

Perseverance at Work at Work

It is not how many times you fall or fail but how many times you get up. So goes one of the old sayings about perseverance. And there is a certain amount of truth to it, as far as it goes. The faith based value of perseverance goes beyond just “getting up again” to encompass both the goal toward which we are striving and the characteristics of the “getting up.”

Faith based perseverance focuses on the God we profess, on an eventual unity with the being who created us and who loves us beyond all measure. We seek to persevere in a life that expresses a desire to be one with God. It is about caring for ourselves AND for others.

During each day we are faced with many challenges, choices. What guides our choices in these moments? When we reference or allow our faith in a loving God and the admonition, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” to influence our actions, we are persevering in a faith-based way. When we return respect for disrespect, we persevere. When we tell the truth when it does not benefit us, we persevere. When we choose what is good for others over what may be good for us, we persevere in moving toward union with our God.

Perseverance is not that we stick to every task, every goal until it is accomplished. It is about keeping to the goal of friendship with Christ no matter the circumstances of life, no matter the many shortfalls to which we fall prey. We are imperfect beings who seek union with the perfect, loving God.

In another sense perseverance is about adjustment, about openness to change. It is not the goal that changes but the ways we move toward that goal. It is, perhaps, a definition of insanity to keep doing the same things and expecting different results. The point of perseverance is not to change the goal when we fall, but to change away from what we did that led to the failure. This requires deep love to strive for the common good. It requires humility to accept that we sinned (moved away from a good relationship with our God) and seek forgiveness. It also requires honesty to admit that what we thought would work does not work. It requires openness to learn from the failure and to move to another path toward the same, ongoing goal, friendship and unity with Christ.

It is not words but the actions of our lives that give voice to our desire, our goal. At times we have the opportunity to be the hands of Christ in this world ministering to Christ in his disguise as the poor, the lonely, the sick, the hungry, or any suffering person(s) who crosses our paths. At other times the opportunity is to share in the sufferings of Christ, being Him in disguise so that others may minister. Whatever the circumstance of the moment, we have the opportunity to choose a path toward a faithful life and being an expression of the love of God. We are able to choose to put perseverance to work in our work lives.

PERSEVERANCE — A Faith Based Value at Work

1. What does applying the faith-based value of Perseverance in your workplace mean to you? What do you think it would mean to those with whom you work? How does its meaning change for your different workplaces, for example, home or where you volunteer?
2. Why is it important to gain an understanding of Perseverance in the workplace and how to apply that understanding?
3. How could you apply the concept of Perseverance in your workplace(s)?
4. What would happen in your workplace if you took and actively applied the value of faith-based Perseverance in your workplace(s)? How would the workplace sound different? Look different? Feel different?
5. What first step are you willing to take this week?