

On Being “Weary”

Have you ever been so tired, worn out, and completely exhausted that it seemed every muscle in your body completely relaxed... as if restarting any of them to action would require more energy than currently available? Such seems to be the more literal idea of the Greek term *ekluo* (*ek-loo-o*) that is rendered as “weary” in at least seven NT passages by the New American Standard Bible translation. Other translations utilize the word “faint” to do so, which also carries the idea of complete exhaustion (and relaxation) of the ability to move. In some ways then, *ekluo* is the opposite of that heightened and acute sense of awareness in which every nerve and muscle is tensed and ready to pounce and fight or flee for life itself in the face of oncoming eminent danger. “Weary,” then, at least as used in the NT, is much more than just being a bit “tired” or “run down.” It is more nearly *exhaustion*- physically and/or mentally, *to the point of immobility*. It is being too tired to even care, let alone run from or face and fight an approaching, roaring lion, and instead merely surrendering oneself to be devoured, cf. 1Pet.5:8-9.

Now that we have a more exact meaning of the type of *weariness* before us, let’s now consider a few of the passages utilizing the word to better understand their admonitions:

Matt.11:28, “Come to Me all who are **weary** and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” Jesus is not offering a temporary respite or “power nap” to those who have become a bit sluggish from the toils of the day (cf. Matt.20:12). He is providing an *enlivening* and *awakening* (cp. Eph.2:2,5) *resurrection* from the brink of eternal despair to those who have been completely “done in” by sin and its corrupting and calamitous consequences, Gal.6:8a.

Heb.12:3, “For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow **weary** and lose heart.” This *weariness* of which we are warned is not then, as we discovered in the opening paragraph, merely becoming “tired and frustrated” with the ways of the world and its influence and impact on our happiness. It is, instead, an acute anguish that leads to the *surrender* of one’s *soul*- for “and lose heart” is more literally “*fainting in your soul*” as the marginal reading suggests. To combat this complacency, we are to “consider Him who endured such hostility by sinners” to the ultimate degree of the cross; for, as v.4 puts it, we, despite all the dramatics and theatrics we imagine and perform to the contrary, “*have not resisted to the point of shedding blood in your (our) striving against sin.*” So in more modern vernacular perhaps, we need to “get over ourselves” and all our imagined “persecutions,” accept the *exhortations, reproofs, and disciplines of the Lord* (vv.5-11), and *get busy* (vv.12-17) lest our *focus* is shifted from the *Savior* (v.2) onto *ourselves* to the degree that we forfeit the fight for eternity, v.1.

2Thess.3:13, “But as for you, brethren, do not grow **weary** of doing good.” How or perhaps why would one *faithfully strengthened by the Lord* and *protected from the evil one* by Him (v.3) possibly become “weary of doing good”? Perhaps because “*doing good*”: 1) sometimes goes *unappreciated* by its beneficiaries; 2) occasionally is repaid by *evil* in return; and, 3) often, if it is done according to Matt.6:3, provides no immediate acclaim (though it always garners *notice* and *remuneration* in heaven, Matt.6:4!). So

what's the point in 2Thess.3:13? **Do good things anyway** and never **grow weary** because of these consequences so that you stop doing them!

May we never “*grow weary*” in our sacrifices and service to the Lord that we *think* or say, “*My, how tiresome it is!*” to do so as did those condemned in Malachi 1:13. And always remember 2Cor.4:16-18 in these regards, “*Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*” Stay vigilant. Stay strong. Don't *grow weary* and *faint* not my brethren!

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