

## GROWING UP IN CHRIST IN STEADFASTNESS

Eph 4:15 “[that] speaking the truth in love, [we] may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ”

Growth as a Christian is necessary and commanded. Eph 4 also tells us that there is a time that “we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine (boat), by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting”

Hebrews 5:10-14 tells us there comes a time when the Christian is no longer a babe looking for milk.

God is steadfast:

Daniel 6:26 Darius “I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion shall endure to the end.”

The word *steadfast*:

1828 Webster “1. Fast fixed; firm; firmly fixed or established; 2. Constant; resolute; not fickle or wavering.”

‘Its Old English predecessor, *stedefæst*, combined *stede* (meaning "place" or "stead") and *fæst* (meaning "firmly fixed").’

Applied to the Christian:

While all doubt may not cease, it must give way to a greater certainty of belief. As the Psalmist says in Ps 46:10, “Be still, and know that I am God.” That certainty of belief leads to steadfastness. The Bible helps us also with an idea of this word’s meaning.

The Psalmist again says in Ps 16:8, “I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand **I shall not be moved.**” Paul urges us in 1Cor 15:58, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, **be steadfast, immovable**”

Steadfastness, then, is the resolution to be firmly fixed, to be immovable.

Php 4:1 “Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so **stand fast** in the Lord, beloved.”

2Thess 2:15 “Therefore, brethren, **stand fast** and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.”

So, we stand fast, firmly fixed, immovable in the Lord and in the word.

Many seem to want to equate steadfastness with endurance or perseverance. Steadfastness is simply the resolution, the determination, to stand firm. Steadfastness, then, is the beginning of, the key to, endurance and perseverance.

How do we know that steadfastness is important?

Heb 2:1 “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.” Boat.

1Cor 10:12 “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

2Pet 3:17 “beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked”

1Tim 1:19 “having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck” Boat.

Yes or No

The resolution comes first, and then it can be strengthened.

2Pet 1:10 “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble”

Get up and go to church? No, the resolution has been made. Value is in strength of the resolution.

→Steadfastness is important because of what happens to the Christian who is not steadfast. He may drift or fall away from the faith.

Metaphors continue

Eph 2:19-20 “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.”

Col 2:7 Be “rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith”

How do we grow in steadfastness?

1) 2Pet 3:18 “but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

What is the value of deeper study of the word, deeper study of related issues of things like archaeology and history? Deeper learning pushes out doubt. Once you learned how to swim, did you lose your fear of the water?

2) Heb 12:14 “Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord”

What is the value of continually trying to emulate the meek and gentle example of Jesus? Emulating Jesus’ example of peace removes the fear and dread of

conflict. The conflict remains, but we are strong in the Lord. Why so many admonitions against worry? Worry destroys our peace.

What is the value of continually trying to live above the bar of the heathen around us? Trying to live above the bar of the heathen removes behaviors that cause doubt and lead to sin. 1Thess 5:22 “Abstain from every form of evil.”

3) 1Cor 14:1 “Pursue love”

What is the value of seeking to add the agape love of God into our lives and character? Martial arts example. Focus on the eternal.

A big little word

Col 1:23 You are reconciled by Jesus’ death “**if** indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard” Heb 6:19 “This hope we have as an **anchor** of the soul, both sure and steadfast”

Heb 3:6 we are Christ’s house “**if** we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.” 1Pet 2:5 “**you** also, as living stones, **are** being built up a **spiritual house**, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

That word, “if”, is there because if there are no waves, the boat is not tossed; if there is no wind, the tree does not topple; if there are no rains, the house does not fall. So we must add something to our definition of steadfastness: the resolution to remain firmly fixed in the face of opposition. If there were no tribulations and persecutions, no cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting in false doctrine, there would be no steadfastness. But there are and there is.

So, I exhort you brethren to resolve to remain steadfast to the end.

Heb 3:14 “For we have become partakers of Christ **if** we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end”