



By Elder  
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# THE BLESSINGS OF Perseverance

*We are asked to be productive in the things that are pleasing to God—living to serve and persevering in things of eternal value.*

**I**n March 2011 my wife, Dina, and I drove from Salt Lake City to the Manti Utah Temple. We traveled with our son Damian and his wife, Gabriela, along with a friend. One of Damian's former missionary companions had asked me to perform his temple marriage.

Because of carelessness during our drive, we did not notice a small sign that indicated a detour. After we had traveled for approximately an hour, Damian looked at our map and, very worried, told us we had gone the wrong way.

Discouraged, desperate, and ashamed, I told my wife to call the temple president to tell him what had happened and have him assign another sealer to perform the marriage. After Dina had given President Ed J. Pinegar my message, he said, "We love you. Don't worry about the delay. We sustain you, we are with you, and we are going to wait for you."

Finally we arrived at the beautiful, historic Manti Temple, and despite the delay, we rejoiced to participate in a sacred ceremony.

Later my wife made an interesting comment. She said that hearing the words of President Pinegar was like hearing the voice of our Heavenly Father saying, "I love you, I sustain you, I am with you. Don't give up. Repent and persevere on the path I have shown you. If you do, I promise you that we will see each other again in our heavenly home."

I felt bad for arriving late to the temple, but I thank my Heavenly Father, who had inspired President Pinegar to say words that caused me to persevere despite difficulty. Being able to reach our destination blessed not only our lives but also the lives of others.



JOSEPH SMITH IN LIBERTY JAIL BY GREG K. OLSEN





"Deep water is what I am wont to swim in,"  
said the Prophet Joseph Smith. Like the  
Apostle Paul, he persevered as he  
gloried in tribulation.



## What It Means to Persevere

I remember reading somewhere a definition of the word *persevere* that I believe provides a better understanding than that provided by a dictionary: “To persevere means to maintain the ability to endure, to carry on, to continue in the same state without weakening or perishing. It is being able to go on in the face of pain, oppression, discouragement or suffering without being defeated.”

What a beautiful and accurate definition!

It has been said that strong men and women are like kites—they only rise higher when the winds of opposition come against them.

Remember that persevering in those things that matter usually requires constant effort. Over time, perseverance will bear the fruit we long to obtain. If our path has no obstacles, our progress will be limited. Success has a price, and there is no choice but to pay that price in order to obtain it.

Former U.S. president Calvin Coolidge said:

“Nothing in this world can take the place of perseverance. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan ‘press on’ has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.”<sup>1</sup>

## Examples of Perseverance

In the scriptures we find countless examples of perseverance. In the Old Testament we read of Joseph, the son of Jacob. Joseph’s brothers hated him to the point of planning his death, although in the end they sold him to Ishmaelites who took him to Egypt as a slave. He was purchased by Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh’s guard, who “left all that he had in Joseph’s hand” (Genesis 39:6).

Later, after being falsely accused of trying to abuse Potiphar’s wife, Joseph was imprisoned (see Genesis 39:7–20). He remained captive for 13 years and did not see his family again for 22 years.



**How grateful I am that our Savior, Jesus Christ, endured to the end, fulfilling His atoning mission.**

After so many trials, Joseph would have been justified in giving up and saying, “What is the use of trying to serve God if my reward is only punishment?” Nevertheless, Joseph persevered in his faithfulness to God.

In the end, his perseverance bore wonderful fruit. It blessed the lives of the Egyptians and the Hebrews, and the progress and maturity he achieved were ample compensation for his suffering.

In the New Testament we read of the Apostle Paul, onetime persecutor of the Christians and later a tireless disciple who was brave and faithful in teaching the truth. He appeared before kings, bearing testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sensing beforehand that his end was near, he wrote:

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:6–8).

In the Book of Mormon we are touched by the courage and perseverance of the prophet Abinadi as he testified of the truth even at the cost of his own life. He declared, “But I finish my message; and then it matters not whither I go, if it so be that I am saved” (Mosiah 13:9).

The Prophet Joseph Smith is another wonderful example of perseverance. Concerning the troubles he had to endure, the Prophet wrote: “Deep water is what I am wont to swim in. It all has become a second nature to me; and I feel, like Paul, to glory in tribulation” (D&C 127:2). Joseph finally sealed his testimony with his own life, as did his brother Hyrum.

These individuals were all imperfect human beings living in a world of realities similar to ours. Their example of perseverance on the right path is worthy of admiration and gratitude. Today we are not required to offer our lives as an example of perseverance. Rather, we are asked to be productive in the things that are pleasing to God—living to serve and persevering in things of eternal value.

### **Blessings of Endurance**

“All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ” (D&C 121:29).

What great blessings we will receive if we endure valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ!

In our family book of remembrance is a photograph taken when my wife and I were children in Primary. In the photo, I am not looking to the front but to the side, right at the girl who would later become my wife. As I look at that photograph, some thoughts come to mind. Some of the children in the photo later left the Church, following forbidden paths. Today we can clearly see the difference between those who persevered in the right path and those who went astray. I can testify of the beautiful fruit

that comes from living the gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is no need to wait until after death to receive the rewards of righteous living. We can enjoy them as we go through this earthly life if we persevere on the right path.

King Benjamin explained the marvelous blessings we will receive if we continue faithful: “And moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness” (Mosiah 2:41).

The Lord will hold us guiltless if we persevere and repent. If you have not confessed some serious sin, now is the time to do so.

We have the responsibility of perfecting ourselves day by day (see D&C 50:24). As we do so, our light and understanding increase and we feel more secure in facing responsibility. Sometimes we think this progress will never come, but it will.

Be very careful in your professional lives. Do not put false gods before the Lord. Be wise. Do not let yourselves be carried away by the current of the world. Seek the Lord’s inspiration and guidance to make wise decisions. Let the material things you earn be a blessing and not a curse in your lives and those of your families.

How grateful I am that our Savior, Jesus Christ, endured to the end, fulfilling His atoning mission. He suffered for our sins, and because of His suffering, having “descended below all things” (D&C 88:6; see also 122:8), He understands our pains, depression, anguish, infirmities, and fears. He knows how to help us, encourage us, comfort us, and give us strength to persevere and obtain the crown that is reserved for those who endure. ■

*From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University–Idaho on November 15, 2011. For the full address, visit [web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches](http://web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches).*

### **NOTES**

1. Calvin Coolidge, in *Wisdom for the Soul: Five Millennia of Prescriptions for Spiritual Healing*, comp. Larry Chang (2006), 226.