

Pioneering is hard work, but it is rewarding work. We are going to continue our series Pioneer Persistence, in this series Paul *highlights* some of his setbacks in ministry, but how he remains persistent by staying focused even in the face various adversities. Today we are going to look at ministry stripes.

2 Corinthians 6:4–7 (NKJV) But in all *things* we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, ⁵ **in stripes**, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; ⁶ by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, ⁷ by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left...

I MINISTRY STRIPES:

A- Ministry will have its Stripes: to *Strike*, a *Stroke*, an *Injury*, a *Blow*, a *Wound*

a. Pauls were quite literal (beaten) ours could be, but there are other stripes we can receive.

1. People might make bad decisions: People you've invested in, work with, poured into make choices that hurt them, or maybe others... it can be painful for you-
2. People might speak against you: Words of criticism, words of rebellion, words of slander, lies...
3. People might leave and pull on others to leave: People you've loved, people you've helped, maybe people you won.

B- Stripes will happen! Jesus even warned us about it-

1. **Matthew 5:11 (NCV)** "People will insult you and hurt you. They will lie and say all kinds of evil things about you because you follow me. But when they do, you will be blessed.

a. Jesus wants us to be encouraged in those moments, but it still hurts!

II STRIPE RESPONSE

A- The danger isn't that stripes may happen, the danger is that Stripes can take men out-

a. Men quit in the stripes, I'm done... Because,

1. This isn't worth it: The stripes are too great for the work and return I am seeing-
2. This is too difficult: Its too hard, I can't do this...
3. This isn't fair: Its not fair because its not true, its imbalanced, its dead wrong... I don't deserve this!
4. They run: Run to other things to heal hurt; Money, Entertainment, Carnality...

B- These are incorrect Responses-

1. Ministry & Calling isn't based on what we are seeing or not seeing... experiencing or not experiencing...

a. Its based on God! He called you, so He will help You-

b. SF: season of Stripes, Called PG, He told me "If God called you, then He will help you"

III TRUSTING GOD:

A- In Stripes we need to trust God!

a. PWM: asked how he stayed faithful even in lots of hurts, his answer "I have a relationship with God"

b. **2 Cor6:6-7** by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, ⁷ by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left-

1. Trust That God sees: God is the unseen observer in all of life! He will see to it that right turns out right!
2. Trust That God will heal: **1Pt2:24** "By **His stripes** you are healed."... Heal the hurts so that you can continue-
3. Trust That God will work out for our good: **Gen50:20** You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good.
4. Trust that God will give you lasting fruit: **1 Thess2:19** After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you!

a. For all the stripes we've received, those aren't my focus... My focus is on the lasting converts!