:7,10,11; 1 Peter 2:19,20; 2 Peter 1:6; Revelation 13:10)

Paul repeatedly links **hope** with **endurance** - Ro 5:2-4, Ro 8:24-25, 1Cor 13:7, 1Thes 1:3.

Rob Morgan - Rejoicing in hope enables us to be patient in affliction. Patience is hope in different clothing. It’s the ability to wait calmly as the Lord works everything in conformity with the purpose of His will.

William Newell - Patience in trial is the only path to our perfecting; wherefore James says we should count “manifold trials to be all joy”; and, “let patience have its perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.” ([Romans 12 Commentary](#))

Note also that in the original Greek, the order is “in **hope** rejoicing, **tribulation** persevering, **prayer** devoted.”

Persevering when you are experiencing crushing circumstances is not a call for you to just “man up” as they say and to “grit your teeth” and “bear it.” That is the “world’s way” of dealing with difficult situations. God has given His children a new and better way to navigate the roaring waters of adversity and in context it is by having one’s mind and heart strengthened by hope in which they are rejoicing. In short, since hope is fixed on our glorious future, it is independent of present crushing circumstances. Don’t misunderstand - Those circumstances are still painful and difficult. It is just that now God has given us a way of escape that we might be able to bear up under the load of these circumstances. So clearly **rejoicing in hope** is linked with **persevering in tribulation**. The former enables us do the latter. Ultimately continual **rejoicing** and steadfast **persevering** call for the believer to “jettison” self reliance and self-effort and instead to yield, surrender, submit and depend on their indwelling, ever with them, ever ready and able Helper, the Holy Spirit Who provides the supernatural enabling power to walk through the difficult circumstances. The result is that we are molded more into the image of God’s Son and God is greatly glorified as both lost and saved see our supernaturally empowered attitudes and actions! Praise the Lord!

Present circumstances cannot remove supernaturally enabled rejoicing because present circumstances cannot, in the long run, impact our future hope of the glory of God, which includes the redemption of our bodies (Ro 5:2-note, Ro 8:19-note, Ro 8:23-note), for this hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness. And on this Solid Rock we can stand!

Spurgeon - The old physicians tell us of two antidotes against poison, the hot and the cold, and they expand upon the special excellence of each of these; in like manner the Apostle Paul gives us first the warm antidote, “rejoicing in hope,” and then he gives us the cool antidote, “patient in tribulation.” Either of these, or both together, will work wonderfully for the sustaining of the spirit; but it is to be observed that neither of these remedies can be taken into the soul unless it is mixed with a draught of prayer. Joy and patience are curative essences, but they must be dropped into a glass full of supplication, and then they will be wonderfully efficient.

MacArthur explains that “because we have perfect assurance concerning the ultimate outcome of our lives **Ed**: This is what Biblical

hope does - it assures us that the ultimate outcome of our temporal life, even one filled with temporal tribulation, will give way to a life of eternal glory!), we are able to persist against any obstacle and endure any suffering. That is why Paul could declare with perfect confidence that "we exult in hope of the glory of God. 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; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Rom. 5:2-5). ([MacArthur, J: Romans 9-16. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

Persevering (5278) (**hupomeno** from **hupo** = under + **meno** = abide - see study on related word **hupomone**) literally means to abide or remain under but not simply with resignation, but with a vibrant hope (see note on Romans 5:3). It describes a resisting by holding one's ground which is not a passive "putting up with" things, but an active, steadfast endurance even in the face of serious trouble. (See also Torrey's Topics - "[Afflicted Saints](#)", "[Steadfastness](#)")

Note that **hupomeno** is in the **present tense**, which calls for this to be our continual, habitual practice! Now, just try to accomplish this in the strength of your flesh! You cannot. Only the Spirit in us can accomplish this objective! (cf Jn 6:63)

The Puritans of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries spoke a great deal about perseverance. **Thomas Watson** wrote: "God's decree is the very pillar and basis on which the saints' **perseverance** depends. That decree ties the knot of adoption so fast that neither sin, death, nor hell can break it asunder.

Watson's companion in conflict was William Secker who put it profoundly "Though Christians be not kept altogether from falling, yet they are kept from falling altogether.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said: By perseverance the snail reached the ark.

Samuel Johnson claimed "Great works are performed not by strength but by perseverance."

And so we think of William Wilberforce, a 19th-century parliamentarian, was moved by the Lord to oppose the slave trade. In 1807 he brought about the banning of the slave trade in England. But not until 1833 was slavery as an institution abolished, and the news reached Wilberforce on his deathbed.

As someone has said "Triumph is **umph** added to **try**."

Wayne Detzler writes that "True Christian **perseverance** is not tied to tenacity. It is rather the work of God the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. The starch in a saint's spine is shown by Scripture to be nothing less than the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Only in this way can one explain the work of [Gladys Aylward](#), a London parlor maid. Societies scorned her missionary application. She seemed too dull to master Chinese and fulfill her vision of serving in China. Realizing this, she scoured up her own fare to China and sailed in 1930. After slogging her way across Siberia she reached her field in remote Yangcheng. When the Japanese invaded in 1940 she led 100 children on an epic journey that caught the imagination of Hollywood ([The Inn of the Sixth Happiness - a great film for the family!](#)) ([Watch an 8' 43" snippet as an appetizer](#)). In 1947 failing health forced her back to England where she crusaded for missions until her death in 1970. That was tenacity, not just British grit. It is God's **persevering grace**." ([Detzler, Wayne E: New Testament Words in Today's Language. Victor. 1986](#))

Nature also illustrates **perseverance**, for as someone has well said "Today's mighty oak is just yesterday's little nut that held its ground"

Tribulation (2347) (**thlipsis** from **thlibo** = to crush, press, compress, squeeze in turn derived from **thláo** not found in NT but see related word **sunthlao**) (Click word study on thlipsis) originally expressed sheer, physical pressure on a man. Medically thlipsis was used of the pulse (pressure). It is a pressing together as of grapes. It conveys the idea of being squeezed or placed under pressure or crushed beneath a weight. When, according to the ancient law of England, those who willfully refused to plead guilty, had heavy weights placed on their breasts, and were pressed and crushed to death, this was literally **thlipsis**. The iron cage was **stenochoria** (see below). **Thlipsis** thus refers not to mild discomfort but to great difficulty.

Thlipsis-45x in the NT - Matt. 13:21; 24:9, 21, 29; Mk. 4:17; 13:19, 24; Jn. 16:21, 33; Acts 7:10, 11; 11:19; 14:22; 20:23; Rom. 2:9; 5:3; 8:35; 12:12; 1 Co. 7:28; 2 Co. 1:4, 8; 2:4; 4:17; 6:4; 7:4; 8:2, 13; Eph. 3:13; Phil. 1:16; 4:14; Col. 1:24; 1Th 1:6; 3:3, 7; 2Th 1:4, 6; Heb. 10:33; Jas. 1:27; Rev. 1:9; 2:9f, 22; 7:14

Thlipsis presents a great picture! Don't we all occasionally feel like the weight of the world is weighing us down?

Jesus warned His disciples that this world would bring us its full share of difficulties ([Jn 16:33 Spurgeon's devotional](#))

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

Paul knows from experience that tribulations are a certainty for believers and so he exhorts us to persevere. For example Luke, describing Paul's missionary travels to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, writes that Paul (and Barnabas) were...

strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many **tribulations** we must (speaks of a necessity, an obligation) enter the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22)

Paul exhorts us as new creatures in Christ who are possessors of a new "power supply" to continue steadfast in the time of trouble. The realization that life is to some extent an obstacle course keeps a person from being surprised when things do not go as planned. Afflictions are to be borne patiently in His power.

This exhortation to **persevere** follows naturally from the former -- Our hope-inspired joy should produce a courage which is able to hold up under the afflictions of this present age, which is passing away. As Paul has already instructed us, from another perspective, afflictions are even to be exulted in because as they are endured, even more hope is produced (Ro 5:3-5-note). Don't misunderstand - affliction is still affliction and the pain and suffering experienced are very real, but a believer can know they are momentary and light in the context of eternity and that they are producing for us an incomparable eternal weight of glory (2Cor 4:17-note).

J Ligon Duncan - The hope of future glory in salvation is able to animate our rejoicing even in the midst in the most real and severe and overwhelming trials in this life. If our ultimate hope was derived even from the desire that bad situations we are in now will eventually become good, we could not rejoice in all circumstance. Not all the bad circumstances that we are in now will be good in the long run in our lives. There will be some things that will never be rectified in this live. That hope of glory, however, enables us to rejoice in every circumstance Paul says, rejoicing in hope. ...When the Spirit enables us to perseverance (**Ed**: Read that statement again - this perseverance in crushing circumstances is not possible naturally but supernaturally!), the spirit enables us to not simply bear up under stress, to survive the things that we are going through, but the Spirit enables us to continue to be useful in kingdom service despite that stress and despite that trial. Paul is calling on us to manifest this in our Christian life and experience. Persevering in tribulation. ([Romans 12](#))

Jamieson - Here it is more lively to retain the order and the verbs of the original: "In hope, rejoicing; in tribulation, enduring; in prayer, persevering." Each of these exercises helps the other. If our "hope" of glory is so assured that it is a rejoicing hope, we shall find the spirit of "endurance in tribulation" natural and easy; but since it is "prayer" which strengthens the faith that begets hope and lifts it up into an assured and joyful expectancy, and since our patience in tribulation is fed by this, it will be seen that all depends on our "perseverance in prayer."

Adam Clarke - Remembering that what you suffer as Christians you suffer for Christ's sake; and it is to his honor, and the honor of your Christian profession, that you suffer it with an even mind.

Barnes - Christians may be enabled to do this by the sustaining influence of their hope of future glory; of being admitted to that world where there shall be no more death, and where all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes, Revelation 21:4; Revelation 7:17; compare James 1:4. See the influence of hope in sustaining us in affliction more fully considered in the notes at Romans 8:18-28. ([Barnes' Notes on the Whole Bible](#))

John Trapp - Bearing up under pressures, as among many other martyrs Nicholas Burton, who by the way to the stake, and in the flame, was so patient and cheerful, that the tormentors said, the devil had his soul before he came to the fire, and therefore his senses of feeling were past. (Acts and Mon.)

John Gill - Nothing tends more to animate the people of God to a cheerful serving of him (Ro 12:11), or to make them more patient under afflictions, **than a hope of being for ever with the Lord**: Whilst the saints are in this world they must expect tribulation (Jn 16:33); their way to heaven lies through it (Acts 14:22, 2Ti 3:12, Php 1:29); and it becomes them to be patient under it, not murmuring against God (Php 2:14), on the one hand, nor reviling of men, on the other (cf Jesus attitude in 1Pe 2:23). ([John Gill Commentary](#))

William Barclay - We are to meet tribulation with triumphant fortitude. Someone once said to a gallant sufferer: "Suffering colours all life, doesn't it?" "Yes," said the gallant one, "it does, but I propose to choose the colour." When the dreadful affliction of complete deafness began to descend on Beethoven and life seemed to be one unbroken disaster, he said: "I will take life by the throat." As William Cowper had it:

"Set free from present sorrow,
We cheerfully can say.
'Even let the unknown tomorrow
Bring with it what it may,
It can bring with it nothing

But he will bear us through."

When Nebuchadnezzar cast Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego into the burning fiery furnace he was amazed that they took no harm. He asked if three men had not been cast into the flames. They told him it was so. He said, "But I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods" (Daniel 3:24-25). A man can meet anything when he meets it with Christ. ([Romans 12 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

John Calvin

Paul first forbids us to acquiesce in present blessings, and to ground our joy on earth and on earthly things, as though our happiness were based on them; and he bids us to raise our minds up to heaven, that we may possess solid and full joy.

If our joy is derived from the hope of future life, then patience will grow up in adversities; for no kind of sorrow will be able to overwhelm this joy. Hence these two things are closely connected together, that is, joy derived from hope, and patience in adversities.

No man will indeed calmly and quietly submit to bear the cross, but he who has learnt to seek his happiness beyond this world, so as to mitigate and allay the bitterness of the cross with the consolation of hope. But as both these things are far above our strength, we must be instant in prayer, and continually call on God, that he may not suffer our hearts to faint and to be pressed down, or to be broken by adverse events. ([Calvin's Commentary](#))

Alexander Maclaren

Now, if my heart is filled with a calm gladness because my eye is fixed upon a celestial hope, then both the passive and active sides of Christian 'patience' will be realised by me. If my hope burns bright, and occupies a large space in my thoughts, then it will not be hard to take the homely consolation of good John Newton's hymn and say-

**'Though painful at present,
'Twill cease before long;
And then, oh, how pleasant
The conqueror's song!'**

A man who is sailing to America, and knows that he will be in New York in a week, does not mind, although his cabin is contracted, and he has a great many discomforts, and though he has a bout of sea-sickness. The disagreeables are only going to last for a day or two. So our hope will make us bear trouble, and not make much of it.

And our hope will strengthen us, if it is strong, for all the work that is to be done. Persistence in the path of duty, though my heart be beating like a smith's hammer on the anvil, is what Christian men should aim at, and possess. **If we have within our hearts that fire of a certain hope, it will impel us to diligence in doing the humblest duty, whether circumstances be for or against us; as some great steamer is driven right on its course, through the ocean, whatever storms may blow in the teeth of its progress, because, deep down in it, there are furnaces and boilers which supply the steam that drives the engines.**

So a life that is joyful because it is hopeful will be full of calm endurance and strenuous work.

'Rejoicing in hope; patient,' persevering in tribulation. ([Romans 12:12 Sermon](#))

RAKU - Some friends gave us a piece of Raku pottery. "Each pot is hand-formed," the tag explained, "a process that allows the spirit of the artist to speak through the finished work with particular directness and intimacy." Once the clay has been shaped by the potter it is fired in a kiln. Then, glowing red hot, it is thrust into a smoldering sawdust pile where it remains until finished. The result is a unique product—"one of a kind," the tag on our piece insists. So it is with us. We bear the imprint of the Potter's hand. He too has spoken through His work "with particular directness and intimacy." Each of us is formed in a unique way for a unique work: "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10-note). But though we are created for good works, we're not yet finished. We must experience the kiln of affliction. Aching hearts, weary spirits, aging bodies are the processes God uses to finish the work He has begun. Don't fear the furnace that surrounds you. Be "patient in tribulation" and await the finished product. "Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (James 1:4-note).

We are here to be perfected,

Only God our needs can see;
Rarest gems bear hardest grinding,
God's own workmanship are we.

—Anon.

He who has begun a good work in you will complete it
until the day of Jesus Christ. —Philippians 1:6-note

DEVOTED TO PRAYER: te proseuche proskarterountes ([PAPMPN](#))

- Eph 6:18, 19, 20 [Spurgeon](#), 2Th 3:1-2 Acts 2:46, 6:4 Col 4:2) (Genesis 32:24, 25, 26; Job 27:8, 9, 10; Psalms 55:16,17; 62:8; 109:4; Jeremiah 29:12,13; Daniel 9:18,19; Luke 11:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13; 18:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,9-43; Acts 1:14; 2:42; 6:4; 12:5; 2 Corinthians 12:8; Ephesians 6:18,19; Philippians 4:6,7; Colossians 4:2,12; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Hebrews 5:7; James 5:15,16; 1 Peter 4:7; 1 John 5:14,15)

When V. Raymond Edman was president of Wheaton College, he often exhorted the students, "Chin up and knees down." That's good advice for all of us. (Ray Pritchard)

Rob Morgan - Whenever your hope seems to fail you and your joy begins to sink," said Spurgeon, "the shortest method is to take to your knees. By remembering the promise in prayer, hope will be sustained and then joy is sure to spring from it." An *open Bible* and a *bowed head* create a powerful atmosphere in which God's will is brought to bear upon the distresses of life. Jesus even recommended we "nag" God with our requests, like a persistent neighbor at a friend's door or a relentless widow harassing a presiding judge. (**100 Bible Verses Everyone Should Know By Heart**)

William Newell - In prayer steadfastly continuing-So did the early Christians (Acts 2:42,46,47; 6:4; 12:5,12). But do not forget to watch expectantly, and to give thanks in your prayers. (Col 4:2.) Ten will attend Bible teaching, and one hundred Sunday preaching, to two or three who "in prayer steadfastly continue": but be thou of that two or three; for they prevail, and to them Christ reveals Himself; and they become channels of blessing to countless others (**Ed: Lord teach us to pray! Amen**). ([Romans 12 Commentary](#))

William Barclay - We are to persevere in prayer. Is it not the case that there are times in life when we let day add itself to day and week to week, and we never speak to God? When a man ceases to pray, he despoils himself of the strength of Almighty God. No man should be surprised when life collapses if he insists on living it alone. ([Romans 12 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

Sanday & Headlam - Persecution again naturally suggests prayer, for the strength of prayer is specially needed in times of persecution.

Writing to the **Ephesians** Paul exhorted them "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance 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 (Eph 6:18-19-note)

Paul also has a similar note to the saints at Colossae (note this an order as from a commanding general which emphasizes the critical need for prayer in the ongoing spiritual war - it's not pray if you feel like it but pray all the time!) "**Devote** (proskartereo - **present imperative**) yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving." (Col 4:2-note)

Note the progression: hope, tribulation, prayer.

How often does tribulation drive you to prayer?

Someone has well said that prayer is the breath of the Christian life and almost nothing decays so fast in the fallen human heart as the desire to pray. In other words, nothing is more vital than prayer in Christian existence, and few things are more vulnerable to neglect. We must come back to it again and again and stoke the fire.

Most Christians will confess the difficulty of maintaining a regular and effective prayer life. The reason is not difficult to discern. If Satan (or our flesh) can keep us out of touch with God, he will not have to worry about any trouble we might cause for his evil kingdom (or our selfish desires).

Devoted ([4342](#)) (proskartereo from **prós** = in compound Greek words **prós** implies motion, direction = toward, to + **kartereo** = be

strong, steadfast, firm, endure, hold out, bear the burden) (Click word study on **proskartereo**) is in the present tense and means continuously, habitually devoted to or attending to. The literal meaning is to be strong toward or earnest toward something, and it carries the ideas of steadfast and unwavering. It also conveys the idea of waiting on or being ready for something as illustrated in (Mk 3:9) where the boat was standing ready for Jesus (Is my "vessel" standing ready for Jesus?).

The **present tense** calls for this to be the believer's continual attitude. Ultimately this is only possible as we learn to yield to the Spirit Who enables our will to want to be devoted and energizes us to follow through (Php 2:13NLT-note).

Denney - The strong word suggests not only the constancy with which they are to pray, but the effort that is needed to maintain a habit so much above nature (**Ed**: Cp our need for the Spirit's initiation of this "genre" of prayer. Ro 8:26, Eph 6:18, Gal 4:6, Jude 1:20). ([Romans 12 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

Proskartereo - 10x in the NT -- Mk. 3:9; Acts 1:14; 2:42, 46; 6:4; 8:13; 10:7; Rom. 12:12; 13:6; Col. 4:2. Translated - continually devoting themselves(2), continued(1), continuing(1), devote ourselves(1), devote yourselves(1), devoted(1), devoting themselves(1), personal attendants(1), stand ready(1).

Proskartereo was a dominant attitude in the early church in Acts especially regarding teaching, prayer and breaking of bread (for a sense of this word see the [6 uses in Acts](#)). Paul has a very picturesque use of **proskartereo** in (Romans 13:6-note) where he describes the unceasing activity of the tax collector! If a tax collector has this attitude for treasure that fades away, what should be a saint's attitude towards prayer knowing that they are being "[added](#) to the [prayers](#) of [all](#) the [saints](#) on the [golden altar](#) which was [before](#) the [throne](#). (of God in heaven)" (Rev 8:3-note)

If the church demonstrated in its prayer life the dedication and persistence of the government in its collection of revenue, then the church would indeed have little to fear from the gates of hell!

Matthew Poole - be instant and constant in the duty. A metaphor from hounds, that give not over the game till they have got it: see Luke 18:1 Ephesians 6:18 Colossians 4:2 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

Prayer ([4335](#))(**proseuche** from **pros** = toward or immediately before + **euchomai** = to pray or vow) is the more general word for prayer and is used only of prayer to God. The prefix **pros** would convey the sense of being immediately before Him and hence the ideas of adoration, devotion, and worship. The basic idea is to bring something, and in prayer this pertains to bringing up prayer requests. In early Greek culture an offering was brought with a prayer that it be accepted. Later the idea was changed slightly, so that the thing brought to God was a prayer. In later Greek, prayers appealed to God for His presence.

Romans 12:13 [contributing](#) to the [needs](#) of the [saints](#), [practicing hospitality](#). ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [tais chreiais ton agion koinonountes](#), (PAPMPN) [ten](#) philoxenian [diokontes](#). (PAPMPN)

Amplified: Contribute to the needs of God's people [sharing in the necessities of the saints]; pursue the practice of hospitality. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: When God's children are in need, be the one to help them out. And get into the habit of inviting guests home for dinner or, if they need lodging, for the night. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Give freely to fellow-Christians in want, never grudging a meal or a bed to those who need them. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: with respect to the needs of the saints, being a sharer with them, eager for opportunities to show hospitality. (Eerdmans)

Young's Literal: to the necessities of the saints communicating; the hospitality pursuing.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE NEEDS OF THE SAINTS : [tais chreiais ton hagion koinonountes](#) (PAPMPN):

- James 2:14, 15, 16, 17, Gal 6:10) (Ro 12:8; 15:25, 26, 27, 28; Psalms 41:1; Acts 4:35; 9:36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41; 10:4; 20:34,35; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2; 2 Corinthians 8:1, 2, 3, 4; 9:1,12; Galatians 6:10; Philemon 1:7; Hebrews 6:10; 13:16; 1 John 3:17)

Literally "to the needs of the saints contributing."

Gal 6:10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the

household of the faith.

James echoes **Paul** "What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself." (James 2:14-17)

John adds "But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (1Jn 3:17)

William Barclay - We are to share with those in need. In a world bent on getting, the Christian is bent on giving, because he knows that "what we keep we lose, and what we give we have." ([Romans 12 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

Contributing (2841) (**koinoneo**) describes the sharing of one's possessions, with the implication of some kind of joint participation and mutual interest. The **present tense** which calls for a lifestyle of sharing.

Koinoneo - 8 uses in the NT - Ro. 12:13; 15:27; Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:15; 1 Tim. 5:22; Heb. 2:14; 1 Pet. 4:13; 2 Jn. 1:11

Koinoneo was used in Greek marriage contracts where the husband and wife agree to a joint-participation in the necessities of life. (what a contrast with modern day "pre-nuptial" agreements!) The key idea is that of a partnership, a possessing things in common, a belonging in common to.

Koinoneo is derived from the Greek word **koinos** (Click in depth study of related word koinonia) meaning that which is common or belonging to several (commonality, partnership, or mutual sharing) and is translated "in common" in (Acts 2:42, 43, 44, 45, 4:32, 33, 34, 35 cf 1Ti 6:17, 18).

Christian **koinonia** or fellowship is much more than a pat on the back and a handshake. It means sharing the burdens and the blessings of others so that we all grow together and glorify the Lord.

The idea is not just the outward act of giving, though, but sharing in one's own heart the burden of need felt by the needy, and the sense of a common ownership of those things that can meet these needs (Acts 4:32, 33, 34, 35). In Murray's words, "We are to identify ourselves with the needs of the saints and make them our own"

The application of Paul's exhortation is clear...When the children of God fall into want, take a part of their wants upon yourselves. Make their wants your wants to the full extent of your ability to relieve them, which should be a natural outflow of the truth that although we "are **many**, (we) **are one body** in **Christ** & **individually * members one** of **another**" (see Romans 12:5-note) and so "**if one member suffers all the members suffer** with" them. (1Cor 12:26)

William Newell - When you obey this injunction and begin wisely to inquire about the saints' needs, you will be astonished at two things: first, at the actual pressing necessities of many saints all about you; and second, at the way God will supply your own necessities as you minister to them. When the Holy Spirit took complete possession of the early Church, "Not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common"; with the result that "neither was there among them any that lacked." Now this shows the basal spirit of Christian giving. It is not "saying in our hearts" that what we have is "our own, " but holding all in stewardship to the Lord, ready to be ministered, as He shall direct. It is true that Paul, in his epistles, which give the constitution of the Church of God, does not direct those that are rich in this world's goods to "sell all that they have"; but to "do good, to be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." This passage (1Ti 6:17-19) should be most carefully regarded as at once the Divine protection against the awful "community of goods" of socialism and communism, because the Bible teaches constantly the rights of personal, private property; and also as the foundation principle of our giving. ([Romans 12 Commentary](#))

PRACTICING HOSPITALITY (literally = "love of strangers" or "befriending strangers"): ten philoxenian diokontes ([PAPMPN](#)):

Ge 18:2-8, 19:1-3 1Ti 3:2, 5:10, Titus 1:8, Heb 13:2 1Pe 4:9)

1Pet 4:9 Be hospitable (philoxenos - loving strangers) to one another without complaint (no murmuring or grumbling! goggusmos- as in Php 2:14-note).

William Newell - Pursuing hospitality-Here the word for hospitality is literally love to strangers, "stranger-loving, " and the translation "given to" is not strong enough. In its forty or fifty occurrences in the New Testament, this word is very frequently

translated "pursuing, " which is the literal meaning. You have it three times in Php 3:6, "persecuting the church"; in verse Php 3:12, "I follow after"; and in verse Php 3:14, "I press on" The meaning here, then, is, pursuing hospitality.-persecuting folks, even strangers, with kindness! What a wonderful testimony of love, hearty obedience to this simple exhortation to pursue hospitality would be! We have in Hebrews Thirteen three uses of this Greek root phil (meaning love): (1) "Let love of the brethren (Philadelphia) continue"; (2) "Forget not to show love unto strangers" (philoxenia) ; and, (3) in verse 5, "Be free from silver-loving" (philarguros). If you are tempted to **philarguros**, **Philadelphia** and **philoxenia**, will cure you! "Given to hospitality, " then, means far more than being "willing to entertain" those who may call on you. It indicates going after this business, pursuing it, following it up! The Lord will reward some day even a cup of cold water given in His Name. Let us make "Strangers' Inns" of our homes. We are not staying here long. And the Lord may send "angels" around when we least expect! "Forget not to show love unto strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Heb 13:2) ([Romans 12 Commentary](#))

William Barclay - Over and over again the New Testament insists on this duty of the open door (Hebrews 13:2; 1Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; 1Peter 4:9). Tyndale used a magnificent word when he translated it that the Christian should have a harbourous disposition. A home can never be happy when it is selfish. Christianity is the religion of the open hand, the open heart, and the open door. ([Romans 12 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))^a

Practicing (literally = pursuing) ([1377](#)) (**dioko** from **dío** = pursue, prosecute, persecute) means to follow or press hard after, literally to pursue as one does a fleeing enemy. It means to chase, harass, vex and pressure and was used for **chasing down criminals**. Dioko speaks of an intensity of effort leading to a pursuit with earnestness and diligence in order to lay hold of.

The English word **practicing** loses some of the meaning of the verb **dioko** which conveys the picture of a host who follows or presses hard after (in a positive sense) to show kindness to strangers! **Are you as convicted as I am?!** Furthermore the **present tense** emphasizes that this is to be the believer's supernatural (Spirit empowered) lifestyle or habitual practice, of continual earnestness & diligence in order show hospitality. Paul uses this same verb expressing his highest desire in (Philippians 3:14)

"I [press on toward](#) the [goal](#) for the [prize](#) of the [upward call](#) of [God](#) in [Christ Jesus](#)." (Philippians 3:14-note)

Hospitality ([5381](#)) (**philoxenia** from **philos** = friend or loving + **xenos** = stranger) is literally love of strangers or a friend of strangers and thus one who entertains strangers or demonstrates hospitality or kindness to strangers.

Our care and concern will demonstrate itself in practical deeds done for others, either going to them (distributing to the needs of the saints) or inviting them to come to you (given to hospitality). In NT times, travel was dangerous and inns were evil, scarce, and expensive. So the early believers often opened their homes to travelers, especially to fellow believers. In prison Paul gave a special blessing "**to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me**" --so here we see a "radical hospitality" even at the risk of his own life! (2Ti 1:16, 17, 18 -note of 3Jn 5, 6, 7, 8; Lk 14:12, 13, 14). Church leaders should be role models of this virtue (see Titus 1:8note).

- [Hospitality - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Hospitality - Torrey's Topical Textbook](#)
- [Hospitality - Bridgeway Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Hospitality - Charles Buck Theological Dictionary](#)
- [Hospitality - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible](#)
- [Hospitality - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Hospitality - The 1901 Jewish Encyclopedia](#)

Lenski - Hospitality is literally to be chased after as one hunts an animal and delights to carry the booty home

Spicq relates the story of a pagan Greek citizen, Gallias of Agrigentum, who in the fourth century B.C. was so hospitable "that he posted his slaves at the city gates to welcome strangers when they presented themselves and ask them to his house".

Some Christians have been known to build extra rooms on their houses in order to provide for traveling evangelists and missionaries on furlough.

RELATED RESOURCES ON HOSPITALITY

Smith Bible Dictionary - Hospitality: Hospitality was regarded by most nations of the ancient world as one of the chief virtues. The Jewish laws respecting strangers (Leviticus 19:33,34) and the poor, (Leviticus 23:14) seq. Deuteronomy 15:7 And concerning redemption (Leviticus 25:23) seq., etc. are framed in accordance with the spirit of hospitality. In the law compassion to strangers is constantly enforced by the words "for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Leviticus 19:34) And before the law, Abraham's entertainment of the angels, (Genesis 18:1) seq., and Lot's, (Genesis 19:1) are in exact agreement with its precepts, and with

modern usage. Comp. (Exodus 2:20; Judges 13:15; 19:17,20,21) In the New Testament hospitality is yet more markedly enjoined; and in the more civilized state of society which then prevailed, its exercise became more a social virtue than a necessity of patriarchal life. The good Samaritan stands for all ages as an example of Christian hospitality. The neglect of Christ is symbolized by inhospitality to our neighbors. (Matthew 25:43) The apostles urged the Church to "follow after hospitality," (Romans 12:13) cf. 1Tim 5:10 To remember Abraham's example, (Hebrews 13:2) to "use hospitality one to another without grudging," (1 Peter 4:9) while a bishop must be a "lover of hospitality (Titus 1:8) cf. 1Tim 3:2 The practice of the early Christians was in accord with these precepts. They had all things in common, and their hospitality was a characteristic of their belief. In the patriarchal ages we may take Abraham's example as the most fitting, as we have of it the fullest account. "The account," says Mr. Lane, "of Abraham's entertaining the three angels related in the Bible, presents a perfect picture of the manner in which a modern Bedawee sheikh receives travellers arriving at his encampment." The Oriental respect for the covenant of bread and salt, or salt alone, certainly sprang from the high regard in which hospitality was held.

ISBE on HOSPITALITY; HOSPITALITY; HOST - hos-pi-tal'-i-ti, host (philoxenia, "love of strangers," xenos, "guest," "friend"; pandocheus, "innkeeper"):

1. Among Nomads:

When the civilization of a people has advanced so far that some traveling has become necessary, but not yet so far that traveling by individuals is a usual thing, then hospitality is a virtue indispensable to the life of the people. This stage of culture was that represented in ancient Palestine and the stage whose customs are still preserved among the present-day Arabs of the desert. Hospitality is regarded as a right by the traveler, to whom it never occurs to thank his host as if for a favor. And hospitality is granted as a duty by the host, who himself may very soon be dependent on some one else's hospitality. But none the less, both in Old Testament times and today, the granting of that right is surrounded by an etiquette that has made Arabian hospitality so justly celebrated. The traveler is made the literal master of the house during his stay; his host will perform for him the most servile offices, and will not even sit in his presence without express request. To the use of the guest is given over all that his host possesses, stopping not even short of the honor of wife or daughter. " `Be we not all,' say the poor nomads, `guests of Ullah? Has God given unto them, God's guest shall partake with them thereof: if they will not for God render his own, it should not go well with them' " (Doughty, Arabia Deserta, I, 228). The host is in duty bound to defend his guest against all comers and to lay aside any personal hatred--the murderer of father is safe as the guest of the son.

2. In the Old Testament:

An exquisite example of the etiquette of hospitality is found in Gen 18:1-8. The very fact that the three strangers have passed by Abraham's door gives him the privilege of entertaining them. When he sees them approaching he runs to beg the honor of their turning in to him, with oriental courtesy depreciates the feast that he is about to lay before them as "a morsel of bread," and stands by them while they eat. Manoah (Jdg 13:15) is equally pressing although more matter-of-fact, while Jethro (Ex 2:20) sends out that the stranger may be brought in. And Job (31:32) repels the very thought that he could let the sojourner be unprovided for. The one case where a breach of hospitality receives praise is that of Jael (Jdg 4 through 5), perhaps to be referred to degeneration of customs in the conflicts with the Canaanites or (perhaps more plausibly) to literary-critical considerations, according to which in Jdg 5 Sisera is not represented as entering Jael's tent or possibly not as actually tasting the food, a state of affairs misunderstood in Jdg 4, written under later circumstances of city life. (For contrasting opinions see "Jael" in Encyclopedia Biblica and HDB.)

3. The Table-Bond:

It is well to understand that to secure the right to hospitality it is not necessary, even in modern times, for the guest to eat with his host, still less to eat salt specifically. Indeed, guests arriving after sunset and departing the next morning do not, as a rule, eat at all in the tent of the host. It is sufficient to enter the tent, to grasp a tent-pin, or even, under certain circumstances, to invoke the name of a man as host. On the other hand, the bond of hospitality is certainly strengthened by eating with one's host, or the bond may actually be created by eating food belonging to him, even by stealth or in an act of theft. Here a quite different set of motives is at work. The idea here is that of kinship arising from participation in a common sacrificial meal, and the modern Arab still terms the animal killed for his guest the dhabichah or "sacrifice" (compare HDB, II, 428). This concept finds its rather materialistic expression in theory that after the processes of digestion are completed (a time estimated as two nights and the included day), the bond lapses if it is not renewed. There seem to be various references in the Bible to some such idea of a "table-bond" (Ps 41:9, e.g.), but hardly in connection directly with hospitality. For a discussion of them see BREAD; GUEST; SACRIFICE.

4. In the City:

In the city, naturally, the exercise of hospitality was more restricted. Where travel was great, doubtless commercial provision for the travelers was made from a very early day (compare Lk 10:34 and see INN), and at all events free hospitality to all comers would

have been unbearably abused. Lot in Sodom (Gen 19) is the nomad who has preserved his old ideas, although settled in the city, and who thinks of the "shadow of his roof" (19:8) as his tent. The same is true of the old man in Gibeah of Jdg 19:16 ff. And the sin of Sodom and of Gibeah is not that wanderers cannot find hospitality so much as it is that they are unsafe in the streets at night. Both Lot and "the old man," however, are firm in their duty and willing to sacrifice their daughters for the safety of their guests. (Later ideas as to the position of woman should not be read back into these narratives.) However, when the city-dweller Rahab refuses to surrender her guests (Josh 2), her reason is not the breach of hospitality involved but her fear of Yahweh (Josh 2:9). When Abraham's old slave is in Nahor, and begs a night's lodging for himself and his camels, he accompanies the request with a substantial present, evidently conceived of as pay for the same (Gen 24:22 f). Such also are the modern conditions; compare Benzinger-Socin in Baedeker's Palestine(3), xxxv, who observe that "inmates" of private houses "are aware that Franks always pay, and therefore receive them gladly." None the less, in New Testament times, if not earlier, and even at present, a room was set apart in each village for the use of strangers, whose expenses were borne by the entire community. Most interpreters consider that the kataluma of Lk 2:7 was a room of this sort, but this opinion cannot be regarded as quite certain. But many of the wealthier city-dwellers still strive to attain a reputation for hospitality, a zeal that naturally was found in the ancient world as well.

5. Christ and Hospitality:

Christ's directions to the apostles to "take nothing for their journey" (Mk 6:8, etc.) presupposes that they were sure of always finding hospitality. Indeed, it is assumed that they may even make their own choice of hosts (Mt 10:11) and may stay as long as they choose (Lk 10:7). In this case, however, the claims of the travelers to hospitality are accentuated by the fact that they are bearers of good tidings for the people, and it is in view of this latter fact that hospitality to them becomes so great a virtue--the "cup of cold water" becomes so highly meritorious because it is given "in the name of a disciple" (Mt 10:42; compare 10:41, and Mk 9:41). Rejection of hospitality to one of Christ's "least brethren" (almost certainly to be understood as disciples) is equivalent to the rejection of Christ Himself (Mt 25:43; compare 25:35). It is not quite clear whether in Mt 10:14 and parallels, simple refusal of hospitality is the sin in point or refusal to hear the message or both.

6. First Missionaries:

In the Dispersion, the Jew who was traveling seemed always to be sure of finding entertainment from the Jews resident in whatever city he might happen to be passing through. The importance of this fact for the spread of early Christianity is incalculable. To be sure, some of the first missionaries may have been men who were able to bear their own traveling expenses or who were merchants that taught the new religion when on business tours. In the case of soldiers or slaves their opportunity to carry the gospel into new fields came often through the movements of the army or of their masters. And it was by an "infiltration" of this sort, probably, rather than by any specific missionary effort that the church of Rome, at least, was rounded. See ROMANS, EPISTLE TO THE. But the ordinary missionary, whether apostle (in any sense of the word) or evangelist, would have been helpless if it had not been that he could count so confidently on the hospitality everywhere. From this fact comes one reason why Paul, for instance, could plan tours of such magnitude with such assurance: he knew that he would not have to face any problem of sustenance in a strange city (Rom 16:23).

7. In the Churches:

As the first Christian churches were founded, the exercise of hospitality took on a new aspect, especially after the breach with the Jews had begun. Not only did the traveling Christian look naturally to his brethren for hospitality, but the individual churches looked to the traveler for fostering the sense of the unity of the church throughout the world. Hospitality became a virtue indispensable to the well-being of the church--one reason for the emphasis laid on it (Rom 12:13; 16:1 f; Heb 13:2). As the organization of the churches became more perfected, the exercise of hospitality grew to be an official duty of the ministry and a reputation for hospitality was a prerequisite in some cases (1 Tim 3:2; 5:10; Tit 1:8). The exercise of such hospitality must have become burdensome at times (1 Pet 4:9), and as false teachers began to appear in the church a new set of problems was created in discriminating among applicants for hospitality. 2 and 3 Jn reflect some of the difficulties. For the later history of hospitality in the church interesting matter will be found in the Didache, chapters xi, xii, Apology of Aristides, chapter xv, and Lucian's Death of Peregrinus, chapter xvi. The church certainly preferred to err by excess of the virtue.

An evaluation of the Biblical directions regarding hospitality for modern times is extremely difficult on account of the utterly changed conditions. Be it said at once, especially, that certain well-meant criticism of modern missionary methods, with their boards, organized finance, etc., on the basis of Christ's directions to the Twelve, is a woeful misapplication of Biblical teaching. The hospitality that an apostle could count on in his own day is something that the modern missionary simply cannot expect and something that it would be arrant folly for him to expect (Weinel, Die urchristliche und die heutige Mission, should be read by everyone desiring to compare modern missions with the apostolic). In general, the basis for hospitality has become so altered that the special virtue has become merged in the larger field of charitable enterprise of various sorts. The modern problem nearest related to the old virtue is the question of providing for the necessities of the indigent traveler, a distinctly minor problem, although a

very real one, in the general field of social problems that the modern church has to study. In so far as the New Testament exhortations are based on missionary motives there has been again a merging into general appeals for missions, perhaps specialized occasionally as appeals for traveling expense. The "hospitality" of today, by which is meant the entertainment of friends or relatives, hardly comes within the Biblical use of the term as denoting a special virtue.

LITERATURE. For hospitality in the church, Harnack, Mission and Expansion of Christianity, II, chapter iv (10). Burton Scott Easton

NAVE'S TOPIC - HOSPITALITY

Ex. 22:21; Ex. 23:9; Lev. 19:10, 33, 34; Lev. 24:22; Deut. 10:18, 19; Deut. 26:12, 13; Deut. 27:19; Prov. 9:1, 2, 3, 4; Prov. 23:6, 7, 8; Is. 58:6, 7; Matt. 22:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; Mt 25:34, 35, 36, 37, 38, Mt 25:39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46; Luke 14:12, 13, 14; Rom. 12:13; Ro 16:1, 2; 1 Tim. 3:2; 1 Tim. 5:10; Titus 1:7, 8; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9-11; 3 John 5:8 See: Guest; Strangers.

Instances of

- Pharaoh to Abraham, Gen. 12:16.
- Melchizedek to Abraham, Gen. 14:18.
- Abraham to the angels, Gen. 18:1-8.
- Lot to the angel, Gen. 19:1-11.
- Abimelech to Abraham, Gen. 20:14, 15.
- Sons of Heth to Abraham, Gen. 23:6, 11.
- Laban to Abraham's servant, Gen. 24:31; to Jacob, Gen. 29:13, 14.
- Isaac to Abimelech, Gen. 26:30.
- Joseph to his brethren, Gen. 43:31-34.
- Pharaoh to Jacob, Gen. 45:16-20; 47:7-12.
- Jethro to Moses, Ex. 2:20.
- Rahab to the spies, Josh. 2:1-16.
- Man of Gibeah to the Levite, Judg. 19:16-21.
- Pharaoh to Hadad, 1 Kin. 11:17, 22.
- David to Mephibosheth, 2 Sam. 9:7-13.
- The widow of Zarephath to Elijah, 1 Kin. 17:10-24.
- The Shunammite to Elisha, 2 Kin. 4:8.
- Elisha to the Syrian spies, 2 Kin. 6:22.
- Job to strangers, Job 31:32.
- Martha to Jesus, Luke 10:38; John 12:1, 2.
- Pharisees to Jesus, Luke 11:37, 38.
- Zacchaeus to Jesus, Luke 19:1-10.
- The taer to Peter, Acts 10:6, 23.
- Lydia to Paul and Silas, Acts 16:15.
- Publius to Paul, Acts 28:7; Phebe to Paul, Rom. 16:2.
- Onesiphorus to Paul, 2 Tim. 1:16.
- Gaius, 3 John 5, 6, 7, 8.

Rewarded

- Instances of: Rahab's, Josh. 6:17, 22-25.
- Widow of Zarephath's, 1 Kin. 17:10-24.