NUDGES 17

Nudges in the right direction



UNDERSTANDING GOD'S VOICE

Perseverance

Wim Kamphorst

NUDGES

Nudges in the right direction

Perseverance

Wim Kamphorst

Foreword

You do not win a race in the first hundred meters. You win it by continuing to run. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews uses that image for our life of faith. He names a whole line of people who ran before us: Abraham, Moses, Joseph, and many others. Many of them did not even see the fulfillment of the promise. And still they kept running.

> *"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."*
> Hebrews 12:1-2

I have now been listening to Jesus for more than twenty years. I have fallen. I have misunderstood Him. I have missed His voice, and sometimes I heard exactly right. From all those times together I learned the most. For me, perseverance is not a heroic deed. It is simply continuing to run, with my eyes on Him.

This booklet is for everyone who is tired of waiting, who doubts whether it still makes sense, or who simply needs a nudge. These are nudges: small pushes to keep standing, even when it takes a long time.

Wim Kamphorst, founder of (F)Luister Nederland

Introduction

Perseverance sounds heavy. As if you have to push on with clenched teeth. But in the Bible perseverance is not a matter of willpower alone. It is staying with Someone. You hold on because you know that He holds on.

> *"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."*
> Isaiah 40:31

Strength does not come from yourself. It is renewed. Whoever waits on the LORD receives new strength again and again. That is the secret of perseverance.

A closer look:

The Greek word for perseverance is hypomone. It is composed of hypo (under) and meno (to remain). To persevere is literally: to remain under the load. Not to run away, not to give way, but to stay, because you know that God is carrying you.

Chapter 1 When it takes a long time

Abraham, Joseph and David

Abraham received a promise of a son and had to wait twenty-five years. Joseph dreamed that his brothers would bow down to him and ended up first in a pit, then in slavery and then in prison. David was anointed king as a boy and had to flee from Saul for years. God's promises came true. But not quickly.

What strikes me is that God was not absent in those long years. He shaped them. Abraham learned to trust, Joseph learned to serve, David learned to wait on God. The waiting was not lost time. It was preparation.

Thirteen years

Years ago I received the impression that I would be allowed to disciple an African man for a while. Only thirteen years later did I meet him, and it stayed short, half a year. Thirteen years between the word and the fulfillment, and then six months to do it. If I had wanted to force that impression too early, I would probably have broken something.

Nine years with the wrong clock

I have also experienced it the other way around. I was convinced that we would be moving soon. Nine years later we were still living there. The what was perhaps right somewhere, sometime, but the when I had completely wrong. That kind of mistake hurts, not because you were wrong about the content, but because you lived for years with the wrong clock in your head. Perseverance also means: giving the clock to God.

> *"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."*
> Galatians 6:9

Persevering without becoming hard

There is a difference between persevering and hardening. You can become so determined that you let nobody in anymore, not even God. I recognize in myself the temptation of the misunderstood hero. When something hurts, I easily turn it into a badge: look, I am being opposed, so I must be doing something right. That is a dangerous compass. The question that keeps me more honest is not: am I being rejected? But: do I stay gentle while I am being rejected?

Starting again

Perseverance does not mean that you never fall. Peter fell hard. He had said that he would never leave Jesus and denied Him three times. After that he went back to his old work: fishing. But Jesus came to look for him at the lake, at a fire with bread and fish. No lecture. The same question three times: “Do you love Me?” And Peter got his assignment back.

So perseverance is not: never falling. It is: getting up again when Jesus calls you. The race goes on, even after a fall. It is not about how often you stumble, but about whether you turn your eyes back to Him.

Chapter 2 Persevering when God seems silent

Three weeks of nothing

After my conversion nothing at all happened for three weeks. No voice, no special experience. I began to think that Jesus might not be the answer after all. Then came a disappointment that brought all the old pain back to the surface. I cycled home in tears. And right then I heard His voice, soft and powerful: “Wim, I am with you and I will never leave you alone.” Since then I have sometimes felt alone, but never lonely again.

Do you recognize the despair I had then, or are you toying with the thought of ending your life? Do not stay alone with it. Talk to someone you trust or to your doctor, or contact 113 Suicide Prevention day and night (in the Netherlands): call 113 or toll-free 0800-0113, or chat via 113.nl.

A building that is not there yet

I do not write from the safety of something that lies far behind me. We believe that God has said something about a building for (F)Luister Nederland. A confirmation seemed to come. After that it went quiet. A year, two years, three years. We still do not know when, what, how or where. I keep that word in my heart and water it. What helps me most in seasons of silence is holding on to what God has already said.

Spiritually tired

After a church split I was spiritually tired for about four years. There was little to hear, mostly a lot to sort out: what was church, what was human, what were wounds, what was truth? I did not stop believing in that time. But I did have to learn to walk again. Slowly we could come into His presence again, then seek out other believers again, and then build again. Perseverance did not go fast then. It went step by step.

When it feels dry

Sometimes Bible reading feels dry and praying seems like talking to the ceiling. Then I do not panic. I listen to the audio Bible or a sermon, I sing a song, I write down what I feel. It does not matter how I receive His words, as long as I receive them. Dry seasons are part of life. They are not proof that God is gone.

> *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."*
> James 1:2-3

Power in weakness

I once spoke at an Alpha group while I had a fever of forty degrees Celsius. There was no perfectly constructed sermon, only the words that I believed God had given for that group. People came to faith. I knew very well that it was not down to me. Perseverance does not mean that you are always strong. It means that you give your weakness to God and still take a step.

Others praying for you

When things were going very badly for me in the past, my mother and her friend kept praying for me. I noticed nothing of it then. Only years later did I see how much it had meant. Sometimes you cannot keep going yourself, but you are held up by the prayers of others. Do not be ashamed to ask for that. And if you know someone who is having a hard time: keep praying, even if you see nothing happening.

Chapter 3 How do you persevere?

Perseverance does not grow all at once. It grows a little every day, by staying. A few nudges:

1. **Fix your eyes on Jesus**

   This week read a passage from a Gospel every day. See how Jesus persevered, all the way to the cross. Ask: “Lord, what do You want to show me today?” You can keep going longer when you know for Whom you are running.

2. **Keep what He has said**

   Make a list of words and promises that God has given you, with the date next to them. Read them back when you get tired. Holding on to what He has already said gives you a hold when it is quiet.

3. **Live in the meantime**

   Do not wait to live until the promise is fulfilled. What does God want to do with you now? My wife and I chose, in the years of waiting, to build on what He did show us. A lot of good came out of that.

4. **Find people who walk along with you**

   Nobody runs a long race alone. Look for one or two people who pray with you, who encourage you and who are honest when you are heading the wrong way. Tell them also when it is hard.

5. **Rest along the way**

   Perseverance is not a sprint. Deliberately plan moments of rest. A day without obligations, a walk, an evening with friends. Whoever waits on the LORD receives new strength. Give Him room to give that strength too.

God does not promise that the road is short. He promises that He walks with you. To the end.

FAQ

Question: How do I know whether I should persevere or let go?
Answer: That is an honest question. Persevering is good when you are holding on to something that God truly said. Letting go is good when it turned out to be your own dream. Test it against the Bible, against peace and with people who are further along in faith. I have experienced both: things I had to let go of and things that came true after years after all.

Question: I am so tired. May I stop for a moment?
Answer: You may rest. Even Elijah lay under a bush and asked God to let him die. God gave him food and let him sleep, before He spoke further. Resting is not giving up. Take it seriously when you are exhausted, and also seek help from your doctor or people you trust.

Question: What if I have been praying for years and nothing changes?
Answer: That is hard, and I am not going to make it easier than it is. Stay honest with God, also about your disappointment. Ask Him what He wants to do in the meantime. Sometimes our heart changes first, and only later the situation. And sometimes a question stays open. Then you may hold on to who God is, even when you do not understand what He is doing.

At whispermagazine.org you can read true stories of people who heard God speak, learn more about hearing His voice and read our free Whisper magazine.

About (F)Luister Nederland

(F)Luister Nederland is a movement that wants to help believers understand the voice of God and grow in it. We believe that God still speaks today and that His children can learn to recognize, understand and obey His voice.

Our mission

We want to equip and encourage people to walk in relationship with Jesus in their daily lives, led by the Holy Spirit. It is our desire that more and more followers of Jesus learn to listen to His whisper and take bold steps in response.

Our vision

We see a church and a society in which God's voice is central once again. Where believers do not only listen to sermons or opinions, but live out of an intimate relationship with their Father in heaven. A generation that understands God's voice and, as a result, makes a difference in their surroundings.

Together we learn to understand His voice

There is more

This booklet is a nudge in the right direction. Do you want to go further? Whisper has more to help you on your way.

Whisper magazine
Our free magazine, to read online. **whispermagazine.org/magazine.html**

Seliah, our app
Our free app, for on the go. **whispermagazine.org/app**

How do you test an impression?
Ten questions to test what you hear. **whispermagazine.org/how-do-you-test.html**

More Nudges
Booklets on other themes. **whispermagazine.org/nudges.html**

Listening together
A guide for your small group. **whispermagazine.org/listening-together.html**

Quiet. I am listening.
A free 30-day reading plan. **whispermagazine.org/magazine.html**

The Listening Profile
How do you hear God? **whispermagazine.org/listening-profile.html**

True stories
People who heard God speak. **whispermagazine.org/stories.html**

Questions and answers
Short Bible-based answers. **whispermagazine.org/questions.html**

Everything in one place: whispermagazine.org

Scan the code to visit Whisper. In Dutch on Instagram and Facebook: @fluisternederland.nl

Questions, or want to share a testimony? info@fluisternederland.nl

Perseverance

Listening to Him. Standing firm when it takes a long time.

God speaks. Every day. Not only to prophets or spiritual leaders, but to each one of us. The problem is not that He is silent, but that we often do not tune in properly.

In this book, Wim Kamphorst takes you on a journey to learn to recognize, understand and obey the voice of God. You will discover:

- why persevering is different from gritting your teeth;
- how you keep listening when God seems silent;
- five nudges to persevere without becoming hard.

Wim Kamphorst has been learning to listen to God's voice for more than twenty years, by trial and error. He knows what it is to wait for years, and what it is to discover that God speaks in the waiting.

With personal testimonies, clear Bible passages and practical examples, this book makes clear that persevering with God is something that is close to God's heart.

God speaks.
What gives you strength to persevere?

