

# Yosemite Bible Conference 1991-17

## Endurance-Hebrews 12

by William MacDonald

---

*William MacDonald emphasizes the importance of endurance in the Christian life, drawing on biblical examples and personal stories to encourage believers to persevere through trials and challenges.*

**Duration:** 33:12

**Scripture:** Luke 9:61-62, Philippians 3:14, Hebrews 11:27, Hebrews 12:1-6

**Topics:** "Endurance"

---

### Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of endurance in the Christian faith. He starts by mentioning how the Lord never promised an easy journey, but a better one. He uses the example of Timex watches, which can take a beating and keep on ticking, to illustrate the idea of persevering through challenges. The speaker then reads from Hebrews 12:1-4, highlighting the theme of endurance and looking to Jesus as the ultimate example. He concludes by urging listeners to press on in their Christian service and never give up, referencing the statistics of missionaries who don't complete their terms.

---

### Transcript

so faithfully and diligently behind the scenes. It's an awful lot of work connected with a conference like this pre-planning and execution of those plans as well and I know I speak for many here when I express my personal gratitude to each one. Also a word of appreciation to Brother Bill Bush.

I would think it'd be very gratifying for him to be here after these 45 years and to um see the conference moving on. It's a time of flipping your dividend coupons Brother Bush and I would think it would be very satisfying and very gratifying. I'd like to turn first of all with you today to Hebrews chapter 12 and I'm going to read the first four verses and see if you can tell me what the thread in these verses is.

See if you can tell me in one word what the underlying theme in these verses is. Hebrews chapter 12 verse 1 Therefore we also since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses let us lay aside every weight of the sin which so easily ensnares us and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God for consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls you have not yet resisted the bloodshed striving against sin. Anybody notice any recurring word or words in that

passage? Very good.

Head of the class. The words endure and endurance. That's what I'd like to speak to you about.

I think it's kind of a nice theme for me to close my part of the conference on endurance. The reason I'm thinking about it in a special way today is that we're sitting here in the shadow of El Capitan. You say what in the world does that have to do with it? Well not very long ago there was a young fellow named Mark Wellman who climbed El Capitan and that in itself is quite an achievement but a lot of other people have done that as well.

The remarkable thing about Mark is that he was paralyzed from his waist down. In a previous climbing accident he had fallen and injured his spine and he was paralyzed but he wanted to climb El Capitan and so he got a friend. He got the equipment.

The friend went before him and for seven days and four hours Mark Wellman climbed 3,000 feet six inches at a time. At various intervals the wind would take him 10 feet away from the side of the cliff but he endured and reached the top safely and successfully. A tremendous physical feat for a man paralyzed from his waist down.

You know, God calls his people the lives of endurance, doesn't he? The Christian life is not a hundred yard dash. It's a marathon and one of the tragedies that we see about us all the time is the highway of Christian life and service littered with corpses. For those who began well but didn't finish.

I think it was Hendrickson that wrote a book titled Many Aspire Few Attain. God calls us the lives of endurance. Let's look at the verses just for a minute before we go on.

Therefore we also since we are surrounded by so great a crowd of witnesses let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily ensnare us and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. What is endurance? Well it's not the mere acceptance of trial and suffering but it's triumphing in those things. It's not the ability to sit down and bear things but it's the ability to rise up and conquer things.

That's what God wants us to do. It's not the patience of fatalism but the patience which masters things. It's the patience that when life deals lemons it makes lemonade.

It's the patience that when life is filled with rocks it makes a rock garden. Endurance halts neither from opposition without or discouragement from within. It's the steadfastness which carries on until in the end it gets there.

Endurance hangs tough. The writer to the Hebrews was addressing his message to people who were going through persecution, and he's encouraging them on. Consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself.

Lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls you have not yet resisted to bloodshed striving against sin. When I read that verse I always add in my own mind two words at the end of the verse. I'm not trying to add to sacred scripture, but I always add in my own thinking two words at the end of verse four.

The words are he did. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed striving against sin. He did.

Resisting to bloodshed refers here, of course, to martyrdom, doesn't it? The Lord Jesus resisted till on the cross of Calvary he laid down his life for us. If you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as

to sons, my son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord. I always feel a bit unsettled with that word chastening.

I always like the word child training there, because when we think of chastening we think of spanking, we think of whipping, but that's not exactly what it was. These people were the chastening of the Lord in this context was God allowing his people to go through times of trial, affliction, and persecution primarily. It was part of his educative process in their lives, and so really chastening in the sense in which it's used in this chapter includes everything that a parent would do in raising the child.

It would include encouragement, it would include correction, it would include teaching, everything that you can possibly think of in connection with the training of a little one. My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by him for whom the Lord loves. He chastens and discourages every son whom he receives.

You might turn back to Hebrews 11 and 27, and it's speaking about Moses there, and it says, By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured at seeing him who is invisible. And you remember the Lord Jesus said in Luke 9 verses 61 and 62, No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God. It's amazing how many portions you have in the word of God in this whole subject.

He that shall endure unto the end shall be saved. Not that we're saved by endurance, but endurance is a proof of reality, isn't it? We have so many today who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you come back in six months and there's nothing there, nothing there. It was just an empty profession.

I believe that endurance is a thing that God gives to us by the power of the Holy Spirit, but I think too that, you know, parents can have a lot to do with it. I think parents can assist God in breeding endurance into a child's life. The reason I say that is, when I was a kid, I had a Scottish mother, and I can remember her telling us the story of Robert the Bruce, and how he had been driven by his foes from Scotland over to Ireland, and he was sitting in a house of refuge one time, and he watched a spider trying to attach its web to a rafter on the ceiling, and the spider tried and it fell, and it tried again and it fell, and it tried six times and it fell, and the seventh time it made the connection, and he said, that speaks to me.

He had failed in warfare six times, and he went forth from there and virtually recaptured Scotland for the cause. Now, here it is a few years after that, and I still remember that story. In other words, that story had become part of my breeding, and she was saying to me, look, don't give up.

When you start out on something, keep at it. I think that's tremendous. What a debt we owe to godly mothers who seek to inculcate these things in our lives.

Let me read you about a man. Most of you know who he is. Once there was a man who failed in business.

He then was defeated for a seat in the legislature. He lost again in business. After winning the election to the legislature, he had a nervous breakdown.

During the next 10 years, he was defeated in elections for Speaker, Land Officer, Elector, and Congressman. After finally being elected to Congress, he was defeated for re-election two years later. Sounds like a loser, doesn't it? Then he failed to gain a seat in the United States Senate.

One year later, he was defeated in the race for Vice President of the United States. Then he failed to be elected again to the United States Senate. Finally, after all of this work, he was elected President of the United States, and his name was Abraham Lincoln.

President Abraham Lincoln looked upon failures, defeats, and losses as opportunities and possibilities. He pressed forward and persisted, became one of our country's best and wisest presidents. He endured steadfastly, having a perfect brightness of hope, a love of the Lord, and of all men and women.

And I think God allows these things to happen, to speak to us. This is what he's looking for in the spiritual life, that we press on for him, that we not give up easily. In 1988, five Costa Rica fishermen set out in the boat.

They had had a very hard time. Fishing had not been good, and they set out in their boat, the Cairo Three, and as they were going out, some other fishing boats were coming back in, and they were laden to the gunwales with fish. And they thought, boy, this is our day, and they went out expectantly.

But as they got out there, and as they were dragging the fish in with the nets, the storm came up, and their boat was badly damaged. It took on water, so that they had to be bailing constantly, and finally the radio went out. After days, they ran out of food and water, and at one time, I can't believe this, at one time, a tanker drew near and actually gave over a hose with water, and then pulled away and went out of sight, refused to rescue them.

They were finally picked up 550 miles southeast of Honolulu. They had set a world record by surviving 142 days adrift at sea, living on rainwater, fish, and an estimated 220 turtles. They had traveled over 3,600 miles and had crossed four time zones.

Quite an example of endurance. Another one is the Tour de France, where men get on their bicycles in one of the most grueling trips that's known to men. They travel over very rough terrain, mountainous terrain in France.

One of the men who participated called it an annual madness. The race covers about 2,000 miles, including some of France's most difficult areas. Eating and drinking are done on the run, and there are extremes of heat and cold.

To train for the event, one man rides 22,000 miles a year. What prize do they get for that? \$10,000? \$100,000? What do they get? Get a yellow t-shirt. You know, that really should speak to us, that men would do that for a yellow t-shirt.

They do it to obtain a corruptible crown. We, an incorruptible. But, you know, we have become soft and flabby, haven't we, in our society? And we give up easily.

We just become discouraged along the way. There was a man who stood for many years passing out tracks at a corner in his city, and after years of doing this, he decided it's no use. He hadn't seen anybody come to the Lord, so he quit.

Two years later, he went back and he saw a man passing out tracks on the very corner, and he went up and spoke to him. What's this all about? The man said, well, I'll tell you. He said, two years ago, I came by here.

He said, a man handed me a track. He said, I read it and I was converted. He said, I came back to thank him, but he wasn't there, and I figured he had gone on to his eternal reward.

So, he said, I took the track and have been passing them out ever since. Endurance. God wants us to press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Keep me from turning back. Lord, keep me from turning back. We need we need endurance in family life, don't we today? It's tough.

I would guess that of all the burdens and all the heartaches that people have brought to the Yosemite conference this year, probably the predominant one, marital problems, family problems. I would guess that. Really rough.

I know so many godly Christian women who are immobilized today by husbands that are as carnal as a goat, and I know many Christian men with hearts ablaze for the Lord Jesus Christ, who are on the shelf because they have a wife who does not share their vision for the Lord and for the work of the Lord. Pretty frank speaking, but it's the truth just the same. What we really need today is husbands and wives who put Jesus Christ first.

And I want to tell you wives today, if you have a husband who seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, you've got the right kind of a husband. But I want to tell you men, if you have a wife who seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, you have the right kind of a wife. This is one of the heartaches that we encounter all the time to see people paralyzed for service for the Lord because of a mistaken marriage.

Young people today need endurance and education, don't they? So many start and they don't finish. When I talk to young people, I tell them, look, usually, generally, when God leads you to start something, he wants you to finish it. And I believe that too.

When God leads you to start something, he wants you to finish it. Put his glory first and go on for him. And we need endurance in the assembly today.

I'll tell you, the church is taking a beating today, isn't it? It's amazing the turnover in the average church today and the flimsy excuses that people use in order to give up. They say, I don't get anything out of it. Nobody speaks to me.

They never invite me out. There aren't enough activities for my children. The meetings are too early.

The only day I have to sleep in. Too much is expected of me. They all sound rather flimsy to me.

Flimsy, flimsy excuses. We need endurance in Christian service. It's really appalling to read the statistics of missionaries in the evangelical church who go out, and some never finish the first term, and some come back after the first term and never go back.

I often think of Winston Churchill who was asked to give a commencement address at a, I think it was a boys school, if I remember right. And he was given a very flowery introduction, which rather, he rather deserved, I feel. And amid great applause, he stood up and he said to those boys, never give up, never give up, never give up.

And he sat down, having finished the greatest commencement address that had ever been given. Many of you who have sat through boring commencement addresses know what I mean. Never give up.

What a great thing for Christian young people. Surely they're going, the Lord never said it would get easier. He said it would get better.

And it does. The path of the just is as a shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day. It's the way I found it.

Can't say it's been easy all along the way, but it's been wonderful just the same. I like Timex watches, not because of the watch, but because of their motto. Timex says, it takes a licking and keeps on ticking.

God wants us to take a licking and keep on ticking. What causes people to turn back? You've known so many people. People have come to your assembly and they seemed so bright and everything was moonlight and roses, you know.

And when they talked, I mean, the spirituality dripped from them. And then all of a sudden they faded out. All of a sudden they tubed out.

What caused that? Well, we've already spoken about one cause that's a wrong love affair or a marriage. Another one is sin. Sin.

And you know, I feel this very strongly. We should pray for one another. We should pray for one another.

The devil is launching attacks. His big guns are going today and every one of us is subject to his attack, especially, I think, those who are on the front lines for him. God doesn't waste his, I mean, Satan doesn't waste his gunpowder on nominal Christians.

They don't represent a threat to him, but he does attack those who are on the front lines. And, of course, the pages of the Christian church are stained in recent years, especially with a terrible scandal. What attitude do we take when we read about those? Well, I tell you, it humbles me.

I don't rejoice. It humbles me and think, Lord, keep me by your mighty power. And I think one of the most humbling things to me is when people come to me and say, I pray for you every day.

And when we get to heaven and see the origin of things, we're going to learn that much of what was accomplished for God was accomplished by the prayers of unrecognized people who were dear to God. Not necessarily by those who are up at the pulpit at all, but those behind the scenes. And in that connection, I think I would pay special tribute to godly Christian sisters and the prayers of Christian sisters who've kept many assembly going.

I never underestimate their power. We need endurance in Christian service, and we need endurance in our personal life. My, the Lord never allows us to forget that we have those two natures, does he? And you look at the preachers and you think, ah, they don't know anything about it.

They don't have the struggles we have. Forget it. Forget it.

Have the same struggles, made of the same dust, and in the same need of the sustaining power of the Lord Jesus Christ. A lot of people give up because of criticism. Have you noticed that? People are very thin-skinned, and the slightest word that might be construed as criticism, they just drop their hands and go

and leave the assembly, and that's the end of it.

Foolish. Foolish. First of all, there are two types of criticism.

Some of it's true, and some of it isn't true. If I get criticism and there's any truth to it, I benefit by it. Actually, my best friends are the ones who are most honest with me.

I consider George Burwer a very good friend, and he never comes to this country without calling me on the phone. One day he called me from Detroit, and he said, how's your spiritual life? Nobody asks me how my spiritual life is, but I tell you, he shook me when he asked me that question. He made me search my heart before God, and realize my frailty.

Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. What causes people to give up? Materialism and covetousness, and that's been spoken of already here at the conference, but what a snare it is, materialism and covetousness. It becomes an addiction.

You start making money, you want more and more and more. I often think of Rockefeller, and he actually got it all, and was near toward the close of his life, and he couldn't enjoy a good meal. All that money couldn't enjoy a good meal, and the same was true of Howard Hughes, wasn't it? What a sad story.

I'll never forget when Howard Hughes died. All that money, and I still have that article from Life Magazine. What a pathetic, race-like creature he was.

So sad, and it's impossible for business to crowd out the things of God in a believer's life. For money, all you need to do is hold a dime between your eye and the sun, and it'll block out the sun. And money blocks out that fellowship with the Son of God as well.

May the Lord deliver us from it. May he give us proper priority, content with a simple life, because the simple life is the happiest life. Malcolm Muggeridge said that.

He said looking back over his life, the happiest times that he could remember were when he was in a simple cabin with a table and a chair and fresh fruit on the table. Happiest time in his life. And maybe some of you in housekeeping and camping are enjoying that today.

I hope so. These are the things that, the little foxes that spoil the vines, things that come in and divert us from a path of entire devotedness to the Lord Jesus Christ. May he save us from it.

That's my closing word to you at this conference. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame that set down at the right hand of God. Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself.

You and I will never be called upon to go through what he went through. No matter how I'll ever suffer in this life, it's pinpricks compared to what the Son of God suffered. And what we want is to stand before him at last, to be able to say with Paul, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith, and to hear him say, well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord.

And remember Mark Wellman, who coined El Capitan, paralyzed from his waist down, and he could do it for earthly glory. You can do it for Jesus. Father, we thank you for this wonderful week we've had together here.

You are a great God and greatly to be praised, and your greatness is unsearchable. And we love you with all our hearts, and we love your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, who endured so much to put our sins away by the sacrifice of himself. Today you hear us calling us to lives of endurance for you.

Oh God, we just come and claim the power that raised the Lord Jesus from the dead. Keep us from turning back. The handles of our plow may be wet with tears, but oh God, oh God, keep us from turning back.

Help us to go on steadfastly for yourself in spite of criticism, persecution, anything else that might come to divert us from the path of duty. We pray with all of our hearts in Jesus' name. Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11876.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/yosemite-bible-conference-1991-17-endurance-hebrews-12/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**