

Full Assurance

Are you in much pain?" Grady asked. Pastor Ericson Davis smiled with his lips slightly tight. Severe arthritis in his back caused the 6-foot-tall minister to walk with a pronounced bent. The pain could be intense at times, but this Sunday morning it was light to moderate. When he woke up, however, the pain had been excruciating. He had needed his wife to help get him out of bed.

The 76-year-old had diligently done the prescribed stretches and exercises, and they helped to lessen the pain.

"It's fair to moderate, thanks for asking," said Pastor Ericson.

"I hate to see you in pain," the younger man said.

"That was an anointed word you preached this morning," said Sister Rhiana, walking up to the two. "I really needed it."

"Praise God!" said Pastor Ericson.

When she left, Grady said, "Do you have plans to retire soon? Not that I want to see you stop. I'm just concerned about how you're going to make it."

"I appreciate that," said Pastor Ericson. "I plan to preach until I can't anymore, and I know God will continue to provide for and bless me until the very end."

On the drive home, Sister Davis turned to her husband, smiled, and said, "I think Brother Grady is going to buy you a leather chair or something more comfortable to sit in."

1. *What is an example of a time in your life when you had to be diligent?*

2. *Is it easy or difficult for you to believe God will keep His promises? Why?*

3. *What Scriptures support the supposition that God keeps His word?*

Be Diligent to the Very End

Hebrews 6:9-12, KJV

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Hebrews 6:9-12, NIV

⁹Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are convinced of better things in your case—the things that have to do with salvation. ¹⁰God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. ¹¹We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. ¹²We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

Hebrews 5:11—6:8 warned readers not to be “lazy” (vs. 12), implying if they remained in their dullness, they would eventually walk away from the faith all together. However, 6:9-20 contrasts this warning with an encouragement to fight dullness by clinging to the promises of God.

Though walking away from faith must be a real concern for these believers, the writer said that he was “persuaded” of “better things” for them (vs. 9). The “better” things refer to the final day, when God will save them from the wrath to come.

The author’s confidence of “better things” is rooted in the unchanging character of God. He “will not forget” their work and labors of love done for Him (vs. 10). The church was known as a people who cared for the needs of others. It is evident that their love was selfless; it was done

“toward his name” (vs. 10, KJV). “Toward his name” indicates that their love was the kind that was from God and for God.

Verse 10 highlights the “labour of love” among the audience and further encourages them to keep going. The author said that his greatest “desire” for them was that they might show ongoing “diligence” so that they might obtain the final reality of their present “hope” (vs. 11). “Diligence” is defined in verse 12 as following the example of the saints who came before.

4. *What are the warnings and encouragements in the context and in this section?*

5. *Why is the author persuaded of better things for his audience?*

6. *According to this text, what is one way to know what diligence looks like in the Christian life?*

God Keeps His Promises

Hebrews 6:13-20, KJV

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,

14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the

Hebrews 6:13-20, NIV

¹³When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, ¹⁴saying, “I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.”

¹⁵And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.

¹⁶People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. ¹⁷Because God wanted to make the

heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.

¹⁸God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. ¹⁹We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, ²⁰where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

Abraham trusted in the promises of God. God both promised and swore by Himself that He would do what He said he would do. To doubly confirm the promise to Abraham, God swore an oath “by himself” (vs. 13, NIV).

An oath was made by making a promise in the name of someone or something greater (Num. 30:2). So, when God wanted to make an oath to Abraham, there is no one greater than God. Thus God made an oath by His own name. God didn’t need to make an oath in order to establish the promise; God’s promise was already trustworthy, for God always makes good on His promises. But in order that Abraham would be doubly confident, God took an oath on His own name.

According to verse 14, God’s promise, confirmed by an oath to Abraham, was that Abraham would receive blessing and would have a large family. Therefore, after patiently waiting, Abraham “received what was promised” in the birth of his heir Isaac (vs. 15).

Verses 16-18 contain an argument from the lesser to

the greater. According to this author, when people want to settle an argument, they make an oath on something greater than themselves. When an oath is made, it “puts an end to all argument,” and the matter is settled (vs. 16) As if God’s promise wasn’t solidified enough already, “two unchangeable things” make it doubly impossible for God to lie: His nature and His oath (vs. 18).

Hope in God and His promises is like “an anchor for the soul” (vs. 19). An anchor holds a ship down amid turbulent waters, but hope in God is “firm and secure” in the midst of the trials and temptations of life. This anchor of hope is firmly established behind the “veil” which separates God’s holy presence.

Jesus’ death made a way for sinful people to have a right relationship with a Holy God. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice and priest who can cleanse sin (Heb. 10:14). When Jesus Christ was crucified on a cross, the separating veil was torn in two (Matt. 27:51). Hope is anchored in Christ who stands behind the veil in heaven (Heb. 9:24).

In the same way that God made a promise and an oath to Abraham, God made a promise and an oath concerning Jesus. Psalm 110:4 says, “The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek” (Ps. 110:4, KJV). If Jesus is a priest forever, then his priestly role in heaven will never cease.

Hope must be anchored in Jesus as the “forerunner” (vs. 20) of faith. For if believers put faith in Jesus, their hope will be anchored in heaven and they will be diligent to press on toward that hope, until they see Him face-to-face on the final day of salvation.

7. *What are the two unchangeable things that guarantee God will not lie?*

8. *What was God’s promise and oath to Abraham?*

9. *What is God’s promise and oath to Jesus?*

10. *How does God’s promise and oath to Jesus give us hope?*

Back Against the Wall

My husband and I were expecting our first child. I was very pregnant when without warning, my husband—Bruce—couldn't walk. His back was causing debilitating pain, and he was immobile! When I say immobile, I mean he couldn't shower, dress, sit, or do anything. The pain became slightly tolerable if he laid in a very specific position. You can imagine the effect this had on us.

Bruce couldn't work anymore, and his job was our only income. We had bills, and we didn't know how long our savings would last. Would this injury resolve itself? I was in my third trimester; I was in no condition to look for a job—not to mention, I couldn't leave Bruce alone if he couldn't do anything. I was his nurse around the clock.

We tried anything to get him relief—physical therapy, a chiropractor, endless doctor appointments, specialists. It felt like a never-ending cycle. Days turned to weeks and months. He was still bedridden and in unbelievable pain.

And yet, I've never felt more seen by God. He showed up when people provided meals, when pastors came to pray, and when we stretched our dollars to make ends meet. Total strangers gave us money. There were people getting us in to see different doctors to try new treatments. We felt care and love like never before. We never missed a payment. Finally, after nearly four months of pain, Bruce had spinal surgery and felt relief.

Our house, our marriage, our new baby girl—all of these would have been impacted without the grace of God during such an ordeal. God gets the glory for the faithfulness He showed us, never leaving or forsaking us.

11. *What promise in Scripture do you cling to on difficult days?*

12. *Which of God's promises are you most excited to see fulfilled?*

13. *What are some ways you "keep the faith" when you feel like giving up?*

Faithful to You

It's easy to flip through Scripture and see examples of God fulfilling His promises and think, *Gee, that's really cool. I wish He would do something like that for me.* Good news! He can, and He will!

► *Rewrite the Key Verses shown below by inserting your name wherever you see the words "our" or "we." How does seeing your name in the verses change or impact their meaning for you? Does it bolster your faith? Why or why not?*

KEY VERSES

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. —Hebrews 6:19-20, KJV

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. —Hebrews 6:19-20, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of June 24 through June 30

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross devotionals* on these passages.)

- Mon.** Psalm 27—My Heart Shall Not Fear.
- Tues.** Philippians 3:1-14—The Treasure of Knowing Christ.
- Wed.** Galatians 1:13-24—Jesus Makes a Difference.
- Thurs.** Isaiah 41:1-15—God Will Help the Fearful.
- Fri.** Daniel 12—The Wise Shall Shine Brightly.
- Sat.** Acts 9:1-9—Encounter with Christ.
- Sun.** Acts 26:1-11—An Apostle's Defense.