

# Self-Control, Perseverance, Godliness:

*Learning to Hope*

Session Seven

Called to Holiness

Spring 2005

Suffering discussion at Starbucks

- how we want to deny it, hate it, avoid it, but we don't want to see it as an entrance to something better...

but Jesus says "to save your life, forfeit your own soul"

Some may say "Nothing is worth dying for" but Willimon responds to them, that then they will "die for nothing".

# Symphony of Grace

(2 Peter 1:5-7)

- n Faith
- n Moral goodness (virtue)
- n Knowledge
- n Self-control
- n Steadfastness
- n Godliness
- n Brotherly-love (Philia)
- n Love (Agape)

Practices for making your  
calling and election sure

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Symphony of Grace	Faith	Virtue	Knowledge	Self-Control	Steadfastness	Godliness	Brotherly Love	Selfless Love
Theological Virtues	Faith			Hope			Love	
The Four Loves	Eros Instinctive 'selfish' passion (needful)			Storge (Affection) Instinctive compassion			Philia Meditative mutual attachment	Agape Meditative selfless attachment
From the Word Incarnate Himself  (Hint: Read across as one thought)	John 7:17 (Amplified Bible) If any man desires to do His will (God's pleasure), he will know (recognize, and can tell for himself) whether the teaching is from God or whether I (Jesus) am speaking from Myself and of My own accord and on My own authority			Luke 21:17-19 (Amplified Bible) And you will be hated (despised) by everyone because [you bear] My name and for its sake. But not a hair of your head shall perish. By your steadfastness and patient endurance you shall win the true life of your souls.			Matthew 5:47-48 (Amplified Bible) [However] if you greet only your brethren, what more than others are you doing? Do not even the Gentiles (the heathen) do that? You, therefore, must be perfect [growing into complete maturity of godliness in mind and character, having reached the proper height of virtue and integrity], as your heavenly Father is perfect.	
The Apostle's Amen	1 Thessalonians 1:2-4 (Amplified Bible) We are ever giving thanks to God for all of you, continually mentioning [you when engaged] in our prayers, Recalling unceasingly before our God and Father your <u>work energized by faith</u> and <u>service motivated by love</u> and <u>unwavering hope</u> in [the return of] our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah). O, brethren beloved by God, we recognize and know that He has selected (chosen) you;							

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# Self-Control

- n the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, esp. his sensual appetites
- n Used in three places in NT
  - n Galatians: fruit of Spirit, juxtaposed against being lead by the flesh or the deeds of the flesh
  - n Acts: Paul as prisoner testifying about Jesus to Governor Felix
  - n 2 Peter: part of the progression of practices to living an effective and holy life
- n The making of new habits, consistent control by will not circumstances

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Demonstrates the control and proper application of the Eros love

Taking the forms away from the sand-castle, formation activities have trained your will and discernment so that when not accessible you still maintain your godly pursuit

# Perseverance

- n steadfastness, constancy, endurance, sustaining, unwavering, patient (“endure under”)
- n not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings
- n Theme for many of the churches in Revelations

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## James 1:2-5

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the **testing of your faith produces steadfastness**. And **let steadfastness have its full effect**, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

## Hebrews 12:1

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 Thessalonians 3:5 in reinforcing these young Christians in their faith as they have started to face persecution, and he says: “May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness (perseverance) of Christ”

# Godliness

- n Piety, reverence, well respected, devout, dutiful, purity, religion, "holiness"
- n Paul's comments on true godliness (1 Timothy 6)
  - n Keeps the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of Jesus
  - n Patiently stands in peace and endures, and makes the good confession
  - n No matter one's societal position, honors God by honoring others.
  - n Not conceited but has true knowledge of God
  - n Does not crave controversy or constant friction. Does not seek to profit from godliness.
  - n Is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. (Not greedy, seek basic comforts)
- n Paul's comments on false godliness:
  - n holding a form of godliness but deny its power, 2 Timothy 3:2-5 (elements of Epicureans)
  - n Overlook the mystery of godliness that came through Jesus, listen to liars that deny a gratitude for the created material world. – 1 Timothy 3:16-4:3 (elements of Gnosticism)

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## Paul's comments on true godliness (1 Timothy 6)

Keeps the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of Jesus

Patiently stands in peace and endures, and makes the good confession

No matter one's societal position, honors God by honoring others.

Not conceited but has true knowledge of God

Does not crave controversy or constant friction among those with depraved minds and deprived of truth, that leads to abusive language and evil suspicions. Does not seek to profit from godliness.

Is a means of great gain when accompanied by **contentment**.

Not greedy, seek basic comforts

No love of money or to be rich, knowing it leads to temptations and many foolish and harmful desires, longing for money redirects from the true faith and pierces oneself with many griefs

flee from love of money and greed, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

## Paul's comments on false godliness:

holding a form of godliness but deny its power, and not having control over their passions (*eros*) and prey on others - 2 Timothy 3:2-5 (elements of Epicureans)

Overlook the mystery of godliness that came through Jesus, they listen to hypocritical liars and sear their consciences with an asceticism that denies a grateful appreciation of the created good material world. – 1 Timothy 3:16-4:3 (elements of Gnosticism)

## Affliction Benefits from OT

n Psalms 119:71

n It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.

n Isaiah 61:1

n The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;

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ALSO....

God tells the nation of Israel that He will allow them to be conquered by Egypt for a time so that “they may learn the difference between serving [God] and serving the kings of other lands.”

God wants us to see how good He is, and for hardened hearts this may require His showing us how bad life can be without Him.

Although the King and the Israelites sought differently from God, Jeremiah told them that it was God’s will that they go into captivity to Babylon.

## Part of the Vision

- n "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- n "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.
- n "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
- n "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.
- n "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;

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Blessed... "on the right path"

- peacemakers, poor in spirit, merciful, meek, thirsting for righteousness...

**BUT**

The vision of God for man has costs.

Blessed (on the right path) are you when you are persecuted...

Not that persecutions and tribulations are good, but in pursuing God's vision they are a sign of change and transformation to something good.

# Returning to Our Shepherd

(1 Peter 2:17-25)

Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.

For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;

and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

## Affection (CS Lewis' Four Loves)

- n Is not discriminating like the appreciative loves
- n Can enable appreciative love where otherwise not possible
- n Learn to appreciate goodness for itself, rather than to our flavored palate
- n Creates the taste in a broader humanity, teaching us to notice, to endure, then to smile at, and then enjoy and appreciate.
- n There is a danger of considering affection as complete, that it substitutes for Love Himself fulfilling the law.

## Reinforcing of Grace

n “Though lip service is paid to the Gospel of grace, many Christians live as if it is only personal discipline and self-denial that will mold the perfect me. The emphasis is on what I do rather than on what God is doing... Our eyes are not on God... We believe that we can pull ourselves by our bootstraps— indeed we can do it ourselves.” --- Brennan Manning

n The Problem of Faith versus Experience

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It is not until our bootstraps are cut that we can get our pride out of the way.

**“Those who trust in God will not be put to shame” is a challenge to us**

**Refer to Psalm 107**

- calling on the Lord, the transforming of identity

**Kreeft Excerpt**

# Suffering

- n "Opiate of the people"
- n Debtor forgiven big debt, now little debts to us
- n No one can harm a man, but he can injure himself
- n Two approaches to suffering seen in two Thieves on cross

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## MARX

Self help guru of the 1800s

Humans have a capacity/imagination for work (called labor power), also describe as one's ability to transform the world; alienation from labor, where labor power is untapped it leads to dissatisfaction and a "spiritual loss" as one may give up ownership of one's own labor — one's capacity to transform the world — is tantamount to being alienated from one's own nature. People come to believe that it is the very things that they produce that are powerful, and the sources of power and creativity, rather than people themselves. He argued that when this happens, people begin to mediate all their relationships among themselves and with others through commodities.

***Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.***

***The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions***

***Religion is only the illusory sun which revolves around man so long as he does not revolve around himself.***

Marx earlier saw religion in terms of its ability to promote solidarity, but later viewed it as a way to express and cope with social inequality thereby maintaining the status quo.

Marx saw the world 's consciousness filled with religion and a spiritual aroma of religion, which must be struggled against in order to bring the human essence to the true reality.

## DEBTOR

Lord's prayer for the disciples

Parable

## HARM A MAN

A proof that even if a man has lost his all either at the hands of slanderers, robbers, disloyal servants and friends that no real loss has been done to the virtue of a man, which is to be morally upright. Neither wealth nor freedom, nor life in native land constitute the virtue of a person, only right actions of the soul. If you are infinitely poorer, and you cannot give as much, your virtue is none the less, consider the widow with two mites.

If a person suffers damage to his virtue in such a way, the damage comes from within and the man himself. The house of the person who built on a rock remains undisturbed in the storm because the one was attentive to the true value of man, while the one that fell was not due to the wind but to the sand that is the laziness and wrong-doing. For before the storm came, it was weak and ready to fall.

## THIEVES

... believed because he saw that Jesus shouldn't be there with him.

## Fruits

- n Compassion
- n Broaden our minds, heart, mind and soul
- n Humility
- n Deeper worship
- n Strengthening of faith
- n Increasing of knowledge
- n Authenticity of moral goodness (virtue)
- n Furthers us toward a more sincere love.

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### Compassion:

Go and learn what this means, "I desire compassion, not sacrifice"

Humility – "Pride hates grace", hardship leads us to call on God more, and we recognize more clearly the source of grace and we are formed by him more completely

n Various scripture and some quotes...

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## Colossians 1:9-12

n “And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.”

## Romans 5:1-5

n Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character (lit: approved, tested), and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

## Romans 15:1-6

n We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God

## Luke 6:14-18

As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with perseverance.

No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away."

## 2 Corinthians 1:5-10

- n For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.
- n For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.

# Faith

n “I discovered later, and am still discovering right up to this moment, that it is only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith. By this... worldliness I mean living unreservedly in life’s duties, problems, successes, failures. In so doing we throw ourselves completely into the arms of God, taking seriously not our own suffering but those of God in the world. That, I think, is faith”

n Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letter to Eberhard Bethge, 1944

## Cheap Grace

n “Cheap grace is grace without the cross, grace without the living, incarnate Jesus Christ. Costly grace is the gospel. It costs people their lives. It cost the life of God’s Son, and nothing can be cheap to us which is costly to God.”

n Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Discipleship 1935

## Are We of Any Use?

n “We have been silent witnesses of evil deeds... We have been drenched by many storms... We have learned the art of equivocation and pretense... Experience has made us suspicious of others, And kept us from being truthful and open... Are we still of any use?”

n Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letter to Family,  
Nazi Germany 1942

## Will of God

n "The will of God is not a system of rules established from the outset. It is something new and different in each different situation in life, and for this reason a man must forever reexamine what the will of God may be. The will of God may lie deeply concealed beneath a great number of possibilities."

n Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ethics, 1943-45

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culmination of the OT leads to repentance, a changing of the mind, a changing of direction...

the culmination of the NT is the vision and power of the new direction (or holiness) for man

The trinity pictured in the baptism

Less of me, more of him.