

Romans 2:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

Analysis

To them who by patient continuance in well doing—the Greek καθ' ὑπομονὴν ἔργου ἀγαθοῦ (kath' hypomonēn ergou agathou) literally means "according to endurance/perseverance in good work." Ὑπομονή (hypomonē) is not passive waiting but active, steadfast persistence despite opposition. **Seek for glory and honour and immortality**—the verb ζητοῦσιν (zētousin, "seeking") implies purposeful pursuit. Δόξα (doxa, "glory"), τιμή (timē, "honor"), and ἀφθαρσία (aphtharsia, "incorruption/immortality") describe eschatological rewards.

This verse describes authentic saving faith: not a one-time decision but patient continuance in righteousness. Paul anticipates Philippians 1:6: "he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it." Perseverance evidences election (John 10:27-29, 1 John 2:19). The pursuit of glory, honor, immortality is not selfish ambition but proper Christian hedonism—seeking ultimate satisfaction in God's eternal presence (Psalm 16:11).

Eternal life—ζωὴν αἰώνιον (zōēn aiōnion), not merely endless existence but qualitative, resurrection life. Paul's grammar suggests reward, not merit: God gives eternal life to those whose faith produces perseverance. This harmonizes justification by faith (instant) with sanctification by works (progressive proof of genuine conversion).

Historical Context

Jewish theology expected eternal life in the age to come (olam ha-ba), often based on Torah obedience and covenant membership. Paul here universalizes the principle while shifting the basis from ethnic identity to faith-produced perseverance. The concept of 'seeking glory and honor' echoes Jewish piety that pursued God's approval, but Paul will show (chapter 3) that no one achieves this apart from Christ's righteousness imputed by faith.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Does my Christian life show 'patient continuance in well doing' or merely sporadic bursts of religious activity?
2. Am I seeking glory and honor from people or from God (John 5:44)?
3. How does understanding eternal life as qualitative (knowing God) rather than merely quantitative (living forever) transform my pursuit of it?

Interlinear Text

τοῖς G3588	μὲν G3303	καθ' G2596	ὑπομονὴν G5281	ἔργου G2041	ἀγαθοῦ G18	δόξαν G1391
	To them who by		patient continuance	doing	in well	for glory
καὶ G2532	τιμὴν G5092	καὶ G2532	ἀφθαρσίαν G861	ζητοῦσιν G2212	ζωὴν G2222	αἰώνιον G166
and	honour	and	immortality	seek	life	eternal

Additional Cross-References

Luke 8:15 (Parallel theme): But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

2 Timothy 1:10 (Eternal Life): But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

Romans 6:23 (Eternal Life): For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (Parallel theme): Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Colossians 1:27 (Glory): To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Psalms 37:3 (Parallel theme): Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

Psalms 27:14 (Parallel theme): Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Romans 2:10 (Glory): But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

Romans 8:18 (Glory): For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Galatians 6:9 (Parallel theme): And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.