

STUDIES IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

“THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH”

STUDY #5: 2 Timothy 2:8-13

“Perseverance: In Single-minded Steadfastness
I will Stay the Course”

Key verse 2:15 — *“Make every effort to present yourself to God, approved, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, guiding the word of truth along a straight path.”*

TEXT:

Key verse 2:10

v. 8 Be keeping in mind Jesus Christ, who has been raised from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel.

v. 9 In which sphere of action I am suffering hardship even to the point of imprisonment as a criminal, but the word of God has not been bound.

v. 10 ***Because of this I am enduring all things for the sake of those who are chosen, in order that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.***

v. 11 Trustworthy is the word: For if we died together with Him, We shall also live together with Him.

v. 12 If we are persevering, we shall also reign with Him; If we shall deny Him, He also will deny us.

v. 13 If we are unfaithful, He is remaining faithful for He is not able to deny Himself.

INTRODUCTION:

(Humor for Preaching & Teaching from Leadership Journal & Christian Reader edited by Edward K. Rowell & Bonne L. Steffen)

Perseverance

A young woman from our congregation wrote me from graduate school. She reported on her studies and extra-curricular activities, which included participating in a Weight Watchers group.

Determined to lose weight, she had set a goal of losing 78 pounds. In fact, she wrote, she had already lost 16. But then she added the Bible reference John 6:9. I checked my Bible and read with a smile, “But what are they among so many?”

—Guy D. Mattox, Jr.

p. 132

(That Cat Won't Flush: An Entertaining Country Dictionary by Wallace O. Chariton)

FLATTERY . . . John Wayne said it best when he described flattery as the “phony express”

p. 92

GOSSIP . . . is like slinging fresh manure at a clean white wall. It may not stick but it leaves its mark.

p. 103

HEROES “We can't all be heroes because somebody has to sit on the curb and clap when they go by,” said Will Rogers.

p. 110

HOME The only place where you can always scratch where it itches

p. 111

(All Hat & No Cattle: A Guide for New Texans and All the West of Us
by Anne Dingus)

CRAZY

One taco short of a combination dinner.
He's got a few loose wingnuts.
She ain't wrapped too tight.
They left her out in the sun too long.
All vines and no taters.
All wax and no wick.

DEAD

They took him out in a sack.
They sent his saddle home.
He hung up his spurs.
He passed on, but it wasn't anything serious.
I can hear the screws squeakin' in my coffin.

(Never Ask A Man the Size of His Spread by Gladiola Montana)

p. 71

Opportunity may
knock just once,
but temptation is a
frequent visitor.

p. 131

Leisure to repent
is a luxury
ill-afforded.

(Coyote Cowboy Poetry by Baxter Black)

THE COYOTE

Take him for what he's worth, nothing more, nothing less.

I think I can speak for the coyote
With more understanding than most.
Especially those who defend him
And live on the New Jersey coast.

They raise up a pitiful cry
And claim he's a mistreated critter.
Who'll soon be extinct if the ranchers out west
Don't put down their rifles and quit'er.

But like all of God's creatures around us
There's always two sides to the tale.
I think if the coyote were human
That most of 'em would be in jail.

Cause there's no doubt he preys on the weaklings
Or the youngsters too little to run
He slits the throats of cute little lambs
And drags little calves from their mom.

So if you must describe him in terms
Such as wily, and clever and keen
You must also include homicidal,
Sadistic, demented and mean.

But I will choose to do neither
And somehow I wish you would, too.
For the coyote he has no conscience
He's just doin' the best he can do.

You can like and dislike the coyote,
Many ranchers I know do both
When he trespasses he'll get shot at
But his song in the night brings a toast.

A toast to our neighbor the coyote
Who'll outlive the earth and the sky.
And be here long after we've parted
Like the cockroach, the rat and the fly.
p. 160

(Quote Unquote compiled by Lloyd Cory)

I haven't been so scared since I donated [my] body to a medical school—and they said they want it now. (ROBERT ORBEN)
p. 116

“A widow,” said Johnny, “is a woman that has lived with her husband so long that he died.” (C. KENNEDY)

Widows are divided into two classes—the bereaved and the relieved. (MARILLA W. RICKER)

Widow Jones inherited a million dollars from her deceased husband, but she was terribly lonely. “I'd give ten thousand of it,” she sighed, “if I could have him back.” (QUOTE)
p. 360

(God in You: Releasing the Power of the Holy Spirit in Your Life
by David Jeremiah)

Two women, rivals in their social circle, met at a party. “My dear,” said the one, “are those *real* pearls?”

“They are,” replied the other.

“Of course,” said the first, smiling, “the only way I could really tell would be to bite one of them.”

“Yes,” agreed the bejeweled woman, “but for that you would need real teeth!”
p. 135

(Over The Hill & On A Roll: Laugh Lines for the Better Half of Life
by Bob Phillips)

You know you're growing old when you're finally able to resist temptation,
but it doesn't come around much anymore.

p. 106

I had a terrible experience last week. I enrolled for a memory course and
forgot why.

p. 127

Middle age is when you're willing to get up and give your seat to a lady—
and can't. —*Sammy Kaye*

p. 132

(Holy Hilarity by Cal & Rose Samra)

A local bishop was the speaker at a banquet for single women and widows.
There were more than 150 women there. The centerpieces on the tables were
given to the women who had a number on the back of their chairs.

The bishop expressed his regrets that not everyone got to take
something home, so he told each of the women to pick a number between
1 and 150 because there are 150 chapters in Psalms. Then everyone would
have something to take home.

One older woman, not understanding that they were to keep the
numbers to themselves, called out No. 56.

The bishop said he would read the psalm to the group. The first verse:
“Be merciful to me, O God, for men hotly pursue me; all day long they
press their attack!”

—VIA IDA MAE GEHMAN, PALMYRA, PENNSYLVANIA

pp. 6-7

(More Holy Hilarity by Cal & Rose Samra)

At the weekly Men in Motion luncheon at Central Baptist Church in Melbourne, Florida, the speaker was talking about the importance of forgiveness. He said, “The Lord has given me the command to forgive the wrongs of others, but He has not given me the ability to forget them.”

From the back of the room, an older man interrupted the speaker: “Just wait a few years!”

—VIA PALMER STILES, MELBOURNE, FLORIDA

p. 4

(Forever, Erma: Best-Loved Writing From America's Favorite Humorist
by Erma Bombeck)

Subversive Window Washer—September 29, 1967

A wonderful thing happened in our neighborhood last week. Wanda the window washer moved.

Wanda wasn't a bad sort. It's just when you get a woman of her kind who washes windows every 10 days the neighborhood gets a bad name.

I remember the day she moved in. We were all poking our heads through the cracks on our doors (our windows distort bodies), when right off we saw her unpack this big stepladder.

"Don't panic!" I told the group. "It's probably a garage prop. Undoubtedly got it for a wedding present and doesn't know what it's for."

Within minutes, she was shinnying up the rungs with a bucket in her hand and polishing the panes until we were nearly struck blind by the glare.

After that performance, homemade FOR SALE signs sprang up like crabgrass. We tried to reason with some of the homeowners, but they stood firm.

"We're selling before property values decrease," they insisted. "Sure, now it's only a window washer, but tomorrow it'll be a grass trimmer, a porch scrubber, a garbage can cleaner or even some nut who waxes the driveway."

Those of us who stood firm got it from all directions, especially our husbands.

"Hey," said my husband one evening, "is that woman across the street washing her windows again?"

"What windows?" I said, trying to divert his attention.

"You told me our windows weren't washable, that you had to send them out to be cleaned."

"Our windows aren't that dirty or I'd wash them."

"Aren't that dirty?" he shouted. "We're the only house in the block growing mushrooms for houseplants!"

"Can't you see what Wanda the window washer really is?" I asked. "She's a subversive. She was sent to this good upper-middle-class neighborhood of slobs to cause unrest, discontent and hostility. In time, she'll cause us to fight with our husbands, argue with our neighbors. The next thing you know, we'll divide politically and the country will be taken over by Communists."

The new neighbor moved in yesterday.

"How do you feel about washing windows?" we asked cautiously.

"The same way I feel about biting fingernails," she said. "It's a filthy habit. Besides, it's un-American."

Now, there's the kind of woman you'd like your son to marry.

pp. 60-61

THE SENILITY PRAYER

“God grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked
and the good fortune to run into the ones that I do,
and the eyesight to tell the difference.”

Now that I'm older, here's what I've discovered:

- ➔ I started out with nothing, and I still have most of it.
- ➔ My wild oats have turned into prunes and All Bran.
- ➔ All reports are in; life is now officially unfair.
- ➔ If all is not lost, where is it?
- ➔ It is easier to get older than it is to get wiser.
- ➔ Some days you're the dog, some days you're the hydrant.
- ➔ I wish the buck stopped here. I sure could use a few . . .
- ➔ Kids in the back seat cause accidents.
- ➔ Accidents in the back seat cause . . . kids!!
- ➔ It's hard to make a comeback when you haven't been anywhere.
- ➔ If God wanted me to touch my toes, he would have put them on my knees.
- ➔ When I'm finally holding all the cards, why does everyone decide to play chess!
- ➔ It's not hard to meet expenses . . . they're everywhere.
- ➔ The only difference between a rut and a grave is the depth.
- ➔ These days, I spend a lot of time thinking about the hereafter . . . I go somewhere to get something and then wonder what I'm here after!!

(Received via e-mail from Nesom & Beth Burt, August 18, 2000)

(Lighten Up! by Ken Davis)

Here's a list of personal reminders I use:

I will never play golf like Tiger Woods.
 I will never play football and live to tell about it.
 I will never be the wordsmith my friend and best-selling author is.
 I will never change the world with my deep philosophical
 contributions.
 I will never get the lead role in *Titanic*.
 I will never beat my mother in a game of cards.

Here is the most important fact concerning the above:

IT DOESN'T MATTER.

Then why, I ask, does my mind herd all those negative thoughts together and nurture them? Here is all that matters:

God made me in his image.
 God made me unique.
 God loves me.

p. 208

Aging ain't easy, but it sure can be a ton of fun if you determine it so.

In our study of the little book of 2 Timothy, which is Paul's last letter written from prison just before he is executed, we have come up with the title for the series:

“THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH.”

Thus far we have talked about FOUR STEPS:

Step #1: INTEGRITY: Getting It All Together (2 Tim. 1:1-7)

Step #2: CONVICTION: Here I Stand, God Help Me (2 Tim. 1:8-12)

Step #3: COURAGE: I Am Willing To Pay The Price (2 Tim. 1:13-18)

Step #4: LEGACY: What Am I Passing On? (2 Tim. 2:1-7)

We now come to:

Step #5: PERSEVERANCE: In Single-Minded Steadfastness, I Will Stay The Course (2 Tim. 2:8-13)

Our KEY VERSE will be verse 10.

(The Enemy Within: Straight Talk About the Power and Defeat of Sin
by Kris Lundgaard)

*John Henry was a li'l baby, uh-huh,
Sittin' on his mama's knee, oh, yeah,
Said: "De Big Bend Tunnel on de C. & O. road
Gonna cause de death of me,
Lawd, Lawd, gonna cause de death of me."*

John Henry's Hammer

John Henry was a man. He out-dug the steam drill through the mountain, fifteen feet to nine. He drove so hard he broke his poor heart,

An' he lied down his hammer an' he died,
Lawd, Lawd, he lied down his hammer an' he died.

When we sing the legend of John Henry to our children, we sing the song of a hero. We sing up a storm of celebration as the sweat flies like rain off John Henry's body, and the wind from his swinging hammer roars through the tunnel. We exalt his hard work, his determination, his skill, his heart. He held nothing back—he gave his life to the work.

p. 69

(God's Little Devotional Book on Success by Honor Books)

While Mike Kollin was a linebacker for the Miami Dolphins, his former college coach — Shug Jordan of Auburn University — asked him to do some recruiting for him. Mike said, “Sure, coach. What kind of player are you looking for?”

Jordan replied, “Well, Mike, you know there’s that fellow, you knock him down, he just stays down?” Mike said, “We don’t want him, do we, coach?”

“No, that’s right,” the coach said. “Then there’s that fellow, you knock him down and he gets up, but you knock him down again and he stays down.” Mike responded, “We don’t want him either, do we, coach?”

Jordan said, “No, but Mike, there’s a fellow, you knock him down, he gets up. Knock him down, he gets up. Knock him down, he gets up. Knock him down, he gets up.” Mike responded enthusiastically, “That’s the guy we want, isn’t it, coach?”

The coach answered, “No, we don’t want him either. I want you to find that guy who’s knocking everybody down. That’s the guy we want!”¹²⁹

The key to success lies not only in doing good work, but in getting the job done.

¹²⁹*Illustrations Unlimited*, James S. Hewett, ed. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1988), p. 466. p. 267

(God's Little Devotional Book for Leaders by Honor Books, Inc.)

**Success seems to be
largely a matter of
hanging on after
others have let go.**

n n n

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering,
for He who promised is faithful.*

Hebrews 10:23 NKJV

On a cold Saturday morning in January, in a small Wisconsin town on the southern shore of Lake Superior, an annual dog sled derby was about to begin. The course had been staked out by little fir trees secured to the ice.

The racers were all children — from large boys with several dogs and big sleds to one little boy who had only a small sled and one small dog. On the signal, the sleds took off and the little fellow was soon so far behind he hardly seemed to be in the race. Then, about halfway through the course, the second-place team tried to move into first place. The sleds came too close and the dogs began to fight. As each subsequent sled came upon the fight, more dogs became involved. The scene was soon one big, seething knot of kids, sleds, and dogs. All thought of *racing* had vanished from the minds of the sledders. However, the one little fellow and his dog managed to skirt the others and went on to win the race!

Part of any success is refusing to become distracted. Pursue your goals today, without wavering or hesitating. Keep your eyes on the finish line.
pp. 110-11

(Time-Out Leadership by Donald Luce)

At times I may be tempted to give up, but I will not. The test of my genius rests in my determination to persevere and overcome all obstacles.

p. 57

Famous People I

1. The memo from the testing director of MGM, shortly after Fred Astaire's first screen test, read: "Can't act! Slightly bald! Can dance a little!"
2. An older "expert" once said of another young coach, "He possesses minimal football knowledge. Lacks motivation." In case you're wondering, he was referring to Vince Lombardi.
3. The parents of Enrico Caruso believed his teacher, who said he had "no voice at all—he just cannot sing." They urged him to be an engineer.
4. Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper editor for "lack of ideas."
5. Thomas Edison's teachers gave up on him. "He's too stupid to do anything," was their evaluation.
6. Before he succeeded, Henry Ford failed and went broke *five* times.

Charles Swindoll, *Kindred Spirit*, Vol. 22, No. 3, Autumn, 1998, p. 3.

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

Death and sorrow will be the companions of our journey; hardship our garment; constancy and valor our only shield. We must be united, we must be undaunted, we must be inflexible.

—Sir Winston Churchill, 1940

(From *Parson's Technology*)

(Color Outside the Lines: A Revolutionary Approach to Creative Leadership
by Howard G. Hendricks and Charles R. Swindoll, General Editor)

He failed in business in '31.
He was defeated for state legislator in '32.
He tried another business in '33. It failed.
His fiancée died in '35.
He had a nervous breakdown in '36.
In '43 he ran for Congress and was defeated.
He tried again in '48 and was defeated again.
He tried running for the Senate in '55. He lost.
The next year he ran for Vice President and lost.
In '58 he ran for the Senate again and was defeated again.
Finally, in 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected the
16th president of the United States.
—Byrd Baggett, Dare to Soar

p. 67

Let us see if we can come to some kind of a DEFINITION for PERSEVERANCE and what we are talking about in this particular study.

PERSEVERANCE is that determined continuation with something. It is steady and continued action or belief, usually over a long period, and especially despite difficulties or set-backs.

We are talking about:

SINGLE-MINDED STEADFASTNESS,

SINGLENESSE OF PURPOSE, or

PLODDING PERSEVERANCE.

Perseverance:

Never say die.

Keep at it.

Keep the pot boiling.

Keep the ball rolling.

Sweat it out.

Stay the course.

Dig in your heels and grit your teeth.

Go down with the ship.

Die with your boots on.

Die in the harness.

It was David Garrick who said:

“Steady boys, steady. We’ll fight and we’ll conquer again and again.”
(source unknown)

It was Virgil who said:

“Fortune favors the bold.”
(source unknown)

As we begin our study on Step #5:

PERSEVERANCE: In Single-minded Steadfastness I will Stay the Course

let us take for our verse:

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

Now as we approach the passage, 2 Timothy 2:8-13, let us prepare our hearts with a few words from some of the commentaries that will get us into the passage.

King says:

WHAT a gold-mine of truth and blessing the passage is: every sentence an ingot, every word a nugget, the whole immensely wealthy with the glittering commodity of the Gospel.

p. 47

Barclay says:

RIGHT from the beginning of this letter Paul has been trying to urge and to inspire Timothy to his task. He has reminded him of his own belief in him; he has reminded him of the godly parentage from which he has come; he has shown him the picture of the Christian soldier, the Christian athlete and the Christian toiler. And now he comes to the greatest appeal of all—*Remember Jesus Christ*.

p. 188

Fee tells us:

This present paragraph provides the theological basis for the appeal. Timothy is urged to remember Jesus Christ himself, whose resurrection and Davidic descent are to bring him confidence (v. 8). But this mention of Christ leads to yet another reminder of Paul's imprisonment and the reasons for it (vv. 9-10). He then concludes with the fifth "faithful saying," a quatrain, apparently from a hymn or poem, which both encourages endurance (line 2) and warns against its lack (line 3), but concludes on the high note of God's faithfulness (line 4).

p. 245

Stott titles these verses:

SUFFERING A CONDITION OF BLESSING (verses 8-13)

p. 60

He says further:

We come now to a new paragraph before the apostle introduces three more metaphors to illustrate the role of the Christian worker. So far we may summarize his theme by the epigram ‘nothing that is easy is ever worth while’, or rather the reverse ‘nothing that is worth while is ever easy’. No soldier, athlete or farmer expects results without labour or suffering. Here Paul continues the same theme.

p. 60

Knight titles the verses we will be considering:

**THREE BASES FOR THE APPEAL TO SUFFER AND ENDURE:
2:8-13**

p. 396

He then says further:

In the case of all Christians, enduring is part of their calling, and the result of their endurance is that they “reign with Christ.”

p. 397

Hughes says:

It is apparent from the Old Testament that remembering the great acts of God is essential to the spiritual well-being of God’s children. In fact, God is very directive about this.

p. 199

MacArthur titles this section:

Motives for Sacrificial Ministry

p. 51

He goes on to say:

Any careful student of the New Testament knows that a true confession of Jesus as Savior and Lord involves willing, unconditional submission to Him and to the work of His kingdom—whatever the cost might be, even if it is death.

p. 52

He then says:

During World War II, eleven missionaries were martyred on the Island of Panay in the Philippines. One of these was Dr. Francis Rose, who had penned these poignant and challenging words in what is commonly called “The Martyr’s Hymn”:

All human progress up to God
Has stained the stairs of time with blood;
For every gain for Christendom
Is bought by someone’s martyrdom.

For us he poured the crimson cup,
And bade us take and drink it up.
Himself he poured to set us free.
Help us, O Christ, to drink with Thee.

Ten thousand saints come thronging home,
From lion’s den and catacomb.
The fire and sword and beasts defied;
For Christ, their King, they gladly died.

With eye of faith we see today
That cross-led column wind its way
Up life’s repeated Calvary.
We rise, O Christ, to follow Thee!

pp. 53-54

MacArthur then introduces the passage by saying:

In 2 Timothy 2:8-13, Paul assures this young pastor that, nevertheless, there is more than reason enough for him, and all Christians, to willingly suffer for Christ, to put everything in this life on the line for Him. No sacrifice—mockery, alienation, rejection, desertion, imprisonment, or even death—is too high a price to pay. The importance and the rewards of a faithful life and ministry, not to mention the honor and glory of the Lord we trust and serve, far outweigh any personal sacrifice that our trust and service may incite.

p. 54

He then says this:

Paul may have anticipated questions that would come to Timothy's mind after the admonitions of 2:1-6. "*Why* should I be a faithful teacher of teachers?" he may have wondered. "*Why* should I suffer hardship like a soldier, compete to win like an athlete, and toil hard like a farmer?"

Whatever Timothy may have been thinking, the apostle offers four powerful motives for faithfulness. He calls him to remember the preeminence of the Lord (v. 8), the power of the Word (v. 9), the purpose of the work (v. 10), and the promise of reward (vv. 11-13).

p. 55

A good verse for us to MEDITATE upon is the Lord's answer to Jeremiah in:

Jeremiah 12:5

"If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?"

God is ever in the business of TURNING UP THE HEAT in order to:

PURIFY US and

make us PROFITABLE for Him.

v. 8 Be keeping in mind Jesus Christ, who has been raised from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel.

Our passage opens with a COMMAND:

“BE KEEPING IN MIND JESUS CHRIST.”

This reminds me of:

Luke 22:19

And having taken some bread, when He had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to them saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

Hebrews 12:2

fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

How easy it is for us to GET DISTRACTED. To look on:

the CIRCUMSTANCES rather than on

the SAVIOR.

PETER faced this situation as he got out of the boat and began walking on the water to Jesus. Everything was going fine as he kept his eyes upon the Savior. But when he began to be troubled by the waves and the wind and took his eyes off Jesus, he began to sink.

So we, likewise, need to take heed that we do not take our eyes off Jesus and get them upon the service He has called us to do, or upon the problems of daily living, or the attractiveness of the world.

Isaiah 26:3 (KJV)

Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee:

In 2 Chronicles we find Hezekiah facing the forces of Sennacherib. As he makes military preparations he sets about to strengthen the morale of his people by saying in:

2 Chronicles 32:7, 8 (version unknown)

“Be strong and of a good courage. Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of Assyria and all the horde that is with him. With him is the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord God to help us and fight our battles.” And the people took confidence from the words of Hezekiah.”

“BE KEEPING IN MIND JESUS CHRIST.”

As I was reading my *Daily Bread* booklet I found this piece by Bosch:

*A wonderful joy is now flooding my heart,
Giving assurance that will not depart.
My Savior is living and reigning above;
Life has rich meaning because of his love.* —Bosch

(From *Our Daily Bread*, Saturday, January 6, 2001)

There are TWO THINGS that Timothy is commanded to remember about Jesus Christ:

1. “WHO HAS BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD” and
2. He is a “DESCENDANT OF DAVID.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Paul rather abruptly introduced the ultimate example of endurance leading to success: **Jesus Christ** . . . The purpose of the fleeting reference is not to expound, but simply to suggest to Timothy a rich subject for his meditation (2 Tim. 2:7) . . .

p. 753

2 Timothy 2:7 (DAV)

Think over what I am saying, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things.

“BE KEEPING IN MIND JESUS CHRIST, WHO HAS BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD.”

Make no mistake about it, He is a LIVING SAVIOR! He is:

ALIVE,

AVAILABLE,

ACTIVE, and

AWARE of what is going on in our individual lives.

1 Corinthians 15:3, 4

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

The LIVING CHRIST marks us off from all other religions of the world. We do not have a dead leader, but a living Christ. One Who has conquered death and now is alive for evermore. Because He lives, we too shall live!

1 Corinthians 15:19, 20

If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most to be pitied. But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.

Fee observes:

In his 'bearing in mind **Jesus Christ**," Timothy is to focus on two realities: that he was **raised from the dead** and that he was **descended from David** (lit., "of David's seed").

p. 246

Wiersbe says:

"Remember Jesus Christ!" is the way this phrase should be translated. It sounds almost like a war cry, like "Remember the Alamo!" or "Remember Pearl Harbor!" Jesus is the Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10), and our purpose is to bring honor and glory to Him. What an encouragement Jesus Christ is to a suffering Christian soldier! For He died and rose again, proving that suffering leads to glory, and that seeming defeat leads to victory. Jesus was treated as an evildoer, and His soldiers will be treated the same way.

p. 131

Lea & Griffin point out:

The perfect tense of the participle for "raised" suggests that Paul was stressing the result of Christ's resurrection, the demonstration of his lordship (Rom. 1:4), rather than the fact of the resurrection. Jesus' resurrection from the dead is the prime example of eschatological victory after death. It provides an encouragement for anyone facing suffering.

p. 206

Gaebelein says:

In connection with this he was to remember “that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from among the dead” according to the Gospel, which he calls “my gospel”—“wherein I suffer as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the Word of God is not bound.” Christ suffered, and though He is of the seed of David and has the promises of David’s throne, yet it is not yet His; He waits patiently for it upon the Father’s throne. In the meantime He, raised from among the dead (the seal upon His blessed work), has given His gospel of grace and glory to be preached.

p. 188

Kelly says:

Paul now resumes his theme, representing Christ as the supreme inspiration of Christian service. The disciple should **Bear in mind** the Messiah himself, who, though he now reigns in glory, is **risen from the dead**. The innuendo probably is that even he had to walk the way of the cross and taste death before being exalted.

pp. 176-7

Towner says:

That this section forms a basis for the teaching that precedes is clear from the connecting imperative *remember*. Paul goes back to the basics to ground Timothy’s thinking—a fresh statement of the elementary gospel. The first thing to notice is the content of this gospel presentation. It consists of a person, *Jesus Christ*, and two events, resurrection and incarnation or Davidic descent. While we might be surprised at what Paul has left out of this summary of the gospel (forgiveness of sins, salvation, eternal life and so on), what he has included probably spoke directly to Timothy’s situation.

p. 175

Lenski translates the PRESENT IMPERATIVE by saying:

. . . “ever keep in memory Jesus Christ.” Now Paul places “Jesus” first and “Christ” second in order to indicate that the Jesus who lived on earth was the Christ. The perfect participle is predicative: remember him “as having been raised up from the dead,” as even being the one so raised up.
p. 786

Guthrie says:

The apostle next strengthens the appeal to his own teaching by directing attention to his Master. As Bengel says, ‘Paul, as usual, quickens (gives life to) his own example by the example of Christ’.
p. 142

Quinn & Wacker point out:

With the solemn present imperative “Keep in mind (*mnēmoneue* . . .),” the exhortation moves to a new level. The singular imperative of Rev 3:3, which matches the singular of this verse, is particularly notable where the church of Sardis is told, “Remember then what you received and heard (*eilēphas kai ēkousas*); keep (*tērei*) that and repent.”
p. 643

Matthew Henry says:

To encourage Timothy in suffering, the apostle puts him in mind of the resurrection of Christ (*v. 8*). The consideration of it should make us faithful to our Christian profession. The incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ, heartily believed and rightly considered, will support a Christian under all sufferings in the present life.
p. 1895

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

Remember Christ risen, so as to follow Him. As He was raised after death, so if thou wouldest share His risen “life,” thou must now share His “death” (vs. 11). The *Greek* perfect passive participle, implies a *permanent character* acquired by Jesus as *the risen Saviour*, and *our permanent interest in Him as such*. Christ’s resurrection is put prominently forward as being the truth now assailed (vs. 18), and the one best calculated to stimulate Timothy to steadfastness in sharing Paul’s sufferings for the Gospel’s sake . . .
p. 1376

MacArthur says:

“Timothy,” Paul is saying, “your service will be more aggressive, you will have greater courage, greater boldness, greater endurance of evil treatment and of suffering for the Lord if you **remember** His preeminence, who He really is—none other than God incarnate, Jesus Christ.”
p. 55

He says further:

The preeminence of our Lord **Jesus Christ** should always be in the forefront of our minds. He is the supreme and ultimate teacher of teachers. He was the greatest soldier, the greatest athlete, and the greatest farmer, as it were. He fought the greatest battle and won the greatest victory. He ran the greatest race and won the greatest prize. He sowed the perfect seed and reaped the perfect harvest.
p. 56

Hughes says:

Beginning with verse 8, Paul again takes up the emphasis on godly memory by urging upon Timothy the grand essential memory—“Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel.” This is the first and foremost of three successive memories essential to standing tall and suffering for Christ.
p. 201

Knight says:

Paul urges Timothy always to “keep in mind” and “think about” . . . Jesus Christ, the one raised from the dead, the descendant of David, who is both according to the Pauline gospel.
p. 397

Stott raises the question:

How could Timothy ever forget him? Yet the human memory is notoriously fickle: it is possible to forget even one’s own name! The epitaph over Israel’s grave was ‘they soon forgot’, and it was to overcome our forgetfulness of Christ crucified that he deliberately instituted his supper as a feast of remembrance, a fragrant ‘forget-me-not’. Even so the church has often forgotten Jesus Christ, absorbing itself instead now in barren theological debate, now in purely humanitarian activity, now in its own petty, parochial business.
p. 61

Barclay says:

Paul is not so much saying to Timothy: “Remember the actual resurrection of Jesus”; rather he is saying: “Remember Jesus for ever risen and for ever present; remember your risen and your ever-present Lord.” Here is the great Christian inspiration.
p. 189

Liefeld titles these verses:

Reasons for Enduring Hardship (2:8-13)

p. 248

Barnes observes:

“Think of the Saviour, now raised up from the dead after all the sorrows of this life, and let this encourage you to bear *your* trials.” There is nothing better fitted to enable us to endure the labours and trials of this life, than to think of the Saviour.

p. 223

Hendriksen says:

“Keep in memory Jesus Christ as raised from the dead,” says Paul. Having been raised once for all from the realm in which death reigns, Jesus Christ now remains forever the risen One; hence, the living One (Rev. 1:17, 18).

p. 250

Milne says:

Remember Jesus Christ (verse 8) is another line of thought Paul uses to encourage young Timothy to be strong and to bear up in the face of future suffering. Jesus Christ also suffered to bring about our salvation (1 Pet. 3:18).

p. 146

Milne says further:

Christ’s resurrection marked the beginning of his rule as sovereign Lord and proved that he was **descended from David** as the promised Messiah (Rom. 1:3f). The Davidic descent of Jesus is important because when the Lord made his covenant with David he promised that one of his descendents would ascend his throne and rule eternally and universally (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Psa. 89:19-37).

p. 147

Stott says:

First, his person. The words ‘descended from David’ imply his humanity, for they speak of his earthly descent from David. The words ‘risen from the dead’ imply his divinity, for he was powerfully designated God’s Son by his resurrection from the dead.

Secondly, his work. The phrase ‘risen from the dead’ indicates that he died for our sins and was raised to prove the efficacy of his sinbearing sacrifice. The phrase ‘descended from David’ indicates that he has established his kingdom as great David’s greater Son (cf. Lk. 1:32, 33). Taken together, the two phrases seem to allude to his double role as Saviour and King.
pp. 61-62

He says finally:

Both expressions set forth in embryonic form the contrast between humiliation and exaltation.

‘So then, Timothy,’ the apostle seems to be saying, ‘when you are tempted to avoid pain, humiliation, suffering or death in your ministry, remember Jesus Christ and think again!’
p. 62

Lea & Griffin say:

. . . the mention that Christ “descended from David” shows that Christ has messianic qualifications and is the heir to the glorious promises of God for David. As the Messiah he is now seated in glory on his heavenly throne and will come again to reign over this world (Heb 1:3; 10:12-13). Paul presented Christ as the fulfillment of God’s promise.
p. 206

Hendriksen says:

Coordinated with this exhortation is the one: “Keep in memory Jesus Christ as the seed of David.” This follows very naturally; for, *the risen One* is surely also *the reigning One!*

p. 250

Hendriksen says still further:

. . . “Timothy, constantly remember that, as living and reigning Lord, Jesus Christ is able as well as willing to help you and to carry you through. Not Nero but Jesus Christ, exalted at the right hand of the Father, has the reins of the universe in his hands and will continue to govern all things in the interest of the church and unto the glory of God.

p. 251

Wilson comments:

If it be asked why Paul here introduces this pregnant statement of the central facts of the gospel entrusted to him, the answer cannot lie in the need to remind Timothy of the truth of the doctrine, but rather in its application to the hardships he must endure as the preacher of a faith outlawed by men. Hence it should be seen as a call to follow the path marked out by the Saviour who suffered the agonies of the cross before he was crowned with glory and honour. ‘Remember it for thine encouragement; that Christ, for a reward of his sufferings, was both raised and exalted, Phil. 2.9’ (Trapp). Timothy will be strengthened for the conflict as he keeps in mind the raised and reigning heir of David’s line, Jesus Christ, with whom we shall also live and reign in glory . . .

p. 141

Lock says:

. . .but keep Him in your mind as a Living Risen Lord who is able to give His life to you . . .

p. 95

Michael Griffiths raises the question:

What is Paul's train of thought here? Jesus, the anointed Messiah, suffered rejection and the cross while his ancestor David, though anointed king, was a refugee relentlessly pursued by Saul. Timothy will remember that both Jesus and David knew what it was to endure hardships and sufferings, and yet they triumphed over them all.

p. 184

Demarest says:

It is this Jesus upon whom our memory is to focus in the midst of our problems and difficulties. The power of memory must never be underestimated. In the deepest sense we are what we remember. Memory is the lense through which we view our world. We relate to the present through our memories of the past. Our present attitudes are shaped by how we remember past events. The same event can have entirely different effects, depending upon how it is remembered.

p. 259

J. Vernon McGee says:

Paul just stops to say, "Remember Jesus Christ." Isn't that lovely! What about Him? He's of the seed of David. That means He's going to sit on David's throne down here. Also, He was raised from the dead, "according to my gospel." It is Paul's gospel because he's the one who preached this gospel.

p. 466

Hawthorne & Martin say:

Romans 1:3-4 is an important christological statement which speaks of the Son in two aspects, his earthly descent and his resurrection glory. Here we focus on Romans 1:3: in the sphere of the flesh (*kata sarka*), Jesus is said to have been “born of the seed of David” (a phrase we find again at the end of the Pauline corpus in 2 Tim 2:8). This phrase in itself indicates not only Jesus’ Jewishness and humanity, but also focuses on the pedigree warranting his title Messiah/Christ. This surely implies some stress on his royalty.
p. 109

They say further:

In a sense then, it is true to say that the linchpin of Paul’s eschatology is the proclamation of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. At the same time it also needs to be said that the key event which guarantees, or authenticates, that messiahship is the raising of Jesus from the dead.
p. 256

They say finally:

Although it would be going too far to suggest that for Paul the resurrection is the act that inaugurates Jesus’ messiahship, it certainly would be true to say that his messiahship is vindicated and proclaimed by means of it. Indeed, it is possible to see the resurrection of Jesus as demonstrating not only his messiahship but his cosmic lordship . . .
p. 811

“BE KEEPING IN MIND JESUS CHRIST, WHO HAS BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD, DESCENDANT OF DAVID, ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL.”

The “DESCENDANT OF DAVID” refers to Him as the Messiah, the soon coming King.

Luke 1:32, 33

“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.”

Revelation 22:16

“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star.”

The fact that “JESUS CHRIST”:

1. “HAS BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD” and
2. “DESCENDANT OF DAVID,”

these things are “ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL.”

Knight, speaking on this last phrase “ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL,” says:

Thus the phrase speaks of the good news that Paul proclaims . . .
p. 398

MacArthur says:

According to my gospel does not refer to Paul's personal opinion about the gospel but to the divinely revealed message of Jesus Christ entrusted to him and that he proclaimed as "an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God" (2 Tim. 1:1). It was the One who was the theme of the gospel he was referring to when he said, "Timothy, keep your eyes on the preeminent Jesus Christ as the Son of God as well as the Son of man, and as Savior as well as Lord and King."
p. 58

Hughes says:

It is important for us to realize that these two things—his resurrection and his messiahship—make up the essential gospel. Paul says, "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. *This is my gospel*" (v. 8, italics added). Certainly there are other elements in the gospel (Christ's atoning death, imputed righteousness that comes by faith alone through Christ alone, forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and so on), but this is shorthand for the whole thing. "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel."
p. 202

He says further:

Jesus Christ did not come out of nowhere. He is the fulfillment of everything the Scriptures pointed to concerning the Messiah. Jesus Christ was resurrected and remains so. He lives! He is all-powerful! Keep on remembering this.
p. 203

Lea & Griffin say:

The phrase “my gospel” helps us to recognize that the twin emphases of this verse were a part of the gospel Paul proclaimed. The phrase does not suggest that Paul alone was the source of the emphasis but, in line with Paul’s statements in 1 Tim 1:11, asserts that these are truths God had revealed to Paul.

p. 207

They say finally:

The memory of Christ cloaked with resurrection power and messianic dignity is an inspiration for Christian service. Such a powerful Savior can stimulate a diffident disciple such as Timothy to new vigor and hope.

p. 207

Calvin says:

Paul refers to **my gospel** not because he claims to be author of the Gospel, but because he is its minister.

p. 133

Milne says:

This is my gospel does not mean that Paul claimed to have originated the gospel, a suggestion he vehemently denies elsewhere (Gal. 1:11f.). The words rather express his strong sense of responsibility for this gospel with regard to its propagation and progress in the world. Paul’s gospel consists of a number of biblically-based propositions which centre around the historical figure of Jesus Christ, his royal descent, his saving death and resurrection. According to the apostle there is no other gospel than this, and any other that claims the name must be rejected (Gal. 1:8f.).

p. 147

Spurgeon says:

There is no doubt that there is another state for human life, for Jesus has been in it, and has come back from it. We have no doubt as to a future existence, for Jesus existed after death. We have no doubt as to a paradise of future bliss, for Jesus went to it and returned. Though He has left us again, yet that coming back to tarry with us forty days has given us a sure pledge that He will return a second time when the hour is due, and then will be with us for a thousand years, and reign on earth amongst His ancients gloriously. His return from among the dead is a pledge to us for existence after death, and we rejoice in it.

p. 848

He says further:

. . . *The resurrection of our Lord, according to Scripture, was the acceptance of His sacrifice.* By the Lord Jesus Christ rising from the dead evidence was given that He had fully endured the penalty which was due to human guilt.

p. 848

Steve Brown related the story of a British soldier in the First World War who lost heart for the battle and deserted. Trying to reach the coast for a boat to England that night, he ended up wandering in the pitch black night, hopelessly lost. In the darkness he came across what he thought was a signpost. It was so dark that he began to climb the post so that he could read it. As he reached the top of the pole, he struck a match to see and found himself looking squarely into the face of Jesus Christ. He realized that, rather than running into a signpost, he had climbed a roadside crucifix. Brown explained, “Then he remembered the One who had died for him—who had endured—who had never turned back. The next morning the soldier was back in the trenches.”

As a runner, when you are tired, afraid and discouraged, the best way I know to get your second wind is to strike a match in the darkness and to look on the face of Jesus Christ.

—To Illustrate, *Preaching Magazine*, Jan.-Feb. 1989.

(From *Parson's Technology*)

(God in You: Releasing the Power of the Holy Spirit in Your Life
by David Jeremiah)

On one bulletin board, someone tacked up a sign that read: “In case of fire, flee the building with the same reckless abandon that occurs each day at quitting time.”

Or maybe you’ve seen this one: “If you don’t believe in the resurrection from the dead, you oughtta be here five minutes before quitting time.”
p. 225

(Quote Unquote compiled by Lloyd Cory)

Look backward—see Christ dying for you.
Look upward—see Christ pleading for you.
Look inward—see Christ living in you.
Look forward—see Christ coming for you.
p. 52

(Quotes for the Journey, Wisdom for the Way compiled by Gordon S. Jackson)

Jesus tasted death. But hell’s party was cancelled after only three days.
—JOSEPH STOWELL
p. 45

(Illustrations Unlimited by James S. Hewett, editor)

A VOICE TO SHOUT

On the Easter just before he died, D. William Sangster painfully printed a short note to his daughter. A deeply spiritual Methodist, he had been spearheading a renewal movement in the British Isles after World War II. Then his ministry, except for prayer, was ended by a disease which progressively paralyzed his body, even his vocal chords. But the last Resurrection Sunday he spent on earth, still able to move his fingers, he wrote: “How terrible to wake up on Easter and have no voice to shout, ‘He is risen!’ Far worse, to have a voice and not want to shout.”
p. 167

(God's Little Devotional Book on Success by Honor Books)

. . . a battle against indecision, procrastination, and laziness. The following poem offers an antidote:

We are often greatly bothered
By two fussy little men,
Who sometimes block our pathway —
Their names are How and When.

If we have a task or duty
Which we can put off a while,
And we do not go and do it —
You should see these two rogues smile!

But there is a way to beat them,
And I will tell you how:
If you have a task or duty,
Do it *well*, and do it *now*.

When the submarine *Squalas* and its crew became immobilized on the floor of the Atlantic ocean, a ten-ton diving bell was lowered several times, bringing the thirty-three surviving members of the crew to safety. An observer noted, "Not one of the men said, 'I think I'll wait for another opportunity.'"¹²³

Look at every opportunity with a sense of urgency. It may be the missing ingredient that will propel you forward.

¹²³*Knight's Treasury of 2,000 Illustrations*, Walter B. Knight (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), p. 300.
p. 255

v. 9 In which sphere of action I am suffering hardship even to the point of imprisonment as a criminal, but the word of God has not been bound.

When the Apostle uses the phrase “IN WHICH SPHERE OF ACTION,” he is referring BACK to the “gospel” in verse 8.

This “gospel” Paul has been talking about is the “gospel” for which he is “SUFFERING HARDSHIP.”

Paul is identifying with what he has asked to Timothy to do in:

2 Timothy 2:3 (DAV)

Suffer hardships with me as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

Paul is not only “SUFFERING HARDSHIP,” but he is wearing chains as “A CRIMINAL.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Preaching the good news about the crucified but resurrected Son of David was what had landed Paul in a Roman jail. Much of the Book of Acts catalogs Paul’s suffering for the cause of Christ . . .
p. 753

Milne says:

Because he believed in this gospel with all his heart, Paul was willing even to endure the shame and suffering of prison for its sake.
p. 147

Lea & Griffin say:

Paul's imprisonment involved "being chained like a criminal." The chains impeded Paul's movement and added to his misery. The term "criminal" (*kakourgos*) is used in Luke 23:32 to refer to the brigands who died with Jesus. Its use shows that Paul had serious charges lodged against him. The harshness of this second imprisonment made his earlier imprisonments seem mild . . .
p. 207

Barnes says:

This is one of Paul's happy turns of thought; . . . The meaning is plain. The gospel was prospered. *That* could not be fettered and imprisoned. It circulated with freedom, even when he who was appointed to preach it was in chains; . . . As this was the great matter, his own imprisonment was of comparatively little consequence. What may befall *us* is of secondary importance. The grand thing is the triumph of truth on the earth; and well may *we* bear privations and sorrows, if the gospel moves on in triumph.
p. 224

Barclay says:

You can exile a man, but you cannot exile the truth. You can imprison a preacher but you cannot imprison the word he preaches. The message is always greater than the man. The truth is always mightier than the bearer.
p. 193

Paul is saying, here in verse 9:

**"IN WHICH SPHERE OF ACTION I AM SUFFERING HARDSHIP
EVEN TO THE POINT OF IMPRISONMENT AS A CRIMINAL, BUT
THE WORD OF GOD HAS NOT BEEN BOUND."**

YOU CANNOT PUT A CHAIN ON IT, YOU CANNOT PUT IT IN PRISON!

You CANNOT:

CHAIN it or

CHANGE it!

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Paul's apparent shame and impotence should be no cause for alarm, discouragement, or faintheartedness.

p. 753

Guthrie says:

The words *I suffer trouble as an evil doer* may possibly throw light on the charge brought against the apostle, for *kakourgos* is the contemporary word for 'criminal' (RSV) or 'malefactor' (RV), and suggests that Paul was being treated as a common criminal. It is worthy of notice that the only other place where the word is used in the New Testament is in Lk. [23] xxiii. 32, 39, where it describes those crucified with Jesus.

p. 143

Guthrie says further:

The persecution of Christian leaders may hamper the progress of the gospel, but it cannot imprison the Word of God nor prevent its spread.

p. 144

What a tremendous note of triumph when he says:

“BUT THE WORD OF GOD HAS NOT BEEN BOUND.”

You can bind the:

MINISTER but not the MESSAGE,

WITNESS but not the WORD.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Philippians 1:12-14

Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well-known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

Paul knows full well that no matter what happens to him:

“THE WORD OF GOD [cannot be] BOUND.”

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith
And heard the anvil ring the vespered chime,
And looking in I saw upon the floor
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

How many anvils have you had,
Said I to wear and batter all these hammers so?
Just one, said he, then with a twinkling eye,
The anvil wears the hammers out you know.

And so thought I the anvil of God's Word
For ages skeptics blows have beat upon,
Yet though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed. The hammers gone.

(source unknown)

Lea & Griffin say:

Paul's indomitable spirit broke out in the declaration "God's word is not chained." Men could silence Paul, but they could not silence the power of God's Word (see Phil. 1:12-18).

p. 207

Milne says:

The state authorities may silence Christ's messenger, but the Word of God cannot be silenced because it is the living and abiding Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23). This is the apostle's hope as he languishes in prison and faces almost certain death. All servants of Christ must come to terms sooner or later with the fact of their own mortality, and the fact that Christ's work in the world does not depend on any one individual, even an apostle. The work will continue because it depends on God who is always at work through his Word as the power of his salvation.

p. 148

Lenski says:

The fact that Paul was chained 1:16 states. Like one who had committed the foulest crimes Paul was confined in a foul dungeon.

See the interlocking chiasmic terms: "in connection with which *gospel* I am suffering *foul disgrace* to the extent of *imprisonment* as a *foul criminal*—but the *Word of God* has not been *imprisoned*."

p. 789

He says further:

Ah, yes, let Timothy ever remember this Lord, raised up and glorious, from David's seed as David's Lord—his Word triumphs.

p. 790

Towner says:

But God's word is not chained have to be some of the most inspiring words spoken in history. God's people can be put away or killed, but his *word* cannot be stopped. He is its source; it is his living communication to the world. To imprison it or kill it would require imprisoning or killing God. Ironically, efforts to halt the spread of the message only caused the early church to grow (Acts 8:1, 4). Paul reported, "What has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. . . . Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly" (Phil 1:12, 14).

p. 177

Kelly says:

The word **criminal** (Gk. *kakourgos*) is a strong one, and in the N.T. is only used elsewhere of the brigands who were crucified alongside Jesus (Lk. [23] xxiii. 32; 33; 39). In technical legal parlance it was reserved for burglars, murderers, traitors, and the like.

p. 177

Fee says:

It is clear from this sentence, as well as from 1:8, 16, and 4:16-18, that Paul's imprisonment was a serious one, and that it was personally repugnant to him.

But his repugnance at his chains is immediately contrasted with **God's word that is not chained**.

p. 247

He says further:

They may stop the messenger, but they cannot stop the message. As Luther sang: "The body they may kill; God's truth abideth still; His kingdom is forever." And this, of course, is Paul's concern for Timothy throughout the letter. "Take your share in suffering," he urges him, "and above all, preach the word (4:2); for it is the **word** alone, the message of the gospel, that counts.

p. 247

A. T. Robertson says:

I am bound with a chain, but no fetters are on the word of God . . .
p. 618

Hughes says:

Paul's circumstances were humiliating and personally repugnant to him because he was considered to be a criminal. The word translated "criminal" is a strong one, a technical term used for violent people—murderers, thieves, traitors who were punished by torture.

Nero had just burned Rome (A.D. 64) and blamed the Christians, of whom Paul was a leader. Thus Paul was chained and treated like criminal scum. All this for the gospel.

p. 203

He says further:

But there was no hint of self-pity in Paul. Rather, there was confident power: "But God's word is not chained." A famous picture in the convent library in Erfurt, Germany, depicts young Martin Luther poring over a copy of Scripture in the morning light. The dawn steals through the open lattice, illuminating the Bible and his eager face. A broken chain hangs from the Bible. Such has been the experience of the church, even in darkest times.

The unchained Word here in 2 Timothy is the gospel. God's Word ("my gospel") had not been and was not then chained.

p. 203

Hughes says finally:

After the fall of Communism, the missionary organization CoMission sent a team to Stavropol. (The city's history was not known to them at that time.) When the team experienced difficulty getting Bibles shipped from Moscow, someone mentioned a warehouse outside of town where confiscated Bibles had been stored since Stalin's day. After prayer, one member got up the courage to go to the warehouse and ask the officials if the Bible were still there. They were! They then asked if the Bibles could be removed and distributed again to the people of Stavropol. The answer was yes. A truck was obtained, and several Russian people helped load the Bibles.

One of the helpers was a young man—a skeptical, hostile, agnostic collegian who had come only for the day's wages. As they were loading Bibles, the young man disappeared. They found him in a corner of the warehouse, weeping. He had slipped away, hoping to quietly take a Bible for himself. What he found shook him to the core. The inside page of the Bible he picked up had the handwritten signature of his own grandmother! It had been her personal Bible. He had stolen the very Bible that had belonged to his grandmother—a woman persecuted for her faith all her life. His grandmother had no doubt prayed for him and for her city.

God's Word can no more be chained than God himself.

p. 204

MacArthur says:

Paul's point in the present verse, therefore, is not to complain about his own lamentable condition but rather to point up, by contrast, the sovereign, unfettered **word of God**.

p. 59

He says further:

At one time there were some 600 miles of catacombs under the city of Rome, nearly all them dug and used by ten generations of Christians over a period of 300 years. In the early centuries of the church, the catacombs served as meeting and burial places for perhaps as many as four million Christians. A common inscription found on walls there is "The Word of God is not bound." In his famous hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," Martin Luther declared, "The body they may kill; God's truth abideth still."

pp. 59-60

Knight says:

Paul's suffering is imprisonment "like a criminal" . . . like one who has committed "gross misdeeds and serious crimes" . . .
p. 398

He says further:

In contrast . . . to his imprisonment, Paul vigorously asserts that "the word of God is not imprisoned." He wants to make clear that his suffering and imprisonment does not hinder the gospel's progress (cf. Phil. 1:22f).
p. 398

Michael Griffiths says:

But even if the apostle is chained up, God's Word is not! If, like Paul, you expect to have your life ended soon what do you care most about? That God's Word will go on being proclaimed, taught and taken to the ends of the earth, whatever the cost to yourself and other human lives? Paul cares more about the gospel of God's word than anything else: 'guard the good deposit' (1:14); 'the things you have heard me say . . . entrust to reliable persons' (2:2); correctly handle the word of truth (2:15).
p. 185

Lock says:

. . . while I have been bound the Word has not been, for I have been able to speak on its behalf, cf. 4:17; and others are doing its work, 4:9-12; "God buries His workers but continues His work," . . .
p. 95

Wilson says:

It is for this gospel that Paul is suffering ‘even to the point of being chained like a criminal’ (NIV). The strength of his language indicates how deeply he felt the shame and degradation of his imprisonment, but he rejoices in the fact that the word of God is not chained!

p. 141

He says further:

‘Persecuting powers may silence ministers and restrain them, but they cannot hinder the operation of the word of God upon men’s hearts and consciences; that cannot be bound by any human force’ (Matthew Henry).

p. 141

Hendriksen says:

. . . Though I am bound, **the word of God is not bound**. Others will carry on when I leave this earthly scene. The authorities have put *me* in this dungeon, but they cannot imprison *the gospel*. It will triumph. It will perform its pre-ordained mission on earth. No enemy can thwart it.

p. 251

Quinn & Wacker put verse 9 this way:

I am being wronged, put into chains as though a wrongdoer.

Lit. “I am bearing hardship . . . to the extent of bonds . . . as though an evildoer . . .”

p. 626

They say further:

From the midst of this utterly demoralizing fate and in dramatic contrast with it (*alla*) comes the triumphant and bold confession “but the word of God has not been chained.”

p. 646

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

. . . Though my person is bound, my tongue and my pen are not . . .
p. 1377

Matthew Henry says:

Persecuting powers cannot hinder the operation of the word of God upon men's hearts and consciences; that cannot be bound by any human force. This might encourage Timothy not to be afraid of bonds for the testimony of Jesus.
p. 1895

“IN WHICH SPHERE OF ACTION I AM SUFFERING HARDSHIP EVEN TO THE POINT OF IMPRISONMENT AS A CRIMINAL.”

“BUT,” forms the CONTRAST:

“THE WORD OF GOD HAS NOT BEEN BOUND.”

Commitment

I've never worked for prizes . . . I'm as ready to receive prizes as I am to be thrown into prison, not that I'm ungrateful for this honor; it's just that neither the one nor the other could ever divert me from the course I've set myself.

Lech Walesa (1943-), Polish politician and trade unionist, 1983. Walesa's response when awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (1983). *A Path of Hope* “Private Citizen” (1987).

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THEOLOGY AND SUCCESS

“As I look at pastors who have finished well, almost all are theological thinkers. Without a strong grounding in theology, pastors tend to have a short shelf life.”

—Dennis Baker
(quoted in *Leadership*,
Fall 1996, page 11)

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(Renewed Day by Day: Daily Devotional Readings: Volume I by A. W. Tozer,
compiled by Gerald B. Smith)

We need right now a return to a gentle dogmatism that smiles while it stands stubborn and firm on the Word of God that liveth and abideth forever!
(June 25)

(The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions edited
by Arthur Bennett)

Thy Word is full of promises,
 flowers of sweet fragrance,
 fruit of refreshing flavour
 when culled by faith.

May I be made rich in its riches,
 be strong in its power,
 be happy in its joy.
 abide in its sweetness,
 feast on its preciousness,
 draw vigour from its manna.

Lord, increase my faith.

p. 107

(Illustrations Unlimited by James S. Hewett, editor)

SO MUCH TIME TO READ

How much time does it take to read from Genesis to Revelation? If you would read the Bible at standard pulpit speed (slow enough to be heard and understood) the reading time would be seventy-one hours. If you would break that down into minutes and divide it into 365 days you could read the entire Bible, cover to cover, in only twelve minutes a day. Is this really too much time to spend reading about God?

pp. 43-44

(Quotes & Idea Starters for Preaching & Teaching from Leadership Journal
edited by Edward K. Rowell)

The Bible was not given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives.

—D. L. Moody

The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me.

—Martin Luther

p. 14

Most people are bothered by those Scripture passages which they cannot understand. But for me, the passages in Scripture which trouble me most are those which I do understand.

—Mark Twain

p. 151

(Quote Unquote compiled by Lloyd Cory)

I believe in getting into hot water. I think it keeps you clean.

(G. K. CHESTERTON)

p. 342

(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.)

The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its decisions are immutable. Read it to believe, believe it to be safe, practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's guide, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, the Christian's character. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, daily, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at the judgment, and will be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemns all who trifle with its contents.

p. 17

v. 10 Because of this I am enduring all things for the sake of those who are chosen, in order that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

“BECAUSE” points us BACK to the last phrase in verse 9. “BECAUSE OF THIS,” that is, “the word of God has not been bound”:

“I AM ENDURING ALL THINGS.”

Romans 8:28

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Yes, God is sovereign and all of these things work together for good.

Job 13:15

Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; . . .

A little PRAYER that I often pray is:

“Lord, help me to maintain a continual contentedness under Your sovereign hand.”

Chambers says:

“If God can accomplish His purposes in this world through a broken heart, then why not thank Him for breaking yours?”

(source unknown)

“BECAUSE OF THIS I AM ENDURING [or PERSEVERING] ALL THINGS.”

This little Greek word is HUPOMENO.

The word means to “remain under,” so Paul is saying:

“I am remaining under the circumstances. I am remaining under all things.”

He is doing this:

“FOR THE SAKE OF THOSE WHO ARE CHOSEN.”

With a PURPOSE in mind:

“IN ORDER THAT THEY ALSO MAY OBTAIN THE SALVATION WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS WITH ETERNAL GLORY.”

You will notice that this is the KEY VERSE for Step #5 in “Making a Fantastic Finish”:

PERSEVERANCE: In Single-minded Steadfastness I Will Stay the Course.

We are going to notice that HUPOMENO also occurs down in verse 12.

PERSEVERANCE is a key ingredient in being certain that we are going to make a FANTASTIC FINISH.

Thus far, we have considered:

Step #1: INTEGRITY: Getting It All Together (2 Tim. 1:1-7)

Step #2: CONVICTION: Here I Stand, God Help Me (2 Tim. 1:8-12)

Step #3: COURAGE: I Am Willing To Pay The Price (2 Tim. 1:13-18)

Step #4: LEGACY: What Am I Passing On? (2 Tim. 2:1-7)

And now we come to:

Step #5: PERSEVERANCE: In Single-Minded Steadfastness, I Will Stay The Course (2 Tim. 2:8-13)

This is one of the most CRUCIAL STEPS.

Quinn & Wacker paraphrase the verse this way:

For this very reason, that is, for the sake of the elect, I am submitting to everything. My purpose is that they too reach the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

p. 646

Wilson says:

As an instrument of God's saving purpose, the apostle Paul knew that his testimony in preaching, writing, and suffering 'was for all countries and for all time; and the elect of this present age are in many ways reaping the benefit of his self-denying and devoted labours' (Fairbairn).

p. 142

Michael Griffiths says:

Paul knows there is no progress without pain; no birth without travail. In Paul's thinking the suffering of the saints, while not redemptive like the suffering of Jesus, is for 'the sake of the body' (see Colossians 1:24). All that Paul is going through is worth it if it achieves its object—the victory for which the soldier fights, the trophy for which athletes train, the harvest for which farmers sweat: namely that people may be saved through Christ Jesus and enter his glory. Paul's own commitment marvellously illustrates his three pictures.

p. 185

Knight says:

Paul's endurance is purposeful. He endures "all things" . . . "for the sake of the elect." . . . refers generally to one who is or those who are "chosen."

p. 399

MacArthur points out:

He is not speaking here of fellow believers, but of God's **chosen** who had yet to **obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus**.

p. 61

Fee confesses:

Far too much ink has been spilled on the theological implications of this term, whether it refers to the "elect" who are already saved or to the "elect" but not yet saved. Such theologizing quite misses Paul's point. Here again, as in Titus 1:1, 2:14, and many other places, Paul has appropriated OT language for God's people and applied it to Christian believers. Furthermore, as in verse 8 above, the emphasis here falls on their continuity with the past, not their theological status.

p. 247

Towner says:

Paul's term *the elect* reflects more than anything the belief that God himself is sovereignly active in forming "a people for himself" . . .
p. 177

Lenski says:

Because the Word of God is not bound, "I bravely endure, remain and hold out under everything."
p. 790

Lea & Griffin say:

Paul articulated the aim of his suffering. He had suffered so as to enable God's chosen people to obtain their salvation. The "therefore" points back to v. 9. The knowledge that the gospel was not chained or bound provided Paul with an incentive to endure.
p. 207

They say further:

Paul did not clarify the nature of the relationship between his suffering and the salvation of God's people. He could not have meant that his sufferings were redemptively effective for them. Such an emphasis would contradict the statements of Rom 3:21-26, which emphasize the fullness of the satisfaction of Christ's death. Kelly explains that Paul was not merely saying that his endurance would be an inspiring example for others but "that the deeper motive of his patient acceptance of hardships was the conviction that he was thereby actually making it easier for them to attain salvation."⁵⁴ Paul felt that the church would face a predetermined amount of suffering before Christ returned. The more Paul took upon himself, the less his Christian friends would have to bear themselves. In line with other New Testament passages (2 Cor 1:6; 4:8-15), he emphasized that his suffering would bring some relief to other believers.

⁵⁴Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 178.
p. 208

Stott points out:

Further, it is not just the preaching but also the resultant suffering which are the means of the elect's salvation. Paul's statement that in some sense the salvation of others is secured by his sufferings may at first astonish us. Yet it is so. Not of course that his sufferings have any redemptive efficacy like Christ's, but that the elect are saved through the gospel and that he could not preach the gospel without suffering for it. It is another case of 'glory through suffering', the 'eternal glory' of the elect through the sufferings endured by the apostle.

p. 63

Calvin says:

. . . he reveals how much more important the edification of the church is for him than his own safety. For Paul is not only prepared to die but even to be known as a criminal in order to promote the welfare of the church.

p. 135

Gaebelein says:

"The afflictions found in the path of service in the gospel assume here a high and peculiar character in the mind of the suffering and blessed Apostle. It is participation in the sufferings of Christ, and, in the case of Paul, to a very remarkable degree. The expressions he uses are such as might be employed in speaking of Christ Himself as regards His love.

p. 188

He says further:

As to the propitiation, naturally no other could take part in that: but in devotedness, and in suffering for love and for righteousness, we have the privilege of suffering with Him. And here what part had the Apostle with these sufferings? 'I endure,' He says, 'all things for the elect's sake.' This is truly what the Lord did. The Apostle trod closely on His footsteps, and with the same purpose of love—that they might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.'

p. 188

Lange says:

. . . therefore, because the word of God is not bound. The unimpeded course of the gospel is to the Apostle a new proof of its all-embracing power; and the thought inspires him to suffer willingly for a cause which otherwise might seem lost.

p. 95

He says further:

[Hupomeno] denotes not only passive endurance, but steadfastness, as of a soldier on the attack of the enemy (Wiesinger).

p. 95

He says finally:

Certainly it is better, if we paraphrase his thoughts thus: that he, amid all the burdens of his calling, endured, without yielding up the high task of his life, that thereby the elect of God might be partakers of the σωτηρια [salvation] in Christ, through his persevering, continued preaching . . .

p. 95

Patrick & Lowth say:

. . . “a chosen generation” . . . and who may be confirmed in the faith, by the example of my patient sufferings, and continuing in it may obtain that salvation to which they are called.

p. 861

Hawthorne & Martin say:

Paul believed that his sufferings filled up what was lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of the church (Col 1:24). This should not be taken to mean that there was something lacking in Christ's atoning sacrifice. Rather Paul shared the sufferings of the Servant-Messiah (*see* Christ) inasmuch as he too suffered for the sake of the elect in bringing the gospel to them . . . pp. 19-20

They say further:

Putting all this together, election for Paul means that God, as an act of his love, has eternally chosen a group of individuals in Christ to be holy and without blame. This has brought about their adoption into God's family according to a predetermined plan that included their calling, justification and glorification. Because it is God who has effectuated this plan, with justification the apparent key to understanding it, no one is able to bring any ultimately damaging charge against believers, and nothing or no one is able to drive a wedge between them and the God of love who set the plan in motion and will surely bring it to completion.

p. 227

“BECAUSE OF THIS I AM ENDURING [or PERSEVERING] ALL THINGS FOR THE SAKE OF THOSE WHO ARE CHOSEN, IN ORDER THAT THEY ALSO MAY OBTAIN THE SALVATION WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS WITH ETERNAL GLORY.”

Towner says:

The final phrase describing salvation, *with eternal glory*, is not superfluous. On the one hand, it is the final goal of the Christian pilgrimage. It is also the hope that can bring the believer through the present necessary experience of struggle for the gospel. Glory, victory, resurrection and removal from troubles are all yet to be fully experienced.

p. 178

Knight says:

. . . “with eternal glory,” refers to the glory and splendor of the next life. Since [doxa] . . . is used normally in the NT of God’s glory, majesty, and sublimity, it is natural that it also be used of the future eternal state . . . and realm of existence in which his splendor is everywhere and immediately present and, as here, of that in which the redeemed participate in a marvelous and endless way as they behold his splendor in a full and direct way . . .
p. 400

Romans 8:16-18

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

perseverance

perseverance *noun*

1. **determined continuation with something:** steady and continued action or belief, usually over a long period and especially despite difficulties or setbacks.
2. **CHRISTIANITY Calvinist concept of divine grace:** in Calvinism, the belief that God’s grace brings selected people, the elect, to salvation
3. **CHRISTIANITY Roman Catholic belief in God’s grace:** in the Roman Catholic Church, the belief that God’s grace lasts to the end of somebody’s life if that person has maintained his or her good works and faith

—**per•se•ver•ant**, *adjective*

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Not exactly known for her commitment to Christ, Dolly Parton did make a good statement about perseverance. She came from a poor Appalachian family. When asked why she became successful when so many other poor mountain people did not, she replied: “I never stopped trying. And I never tried stopping.”

—Lewis Timberlake in *It's Always Too Soon To Quit*

(From *Parson's Technology*)

The man who goes down swinging is very admirable; but the man to watch out for is the one who gets up swinging.

—D.O. Flynn

(From *Parson's Technology*)

Harold Sherman quite awhile ago, wrote a book entitled *How To Turn Failure Into Success*. In it he gives a “Code of Persistence.” If you give up too easily, write this down and read it daily.

1. I will never give up so long as I know I am right.
2. I will believe that all things will work out for me if I hang on until the end.
3. I will be courageous and undismayed in the face of odds.
4. I will not permit anyone to intimidate me or deter me from my goals.
5. I will fight to overcome all physical handicaps and setbacks.
6. I will try again and again and yet again to accomplish what I desire.
7. I will take new faith and resolution from the knowledge that all successful men and women had to fight defeat and adversity.
8. I will never surrender to discouragement or despair no matter what seeming obstacles may confront me.

(From *Parson's Technology*)

STICK-TO-ITIVENESS

Failure is the path of least persistence.

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

WALKING THROUGH DARKNESS

My earthly plans were made,
 I thought my path all clear;
 My heart with song o'erflowed,
 The world seemed full of cheer.
 My Lord I wished to serve,
 To take Him for my guide,
 To keep so close that I could
 Feel Him by my side;
 And so I traveled on.

But suddenly in skies
 So clear and full of light
 The clouds fell thick and fast,
 The days seemed changed to night;
 Instead of paths so clear
 And full of things so sweet,
 Rough times and thorns and stones
 Seemed all about my feet;
 I scarce could travel on.

I bowed my head and asked
 Why now this change should come,
 And murmured, "Lord, is this
 Because of what I've done?
 Has not the past been
 Full enough of pain and care?
 Why should my path again
 Be changed to dark from fair?"
 But still I traveled on.

I listened quietly,
 And then there came a voice—
 "This path is Mine, dear child,
 Not yours, I made the choice;
 'Tis sure this way will be
 The best for you and Me."
 And so we travel on!

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

KEEP ON KEEPING ON

A student who later became a skilled mathematician was discouraged by the difficulties he was encountering in his studies. One day when he opened a used textbook he had purchased, he noticed that a piece of paper had been pasted to the inside cover, and that some of the words were showing through from the other side. His curiosity aroused, he carefully moistened the cover and peeled back the leaf. He was surprised to find that on the paper was a short letter written by his instructor to the previous owner of the book, apparently another student who had become very disheartened. The note read, "Go on, sir, go on! The difficulties you meet will resolve themselves as you advance. Proceed, and light will dawn with increasing clearness on your path."

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

HANGING IN THERE

According to Bob Hartman, a single page from the journal of John Wesley reads something like this:

Sunday a.m., May 5—Preached in St. Ann's; was asked not to come back any more.

Sunday p.m., May 5—Preached at St. John's; deacons said, "Get out and stay out."

Sunday a.m., May 12—Preached at St. Jude's; can't go back there either.

Sunday p.m., May 12—preached at St. George's; kicked out again.

Sunday a.m., May 19—Preached at St. Somebody Else's; deacons called special meeting and said I couldn't return.

Sunday p.m., May 19—Preached on the street; kicked off the street.

Sunday a.m., May 26—Preached out in a meadow; chased out of meadow when a bull was turned loose during the service.

Sunday a.m., June 2—Preached out at the edge of town; kicked off the highway.

Sunday p.m., June 2—Afternoon service, preached in pasture; 10,000 people came.

Now that's real perseverance!

[Plugged In, Sep 16, 1997. Page 6.]

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

SOUND ADVICE

“If successful, don’t crow;
if defeated, don’t croak.”

—Samuel Chadwick
(quoted in *Interest*, Jul/Aug 1994)

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

Determination

I fight on, I fight to win.

Margaret Thatcher (1925-), British stateswoman. Referring to the election for the leadership of the Conservative Party, after failing to gain the required majority in the first poll.

The Times (London) (November 21, 1990).

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All that is necessary to break the spell of inertia and frustration is this: act as if it were impossible to fail. That is the talisman, the formula, the command of right-about-face that turns us from failure toward success.

—DOROTHEA BRANDE

Bear in mind, if you are going to amount to anything, that your success does not depend upon the brilliancy and the impetuosity with which you take hold, but upon the everlasting and sanctified bull-doggedness with which you hang on after you have taken hold.

—A. B. MELDRUM

By perseverance the snail reached the ark.

Every noble work is at first impossible.

—THOMAS CARLYLE (1795-1881)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs even though checkered by failures, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory or defeat.

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT (1858-1919)

Few things are impossible to diligence and skill.

—SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709-1784)

Genius, that power that dazzles mortal eyes,
Is oft but perseverance in disguise.

—HENRY AUSTIN

God is with those who persevere.

—ARABIAN PROVERB

Great souls have wills, feeble ones have only wishes.

—CHINESE PROVERB

He that perseveres makes every difficulty an advancement and every contest a victory.

—CHARLES CALEB COLTON (1780-1832)

If you stop every time a dog barks, your road will never end.

—ARABIAN PROVERB

If your determination is fixed, I do not counsel you to despair. Great works are performed not by strength, but perseverance.

—SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709-1784)

It is a great thing to see physical pluck, and greater still to see moral pluck, but the greatest to see of all is spiritual pluck, to see a man who will stand true to the integrity of Jesus Christ no matter what he is going through.

—OSWALD CHAMBERS (1874-1917)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day. Be systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points. Do every day or two something for no reason than that you would rather not do it, so that when the hour of dire needs draws nigh, it may find you not unnerved and untrained to stand the test.

—WILLIAM JAMES (1842-1910)

Little strokes fell great oaks.

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706-1790)

Never give in! Never give in! Never! Never! Never! Never! In anything great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense.

—SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL (1874-1965)

Nothing is difficult to those who have the will.

On a long journey even a straw is heavy.

—ITALIAN PROVERB

Perseverance can do anything which genius can do, and very many things which it cannot.

—HENRY WARD BEECHER (1813-1887)

Perseverance is more prevailing than violence.

—PLUTARCH (C. 46-AFTER 119)

Perseverance is the most overrated of traits: if it is unaccompanied by talent, beating your head against a wall is more likely to produce a concussion in the head than a hole in the wall.

—SYDNEY J. HARRIS (1917-1986)

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

Perseverance is the rope that ties the soul to the doorpost of heaven.
—FRANCES J. ROBERTS

Press on! Nothing in the world can take the place of perseverance. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.
—CALVIN COOLIDGE (1872-1933)

Small drops of water hollow out a stone.
—LUCRETIUS (C. 96-C. 55 B.C.)

Strength is the lot but of a few privileged men; but austere perseverance, harsh and continuous, may be employed by the smallest of us and rarely fails in its purpose. Its silent power grows irresistibly greater with time.
—JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE (1749-1832)

'Tis a lesson you should heed,
Try, try again.
If at first you don't succeed,
Try, try again.
Then your courage should appear,
For, if you will persevere,
You will conquer, never fear;
Try, try again.

—WILLIAM EDWARD HICKSON (1803-1870)

Unless the clay be well pounded, no pitcher can be made.
—LATIN PROVERB

What you are is God's gift to you. What you make of yourself is your gift to him.

With time and patience the mulberry leaf becomes satin.
—CHINESE PROVERB
(From Quick Verse 6.0)

You must scale the mountains if you would view the plain.

—CHINESE PROVERB

What we obtain too easy, we value too lightly; it is the cost that gives value.

(From Quick Verse 6.0)

Be Strong!

Be strong!

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift:
We have hard work to do and loads to lift;
Shun not the struggle: face it 'tis God's gift.

Be strong!

Say not the days are evil who's to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce O shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's Name,

Be strong!

It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day, how long;
Faint not, fight on! Tomorrow comes the song.

—Maltbie Babcock (d. 1901)

Source unknown

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

VICTORIES THE HARD WAY

“Many men owe the grandeur of their lives to their tremendous difficulties.”

—Charles Haddon Spurgeon
(quoted in Christianity Today,
Jun 16, 1997, page 45)

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

(Quote Unquote compiled by Lloyd Cory)

Unless a man believes in himself, makes a total commitment to his career, and puts everything he has into it, he'll never be successful at anything he undertakes. (VINCE LOMBARDI)

p. 191

(The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment by Jeremiah Burroughs)

A contented heart looks to God's disposal, and submits to God's disposal, that is, he sees the wisdom of God in everything. In his submission he sees his sovereignty, but what makes him take pleasure is God's wisdom. The Lord knows how to order things better than I. The Lord sees further than I do; I only see things at present but the Lord sees a great while from now. And how do I know but that had it not been for this affliction, I should have been undone. I know that the love of God may as well stand with an afflicted condition as with a prosperous condition.

p. 36

(Values and Virtues by Howard Hendricks & Bob Phillips)

A good rooster crows in any henhouse.
ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

p. 8

(Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage by Alfred Lansing)

Instead, life was reckoned to periods of a few hours, or possibly only a few minutes—an endless succession of trials leading to deliverance from the particular hell of the moment.

p. 196

(Illustrations Unlimited by James S. Hewett, editor)

A STRATEGY FOR LIFE

You don't learn to hold your own in the world by standing guard but by attacking and getting well-hammered yourself.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

p. 11

(Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance by Jennifer Armstrong)

On December 31, 1915, Shackleton wrote in his diary: "The last day of the old year: May the new one bring us good fortune, a safe deliverance from this anxious time, and all good things to those we love so far away."

If their loved ones so far away could have seen the crew of *Endurance*, their hearts would have broken. Nothing could have been more pitiful and hopeless than the twenty-eight men marooned on the rotting ice pack nearly 200 miles from the nearest solid land. They called their new home Patience Camp.

p. 65

(1001 Great Stories & “Quotes” by R. Kent Hughes)

Paganini and One String

The great concert violinist Niccolò Paganini was standing before a packed house, surrounded by a full orchestra. He was playing a number of difficult pieces, and he came to one of his favorites, which was a violin concerto. Shortly after he was under way and the Italian audience was sitting in rapt attention, one of the strings on his violin snapped and hung down from the instrument. Relying on his genius, he improvised and played on the next three strings. To his surprise (and the conductor’s as well), a second string broke. Now there were two dangling as he again began to improvise and play the piece on the two remaining strings. You guessed it! Almost at the end of this magnificent concerto, a third string snapped. Now there were three dangling, and he finished the piece on one string. The audience stood to their feet and applauded until their hands were numb. They never thought to ask for an encore; they expected to leave. But Paganini held his instrument high in the air and said, “Paganini and one string,” and he proceeded to play an encore with the full orchestra. He made more music from one string than many violinists ever could do on four. The difference, of course, aside from his superb abilities, was one of attitude. Instead of falling to despair and self-pity, Paganini’s splendid attitude allowed him to take a very difficult situation and turn it into a triumph. As we go through life, no matter what we pursue—music, athletics, education, business, homemaking, politics—attitude makes a world of difference. With reasonable qualifications, the saying “Attitude is everything” is amazingly true.

pp. 19-20

(The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart: And 1,501 Other Stories by Charles R. Swindoll)

A WRONG FORMULA CAN BE LETHAL. It reminds me of a little jingle I picked up in high school chemistry class. “Say a prayer for Jimmy Brown, for Jimmy is no more; what he thought was H₂O was really H₂SO₄!”

p. 379

AN ADDRESS at Harrow School, October 29, 1941: “Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never give in.”
Then he sat down. —Winston Churchill

p. 438

(The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart: And 1,501 Other Stories by
Charles R. Swindoll)

I ONCE HEARD W. A. CRISWELL, long-time beloved pastor of the First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, tell a story about an evangelist who loved to hunt. As best I can recall, the man bought two setter pups that were topnotch bird dogs. He kept them in his backyard, where he trained them. One morning, an ornery, little, vicious looking bulldog came shuffling and snorting down the alley. He crawled under the fence into the backyard where the setters spent their days. It was easy to see he meant business. The evangelist's first impulse was to take his setters and lock them in the basement so they wouldn't tear up that little bulldog. But he decided he would just let the creature learn a lesson he would never forget. Naturally, they got into a scuffle in the backyard, and those two setters and that bulldog went round and round and round! The little critter finally had enough, so he squeezed under the fence and took off. All the rest of that day he whined and licked his sores. Interestingly, the next day at about the same time, here came that same ornery little bulldog—back under the fence and after those setters. Once again those two bird dogs beat the stuffing out of that little bowlegged animal and would have chewed him up if he hadn't retreated down the alley. Would you believe, the very next day he was back! Same time, same station, same results. Once again after the bulldog had had all he could take, he crawled back under the fence and found his way home to lick his wounds.

“Well” the evangelist said, “I had to leave for a revival meeting. I was gone several weeks. And when I came back, I asked my wife what had happened. She said, ‘Honey, you just won't believe what's happened. Every day, at the same time every morning, that little bulldog came back in the backyard and fought with our two setters. He didn't miss a day! And I want you to know it has come to the point that when our setters simply hear that bulldog snorting down the alley and spot him squeezing under the fence, they immediately start whining and run down into our basement. That little, old bulldog struts around our backyard now just like he owns it.’”

—Charles R. Swindoll, *Living Above the Level of Mediocrity*

pp. 439-40

(The Legacy: What Every Father Wants to Leave His Child by
Steven J. Lawson)

As a child growing up, my dad used to tell me, “Son, this is going to hurt me more than it hurts you.” I always wanted to reply, “Then I’d hate to see you suffer so. Why don’t we swap roles and let me give *you* the spanking.” For some reason, I never worked up my courage to make that offer. If I had, I’m sure I would have heard, “Son, I brought you *into* this world, and I can take you *out*.”

My dad also used to say, “Son, I’m only spanking you because I love you.” If so, he loved me more than he loved my brother and sister. I bore the proof.

p. 126

(The Complete Book of Practical Proverbs & Wacky Wit by Vern McLellan)

The Lord doesn’t take us into deep water to drown us, but to develop us.

p. 28

v. 11 Trustworthy is the word: For if we died together with Him, We shall also live together with Him.

Hawthorne & Martin say:

Passages of the Pastorals . . . read like hymns of the martyrs' confession and illustrate the strenuous quality of Christian living which was expected in the early church in its incipient conflict with the persecuting state.
p. 422

Knight says:

Paul now turns to the last of the three bases for endurance, which is the promised privilege of reigning with Christ.
p. 400

Towner titles these remaining verses and then says:

Conditions of Faithfulness (2:11-13) The conditions that follow depict *salvation that is in Christ Jesus* as a life to be lived in a hostile world. This *trustworthy saying* is part of a hymn or baptismal creed that was well known and widely accepted in the church . . . Its grave tone and conditional (if—then) form draw us to reflect on the importance of this life in relation to the life to come.
p. 178

Towner says finally:

The first condition, *if we died with him, we will also live with him*, recalls the words of Romans 6:8. In the earlier setting, the symbolic meaning of baptism is surely in view: through baptism one testifies to identification with Christ in his death and reception of the Spirit, and acknowledges the promise of resurrection. In our passage, Paul probably extends the application of the original saying beyond the event of baptism to the entire Christian life. That is, a believer's life must be the living out of death to self for the sake of Christ and his gospel. *Died with him* depicts a life characterized by sacrifice that may (and must be ready to) end in martyrdom. But neither baptism nor martyrdom is exclusively in mind. The saying functions as an abbreviation of the life described above (1:5-2:7).

pp. 178-9

Lea & Griffin say:

The saying of 2:11b-13 has four conditional clauses. Each protasis (the "if" clause) describes an action of a believer. Each apodosis (the conclusion) presents the results in terms of either Christ's individual action or joint action with the believer. The initial two sayings describe positive actions. The final two sayings refer to negative actions.

p. 209

Fee says:

As a way of wrapping up this segment of the argument (appeal), and thereby reinforcing the appeal itself (which now includes God's people), Paul "cites" a fifth (and last) **trustworthy** ("faithful") **saying**.

p. 248

Fee, with regard to the first line “if we died with Him, we will also live with Him,” says further:

This clearly mirrors Romans 6:8 (cf. Col. 2:20; 3:1), and there is no reason to think that it means anything different here from what it does there. Using baptismal imagery, Paul is reflecting again on Christian conversion as a dying and rising with Christ. The future, **we will also live with him**, has primarily to do with life in Christ in the present (as it does in Rom. 6:8-11), although such language always has latent in it the thought of the eschatological fulfillment yet to be realized. After all, the present life **with him** is the result of his resurrection, *the* primary eschatological event that has already set the future in motion.

p. 249

MacArthur says:

Paul uses the phrase **It is a trustworthy statement** five times in the Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus), but it is found nowhere else in the New Testament. He seems to have used it to introduce a truth that was axiomatic, a truism in the early church that was commonly known and believed.

p. 63

Wilson says:

The last of the five faithful sayings in the Pastorals is another fragment of an early Christian hymn, which some scholars have seen as a ‘Hymn to Martyrdom’, but the language used suggests that it rather belongs to a baptismal setting.

p. 142

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say:

. . . “if we be dead with Him (the *Greek* aorist tense implies *a state once for all entered into in past times* at the moment of regeneration, Rom. 6:3, 4, 8; Col. 2:12), we shall also live with Him.”

p. 1377

Milne says:

This one is a four-line extract from a hymn, the first two lines working around the theme of union with Christ, the second two working around the subject of denial. Each line is introduced by a conditional clause (‘if’), followed by an answering one. Paul quotes it to give support from the church’s own standards to his appeal to Timothy to stand fast in suffering.
p. 149

King says:

Our personal faith has identified us with Him; and because He has fully borne the penalty, so also, “in Him”, have we. Is that not something to sing about?
p. 58

Demarest says:

Before Paul concludes this section, he pauses, perhaps singing a stanza of a well-known song. Many scholars believe that these verses represent a portion of an early Christian hymn. It reinforces the theme of this section: ministry involves hardship.
p. 261

J. Vernon McGee asks the question:

When did we die with Him? When He died over nineteen hundred years ago. When we come to Christ and receive Him as our Savior, His death becomes our death. We are identified with Him and are raised with Him in newness of life. This means that this very day He wants to live His life out through us by the power of the Holy Spirit.
p. 466

Romans 6:4-8

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

Colossians 3:3

For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

John 12:24, 25

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal.

Galatians 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The reference is not to martyrdom for Christ, but rather to a believer's mystical identification with the death and life of Christ . . .

p. 753

Oh to be saved from myself, dear Lord.
Oh to be lost in Thee.
Oh that it might be no more I,
But Christ that lives in me.
(source unknown)

John Hunter points out:

The secret of a changed life is an exchanged life. Jesus Christ doesn't want my dedication, he wants my death. A dead man can't do anything. He can only decay.
(source unknown)

I am sure in a real sense, Paul was thinking of this in terms of the fact that he was just about ready to **DIE PHYSICALLY** in the same way the Lord Jesus did. He could look forward to living together with Him.

(God's Little Devotional Book II by Honor Books)

**Faith is not belief
without proof,
but trust
without reservation.**

n n n

*I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that
which I have committed unto him against that day.*

2 Timothy 1:12

A little girl once crawled up into her father's lap while he was reading the newspaper and told him how much she wanted him to build her a dollhouse. She refused to climb down until her daddy promised to do just that. He made the promise, but, mostly just to get her to move so he could read his paper in peace. She climbed down and skipped off, and the father went back to his reading. The promise completely slipped his mind.

Then one evening, he walked into her room and found her carefully packing all of her dolls and doll furniture into a box.

"What are you doing?" he asked her.

"I'm getting ready to move," she replied.

"And where are you moving?" he asked.

"Why, into the new dollhouse you promised to build me." The father was overwhelmed with guilt because he hadn't given the dollhouse any further thought, much less even started building it. He tried to cover his guilt with a tease. "And are you sure there's going to be a new dollhouse?" he asked, hoping to smooth over the situation with a big grin.

"Oh, yes," she said matter-of-factly. "You promised."¹²²

To her, daddy's promise had been as good as a done deal.

¹²²*From Bad Beginnings to Happy Endings*, Ed Young (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1994), p. 83.

pp. 246-7

v. 12 If we are persevering, we shall also reign with Him; If we shall deny Him, He also will deny us.

Once again we have the word HUPOMENO in the PRESENT TENSE:

“IF WE ARE PERSEVERING.”

Paul’s longing for Timothy is that he will endure and not turn away from the Gospel, but he will be like the:

1. suffering SOLDIER,
2. rule-keeping RUNNER, and
3. hard working FARMER and endure through to the end.

For in so doing, he will also “REIGN WITH HIM.”

Matthew 10:32, 33

“Every one therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

“IF WE ARE PERSEVERING, WE SHALL ALSO REIGN WITH HIM.”

Romans 8:17

and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Christ endured and will one day reign . . .
p. 753

1 Corinthians 15:25

For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

. . . and those saints [who are persevering] will one day reign with Him
(Rev. 3:21).
pp. 753-4

Revelation 3:21

“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

King says:

In the words of our present passage, it is (b) “*We shall also reign with Him.*” An unimaginably wonderful prospect awaits the faithful believer, and amongst the golden experiences that lie before him is this reigning. All who are truly loyal to Him here, whether that loyalty incur suffering or not, will reign with Him hereafter.

p. 59

Milne says:

Enduring for Christ in suffering is an evidence of having died and risen with him, because it is the outworking of our faith in him. For this reason endurance is a cardinal Christian virtue . . . Just as Jesus exchanged the cross of suffering for the crown of victory, so he has promised the crown of glory to all his suffering disciples (Luke 22:28ff.). Only fellow-sufferers will be fellow-conquerors . . .

p. 149

Wilson says:

Between our past death and future hope, there lies our present responsibility, and this accounts for the omission of the preposition 'with him' from the verb 'endure' [cf *Rom* 8.17]. If we continue to endure to the end of our earthly course, then we shall also reign with him in glory. Thus reigning *with* Christ is the reward promised to those who now suffer *for* him.

p. 143

Fee says:

Lines 2 and 3 together, therefore, form the basic reason for the citation: promise and warning attached to a call for endurance in the face of suffering and hardship.

p. 250

Lea & Griffin say:

The first conditional clause of v. 12 urged Timothy to remain loyal even in the face of suffering. To “endure” demands a “continuing experience of bravely bearing up under the hardships and afflictions heaped upon the believer because of his relation to Christ.”⁶¹ The apodosis of this clause promises a victory in the end times for faithful believers. The reigning does not occur until after the return of Christ. Believers will participate in the reign of the glorified Messiah, perhaps during the millennium described in Rev. 20:1-6.

⁶¹Hiebert, *Second Timothy*, 63.
p. 210

Kelly says:

The line crystallizes the primitive Christian hope that, when Christ returns in glory to reign . . . the saints who have endured will sit on thrones like kings alongside him . . .
p. 180

Wiersbe says:

What a pair of paradoxes! Death leads to life! Suffering leads to reigning in glory! We have nothing to fear! The important thing is that we not “disown” our Lord; for if we disown Him here, He will disown us before the Father (Matt. 10:33). In that great “roll call” in glory, when the “medals” are given out, we will lose our reward if we disown His name.
p. 132

Liefeld says:

In verse 12 the endurance is, by its very nature, lifelong. The reigning is not something of a spiritual nature in this life, but is eschatological.
p. 250

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The last two couplets are negative: (3) **If we disown Him, He will also disown us** speaks of the possibility of apostasy . . . and the Lord's ultimate rejection of those who professed Christ only temporarily . . . Instead of identifying with Christ, the apostate finally dissociates himself with Christ.
p. 754

1 Timothy 4:1

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons,

Titus 1:16

They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed.

Hebrews 10:38, 39

But My righteous one shall live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

2 John 9

Any one who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

J. Vernon McGee quotes Calvin:

Calvin put it like this: "Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone."

p. 466

"IF WE ARE PERSEVERING, WE SHALL ALSO REIGN WITH HIM."

1 Chronicles 16:31

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, "The Lord reigns!"

Revelation 19:6, 7

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."

“IF WE SHALL DENY HIM, HE ALSO WILL DENY US.”

If we say “NO” to Him, He will say “NO” to us!

The CHOICE in verse 12 is between:

REIGNING and

REJECTION.

Kelly says:

But what **if we** actually **disown him**? The stern answer, based on Christ’s own warning (Mt. x. 33), is that **he will also disown us**. The reference is again to the Last Judgment, when the Lord will refuse to recognize those who have denied him.

p. 180

Knight, commenting on the word “DENY,” says:

. . . [It] means basically “say no, deny,” and is used in the NT of denial of a person with whom there was some prior relationship . . .

p. 405

He says further:

The saying in these verses gives a helpful overview of key aspects of the professing believer’s life. The first two lines encouragingly state the glorious results that accrue from one’s identification with Christ, first in dying to oneself in union with Christ’s death and second in enduring and suffering for Christ throughout one’s life. The last two lines state the sad possibilities that an imperfect disciple faces in this life, denial and unfaithfulness. The saying sharply warns against denial, which can only expect denial in turn by Christ. But as a counterbalance comfort is offered to the disciple who is unfaithful by assuring him that Christ will remain faithful to him.

pp. 407-8

MacArthur says:

The Greek verb rendered **deny** is in the future tense, and the clause is therefore more clearly rendered, “If we ever deny Him” or “If in the future we deny Him.” It looks at some confrontation that makes the cost of confessing Christ very high and thereby tests one’s true faith. A person who fails to endure and hold onto his confession of Christ will **deny Him**, because he never belonged to Christ at all.

p. 64

He says further:

Jesus Himself gave the sobering warning, “Whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 10:33). There is a settled, final kind of denial that does not repent and thereby evidences an unregenerate heart.

p. 65

KEEP SWINGING

Golfer: “That’s the tenth time I’ve swung at that ball, and I still haven’t hit it.”

Friend: “Well, keep swinging. I think you’ve got it worried.”

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

The ability to bind oneself emotionally and intellectually to an idea or task that needs to be completed.

<Unknown>

When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hold on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn.

—Harriet Beecher Stowe

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

I never allow myself to become discouraged under any circumstances . . . The three great essentials to achieve anything worth while are, first, hard work; second, stick-to-itiveness; third, common sense.

—Thomas Alva Edison

Victory belongs to the most persevering.

—Napoleon

Feather by feather the goose is plucked.

—John Ray

Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan “Press on” has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.

—Calvin Coolidge

Perhaps there is no more important component of character than steadfast resolution. The boy who is going to make a great man, or is going to count in any way in after life, must make up his mind not merely to overcome a thousand obstacles, but to win in spite of a thousand repulses and defeats.

—Theodore Roosevelt

It takes about twenty years to become an overnight success.

—Eddie Cantor

Let me tell you the secret that has led me to my goal. My strength lies solely in my tenacity.

—Louis Pasteur

Few things are impossible to diligence and skill . . . Great works are performed, not by strength, but perseverance.

—Samuel Johnson

(From InfoSearch 3.51)

How Badly Do You Want it?

If you want a thing bad enough to go out and fight for it, to work day and night for it, to give up your time, your peace, and your sleep for it . . . if all that you dream and scheme is about it, and life seems useless and worthless without it . . . if you gladly sweat for it and fret for it and plan for it and lose all your terror of the opposition for it . . . if you simply go after that thing you want with all of your capacity, strength and sagacity, faith, hope and confidence and stern pertinacity . . . if neither cold, poverty, famine, nor gout, sickness nor pain, of body and brain, can keep you away from the thing that you want . . . if dogged and grim you beseech and beset it, with the help of God, you WILL get it!

Les Brown, *Live Your Dreams*, Avon Books, quoted in *Bits & Pieces*, Vol. T/No. 17, pp. 21-22

Multiple, *10,000 Sermon Illustrations*, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

The Little Burro

John Killinger retells this story from *Atlantic Monthly* about the days of the great Western cattle rancher:

“A little burro sometimes would be harnessed to a wild steed. Bucking and raging, convulsing like drunken sailors, the two would be turned loose like Laurel and Hardy to proceed out onto the desert range. They could be seen disappearing over the horizon, the great steed dragging that little burro along and throwing him about like a bag of cream puffs. They might be gone for days, but eventually they would come back. The little burro would be seen first, trotting back across the horizon, leading the submissive steed in tow. Somewhere out there on the rim of the world, that steed would become exhausted from trying to get rid of the burro, and in that moment, the burro would take mastery and become the leader. And that is the way it is with the kingdom and its heroes, isn't it? The battle is to the determined, not to the outraged; to the committed, not to those who are merely dramatic.

Leadership, Summer, 1989

Multiple, *10,000 Sermon Illustrations*, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

Determination

Don't listen to anyone who tells you that you can't do this or that. That's nonsense. Make up your mind, you'll never use crutches or a stick, then have a go at everything. Go to school, join in all the games you can. Go anywhere you want to. But never, never let them persuade you that things are too difficult or impossible.

Douglas Bader (1910-1982), British fighter pilot.
Speaking to a 14-year-old boy who had had a leg amputated after a car crash.
Flying Colours (Laddie Lucas; 1980).

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Persistence

Keep Right on to the End of the Road.

Harry Lauder (1870-1950), Scottish singer. Song title. "Keep Right on to the End of the Road" (1905).

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(Grace for the Moment: Inspirational Thoughts for Each Day of the Year
by Max Lucado)

God Honors Our Choice

*We all have wandered away
like sheep; each of us has gone his own way.*
ISAIAH 53:6

How could a loving God send people to hell? That's a commonly asked question. The question itself reveals a couple of misconceptions.

First, God does not *send* people to hell. He simply honors their choice. Hell is the ultimate expression of God's high regard for the dignity of man. He has never forced us to choose him, even when that means we would choose hell. . . .

No, God does not "send" people to hell. Nor does he send *people* to hell. That is the second misconception.

The word "people" is neutral, implying innocence. Nowhere does Scripture teach that innocent people are condemned. People do not go to hell. Sinners do. The rebellious do. The self-centered do. So how could a loving God send people to hell? He doesn't. He simply honors the choice of sinners.

When Christ Comes

p. 182

(Sport Shorts Calendar by Jay Carty)

When things get tough, we like to refer to a little piece of paper that Dusty Baker carries in his pocket. I'd like to share it with you— it's from Romans 5:1-5: "Tribulations bring about perseverance, and perseverance brings about proven character, and proven character brings about hope, and hope does not disappoint."

Tommy Lasorda, Major League Manager

(July 31)

(Lessons Learned the Hard Way: A Personal Report by Newt Gingrich)

In the middle of these discussions my mother had a series of ministrokes and was taken to the hospital. I went to see her. She was already recovering, and we went outdoors to sit in the spring sunshine. Talking with her was enormously helpful. She had lost her husband of fifty years. She had moved out of her home and into an apartment, surrounded by people she did not know. She was losing most of the furniture she had worked for and saved for all her life. And here she was, sitting in a robe on a hospital bench, with pain and suffering all around her, trying to think through her life. “You just can’t give up,” she told me. “You have to get up every day and do the best you can. God knows what He is doing and you just have to trust in Him.”
pp. 129-30

(Quote Unquote compiled by Lloyd Cory)

Man swims in the sea of self-satisfaction, nibbles at the bait of procrastination, swallows the hook of mediocrity, and ends up in the net of failure.
(WILLIAM A. WARD)
p. 109

(Churchill on Leadership: Executive Success in the Face of Adversity
by Steven F. Hayward)

“. . . If this long island story of ours is to end at last, let it end only when each one of us lies choking in his own blood upon the ground.”
p. 148

(Inspiring Quotations compiled by Albert M. Wells, Jr.)

No task to row where water is still,
To drift along and dream;
But it takes a fellow plus a will
To row against the stream.

Most any frail duck can float at ease
And drift along and dream,
But it takes persistence, if you please,
To swim against the stream.

—H. Atlee Brumbaugh

p. 142

(Time-Out Leadership by Donald Luce)

“Your own resolution to success is more important than any other one thing.”

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Your own personal vision carries the day. No matter what anyone says. No matter what the newspapers print. No matter what the analysts predict. You are the deciding factor in interpreting your dreams and what to do about them.

People are in need of leaders with exciting visions. They will go the extra mile for a leader committed to succeed regardless of the odds or obstacles. They will ignore all outside factors if your determination is strong enough and clear enough. Forget what the naysayers are talking about. You, more than any other factor, are responsible for the success you deserve and can so clearly see.

*I am committed to success and the completion of my strong and clear vision.
My determination serves to continually motivate others as well as myself.*

p. 81

“The world is moving so fast these days that the man who says it can’t be done is generally interrupted by someone doing it.”

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

p. 82

(Great Souls at Prayer: Fourteen Centuries of Prayer, Praise and Aspiration
by Mary W. Tileston)

. . . Set me free from all evil passions, and heal my heart of all inordinate affections; that, being inwardly cured and thoroughly cleansed, I may be made fit to love, courageous to suffer, steady to persevere. . . .

Thomas à Kempis.

p. 73

(The Fullness of Joy by Charles Spurgeon)

The sterner attributes of God had been discovered amid the thunders of Sinai, and the fury of the Deluge.

p. 38

(Lord Foulgrin's Letters by Randy Alcorn)

The road to hell is easily traveled. It's the arrival and the accommodations that take the toll!

p. 62

(When Christ Comes: The Beginning of the Very Best by Max Lucado)

We agree with C. S. Lewis: “There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than [hell], if it lay in my power. . . . I would pay any price to be able to say truthfully: ‘All will be saved.’”¹

1. C. S. Lewis, as quoted in Larry Dixon, *The Other Side of the Good News* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1992), 45.
p. 117

Think about these facts: Thirteen percent of the teachings of Christ are about judgment and hell. More than half of his parables relate to God’s eternal judgment of sinners. Of the twelve times that the word *gehenna*—the strongest biblical word for hell—appears in Scripture, there is only one time in which Jesus was not the speaker.² No one spoke of hell more than Christ did. “Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved, but anyone who does not believe will be punished” (Mark 16:16).

2. For two contrasting views of the duration of hell, consider Blanchard, *Whatever Happened to Hell?* and Edward William Fudge, *The Fire That Consumes* (Carlisle, UK: The Paternoster Press, 1994).
p. 118

Retirement

I have a lifetime appointment and I intend to serve it. I expect to die at 110, shot by a jealous husband.

Justice Thurgood Marshall (1908-1993), U.S. judge. *International Herald Tribune* (Paris, 15 Jan. 1990).

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(I'm Trying to Number My Days, But I Keep Losing Count!: Life Lessons on Living Your Days to the Fullest by Al Sanders)

In the first century A.D., despite impending execution, Polycarp refused to renounce his trust in the Lord. As the torch was about to light the stake to which he was tied, he professed in a strong, clear voice, "I have served Christ these eighty-six years, and He has not injured me once. Shall I now deny Him and lose all hope?"

No matter what happens to us, our responsibility in these "bonus" years is to use them wisely and courageously, always considering whether we're advancing the cause of God's kingdom.

pp. 24-25

(In the Hands of God: Inspiration From Daily Life by William Barclay)

There is a sentence in Job which Moffatt translates with a flash of sheer inspiration. It is in the speech of Eliphaz the Temanite; and in it Eliphaz says to Job: "*Your words have kept men on their feet*" (Job 4:4).

How any preacher might covet such a verdict on his preaching!

In any service there should be that word of comfort which will keep men and women on their feet, still facing life erect and with steady eyes, even when life has dealt them a blow which threatens to leave them prostrate.

p. 80

(God's Little Devotional Book on Prayer by Honor Books, Inc.)

On a bitterly cold night in February of 1943, one of the great maritime losses of World War II occurred—the sinking of the *SS Dorchester* in the North Atlantic. Of the 904 men aboard, 678 lost their lives.

Clark Poling was a young chaplain assigned to the ship. Before going to sea he asked his father, Daniel A. Poling, to pray for him, but with this stipulation: pray not for his safety, but that he would be adequate for any situation. Poling prayed as his son had requested.

When the enemy's torpedo struck the *Dorchester* and the ship began to sink, many of the men became paralyzed with fear. Young Poling, along with three other chaplains, strapped their own life belts to the fear-stricken men. They helped load the lifeboats, and then joined hands in a circle of prayer as they sank to their watery graves. Poling's prayer had been answered. Although his son had not remained in safety, he had been adequate for the situation.¹⁴

Ultimately, our adequacy for any situation is found only in the Lord. He provides what we need to remain true to Him and to be His brightest light in the darkest of circumstances.

¹⁴*Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*, Paul Lee Tan, ed. (Rockville, MD: Assurance Publishers, 1979), #4589
p. 35

(God's Little Devotional Book on Success by Honor Books)

**Four steps
to achievement:
plan purposefully,
prepare prayerfully,
proceed positively,
pursue persistently.**

■ ■ ■

Now all the work of Solomon was well-ordered from the day of the foundation of the house of the Lord until it was finished. So the house of the Lord was completed.

2 Chronicles 8:16 NKJV

No one is born an achiever. Achievement comes through developing competency and working hard. Jack Nicklaus knows this well. He has said, "I don't think talent is as important as the work and the dedication necessary to become competent." Nicklaus readily admits that there are hundreds of talented golfers who never made it on the pro circuit. "You see guys," he said, "and you say, 'Gosh, how did this guy not make it?' And then it's pretty easy to figure out why he didn't. He had a lot of talent, but didn't have much dedication, wasn't organized, didn't know how to learn, didn't know how to comprehend what he was doing, didn't try to learn to get better. . . . I think the big thing about doing anything is striving to improve every day. I'm learning new shots every day. I worked on a couple of new shots yesterday — ones I didn't have in my game. I spent about two hours working on a specific shot yesterday that I didn't have. I got it today."

Nicklaus now competes on the senior circuit. He says, "I'm not as talented as I was ten or fifteen years ago, 'cause I just don't have the physical ability. That's why I have to compete in another way. I have to compete with my mind — compete with a larger variety of shots."⁹²

Basic to all plans, preparations, and persistence should be the willingness to work hard and learn more.

⁹²*The Achievement Factors*, B. Eugene Griessman (NY: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1987), pp. 29, 30. pp. 192-3

v. 13 If we are unfaithful, He is remaining faithful for He is not able to deny Himself.

No matter what we do, “HE IS REMAINING FAITHFUL.”

What a tremendous verse this is to realize that no matter how “UNFAITHFUL” we might be, He abides “FAITHFUL” because He does not change.

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

Lamentations 3:22, 23

Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

1 Thessalonians 5:24

Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

We can sing together with the hymn writer:

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

(“Great Is Thy Faithfulness” by Thomas O. Chisholm. *Christian Praise Hymnal*, Broadman Press, 1964. #42)

NOTHING WE DO AFFECTS THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

Psalm 85:6, 7

Will you not revive us again,
 that your people may rejoice in you?
 Show us your unfailing love, O Lord,
 and grant us your salvation.

Psalm 89:33

but I will not take my love from him,
 nor will I ever betray my faithfulness.
 I will not violate my covenant
 or alter what my lips have uttered.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

If we are faithless, He will remain faithful speaks not of the apostate, but of a true child of God who nevertheless proves unfaithful . . . Christ's faithfulness to Christians is not contingent on their faithfulness to Him. The significance of these couplets could hardly have been lost on Timothy.
 p. 754

MacArthur says:

The second negative condition and promise are: **If we are faithless, Christ remains faithful.** In this context, *apisteō* (**are faithless**) means lack of saving faith, not merely weak or unreliable faith. The unsaved ultimately deny Christ, because they never had faith in Him for salvation. But **He remains faithful**, not only to those who believe in Him but to those who do not, as here. God's divine assurance to save "whoever believes in Him [Christ]" (John 3:16) is followed almost immediately by another divine assurance that "he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). Just as Christ will never renege on His promise to save those who trust in Him, He also will never renege on His promise to condemn those who do not.
p. 66

He says finally:

It was on the basis of Christ's absolute faithfulness that Paul declared earlier in this letter, "I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" . . . It was on that basis that the writer of Hebrews admonished, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering," and then exulted, "for He who promised is faithful" (Heb. 10:23).
p. 66

Kelly says:

Hence the paraphrase 'if we fail to live up to our profession', or 'if we sin and prove unstable in trials and temptations', seems to bring out the meaning better. The rejoinder which in strict logic we expect is, 'he too will be faithless', but the paradox of the divine love does not permit that. Triumphantly the truth comes out: **he remains faithful.**
p. 180

Liefeld says:

Although human beings may not keep faith with God, he will not break faith with us because he cannot be inconsistent with himself. It is difficult to know with certainty what Paul has in mind when he speaks of God's faithfulness.
p. 250

Wiersbe says:

But Paul makes it clear (2 Tim. 2:13) that even our own doubt and unbelief cannot change Him: "He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself." We do not put faith in our faith or in our feelings because they will change and fail. We put our faith in Christ. The great missionary, J. Hudson Taylor, often said, "It is not by trying to be faithful, but in looking to the Faithful One, that we win the victory."
p. 132

Lea & Griffin admit:

Paul's statement here has raised varied interpretations. To be "faithless" is a present tense, implying that the readers were developing a pattern of failure to live up to their profession or were proving unstable and disobedient in trials. We would expect Paul to have concluded his statements with a promise that God would also be faithless to us, but Paul could not bring himself to state that about God. The statement that "he will remain faithful" may mean that God will be faithful to mete out punishment to the guilty. However, in keeping with Paul's statements in Rom 3:3-4 and 8:35-39, he seems to have suggested that "however wayward and faithless men may be, God's love continues unalterable and he remains true to his promises."⁶⁶

⁶⁶Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 180.
p. 211

Lea & Griffin say finally:

The human faithlessness only serves to decorate the faithfulness of God. Paul was asserting that despite human unfaithfulness God's saving purpose has not retreated. Timothy and all those with him were to continue their endurance that they might experience God's blessing. Paul did not state these words to open the door to apostasy and disobedience but to soothe a troubled conscience and to provide encouragement to return to God.

Paul supported his affirmation by stating that God cannot deny or change himself.

p. 211

Fee says:

If we are faithless (and the context demands this meaning of the verb *apistoumen*, not "unbelieving," as KJV, et al.), this does not in any way affect God's own faithfulness to his people. This can mean either that God will override our infidelity with his grace (as most commentators) or that his overall faithfulness to his gracious gift of eschatological salvation for his people is not negated by the faithlessness of some. This latter seems more in keeping with Paul and the immediate context. Some have proved faithless, but God's saving faithfulness has not been diminished thereby.

p. 251

Milne says:

But it can also mean that for the true believer united to Christ in the enduring bonds of the gospel covenant, the occasional or periodic lapse into sin does not negate the Saviour's commitment to them. Jesus is grieved by the failures of his people, but his love for them endures. By their more serious sins believers may lose the enjoyment of Christ's love, through wounding their conscience and grieving his Holy Spirit, but they can never lose their salvation . . . To the penitent disciple Christ promises his pardoning grace, and immediately works to restore the damage done to faith through sinning . . . To do otherwise would be to deny himself as each Christian's faithful Friend and Brother. This is something that ethically he cannot do.

p. 150

King says:

Well, sense the sheer joy of it, whatever may be our own spiritual condition, (b) *“He abideth faithful”*—an unswerving Friend. He will always remain (i) True to His word “He is faithful that promised”, Hebrews [10] x. 23; “He . . . will not call back His words”, Isaiah [31] xxxi. 2. Even the word of warning, as in our verse 12. (ii) True to His people, who are exhorted to “commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator”—one Who will not let down His creatures. (iii) True to Himself, “He cannot deny Himself”, our verse 13. Every divine and human quality in Him is held in perfect poise and balance; no part of His being contradicts, or contravenes, another part; what He ever was, He always is—“JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever”, as Hebrews [13] xiii. 8 teaches us. Here is One on Whom we may always depend, however undependable we ourselves may be.

p. 62

Gaebelein says:

“The One we serve must of necessity be served according to the reality of what He is. The Righteous One must be served in righteousness; the Holy One, in holiness; the One who is not of the world, by those who seek no place in the world. We cannot make Christ other than He is, and we cannot make the world other than it is.”

p. 189

Stott says:

So why should we expect things to be easy for us or promise an easy time to others? Neither human wisdom nor divine revelation gives us such an expectation. Why then do we deceive ourselves and others? The truth is the reverse, namely ‘no pains, no gains’ or ‘no cross, no crown’.

p. 65

Guthrie says:

Christ's constancy to His own promises provides the believer with his greatest security. It is unthinkable that any contingency could affect the faithfulness of God, for *he cannot deny himself*.

p. 146

Baxter concludes his study on the epistles to Timothy with these words:

Jesus, my Lord, Thou art coming!
 The signs are around us today.
 Coming, dear Lord, Thou art coming;
 The times are preparing Thy way.
 World-wide conditions portentous,
 Undreamed by our fathers appear;
 Happenings vast and momentous
 Proclaim that Thy coming is near.
 Coming, coming, Jesus my Lord!
 Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

p. 242

Spurgeon titles his thoughts on verse 13:

**ETERNAL FAITHFULNESS UNAFFECTED BY
 HUMAN UNBELIEF**

p. 858

(Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals & Groups edited by
Richard J. Foster & James Bryan Smith)

Therefore we may ask from our Lover to have all of him that we desire. For it is our nature to long for him, and it is his nature to long for us. In this life we can never stop loving him.

—Julian of Norwich (1343-1413)

p. 71

(Grace for the Moment: Inspirational Thoughts for Each Day of the Year
by Max Lucado)

Flooded by emotion. Overcome by pride, the Starmaker turns to us, one by one, and says, “You are my child. I love you dearly. I’m aware that someday you’ll turn from me and walk away. But I want you to know, I’ve already provided you a way back.”

In the Grip of Grace

p. 340

“IF WE ARE UNFAITHFUL, HE IS REMAINING FAITHFUL.”

The REASON:

“FOR HE IS NOT ABLE TO DENY HIMSELF.”

CONCLUSION:

What lessons did you learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Is Jesus Christ at the center of your thoughts and actions?

LESSON #2: Is the focus of your life on Christ?

LESSON #3: Jesus Christ is a living Savior who is alive, available, active, and aware of what is going on in our individual lives.

LESSON #4: Jesus Christ is the “descendant of David,” demonstrating His humanity and His reigning as king (verse 8).

LESSON #5: Is Jesus Christ a living, bright reality to you?

LESSON #6: Do you sense His smile of approval on you?

LESSON #7: Do you have your eyes on the Lord or on your circumstances?

LESSON #8: You can chain the messenger but you cannot chain the message.

LESSON #9: Because God is sovereign, the apostle is “enduring all things” (verse 10).

LESSON #10: Suffering is an integral part of the Father’s program for each of us.

LESSON #11: Salvation is “in Christ Jesus” (verse 10).

LESSON #12: “For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3).

LESSON #13: “If we are persevering we shall also reign with Him”
(verse 12).

LESSON #14: “If we are unfaithful, He is remaining faithful” (verse 13).

Stott says:

It is this principle which took Jesus Christ through a lowly birth and a shameful death to his glorious resurrection and heavenly reign. It is this principle which had brought Paul his chains and prison cell, in order that the elect might obtain salvation and glory. It is the same principle which makes the soldier willing to endure hardship, the athlete discipline and the farmer toil. It would be ridiculous, therefore, to expect our Christian life and service to cost us nothing.

p. 65

(Drawing Closer, Growing Stronger by Donald E. Anderson)

George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright and agnostic, writes:

This is the true joy in life, being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one.

Being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.

I want to be thoroughly used up when I die. For the harder I work the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me; it's a sort of splendid torch which I've got to hold up for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.⁹

I will take issue by saying: "I agree with Paul. My life belongs to the Savior, and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for Him whatever I can."

Let's return to that dark, damp, dungeon where our beloved friend is just now finishing his lines to young Timothy. In the flickering candlelight we read over his shoulder: "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering and the time of my departure is imminent. I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept (guarded) the faith . . ." The clock is ticking. Paul's flight is ready to depart.

Paul, are you sad?

To paraphrase Philippians 2:17-18—"Oh no! I am a weary traveler and I have finished my Father's business, and I am going home! How could I be sad? I told the Philippians that 'Even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am joying and rejoicing with you all. But you also, be rejoicing in the same thing and be rejoicing with me.'"

"I am totally spent and spilled out. I have given myself fully to the Savior and His plan for me. I am so filled with joy. I am ready for some celebrating!"

You know, what Paul says is really true. One of the greatest joys in eternity will be knowing we gave ourselves away in sacrificial involvement. Every day is a joy to live as we learn how to Give! Give! Give!

Lord! When I come home on the flight You've scheduled for me, I hope I can say: "I have fought, I was faithful, and I finished." I am longing to hear You say: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

pp. 239-40

(Sport Shorts Calendar by Jay Carty)

You've got to "have it" at the end of the game—
that's when it's the most important.

Julius Erving, NBA Forward

(April 23)

(Diamonds in the Dust: 366 Sparkling Devotions by Joni Eareckson Tada)

Don't let your heart quit. For at the proper time, we will reap!

O Christian worker, Christian soldier, Christian pilgrim, in the midst of your "contest" and your "running" today, or in what *seems* the midst of it, for the end may all the while be just upon you, take heart often from the thought that even so for you, if you are true to the blessed Name, it shall one day be. The last care will have been felt and cast upon the Lord, the last exhausting effort will have been made, the last witness under difficulties borne, the last sorrow faced and entered, the last word written, the last word spoken. And then the one remaining thing will be to let the Lord, "the Man at the Gate," lift thee in, and give thee rest.

—Bishop Moule

Lord, when my heart gets tired and my soul gets weary, strengthen me with Your grace.

(June 25)

(Churchill on Courage: Wisdom for Perseverance by Frederick Talbott)

We must all drive ourselves to the utmost limit of our strength. We must preserve and refine our sense of proportion. We must strive to combine the virtues of wisdom and of daring. We must move forward together, united and inexorable.

Winston Churchill
Edinburgh, October 12, 1942

(quote 101)

(A 4th Course of Chicken Soup for the Soul: 101 More Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Hanoch McCarty, & Meladee McCarty)

Don't Quit

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest, if you must—but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up, though the pace seems slow—
You might succeed with another blow.

Often the goal is nearer than
It seems to a faint and faltering man,
Often the struggler has given up
When he might have captured the victor's cup.
And he learned too late, when the night slipped down,
How close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out—
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt—
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems afar;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit.

Author Unknown

pp. 295-6

(Payne Stewart by Tracey Stewart with Ken Abraham)

The party slowly reached ebb tide, but Payne didn't want to leave. He was enjoying it too much, even though I could see his head nodding and his eyes struggling to stay open. Finally, as he nearly drifted off to sleep in the chair, I said, "Come on, Payne. It's time to go to bed." Reluctantly, he let me help him back to our room. "Tracy," he said as he crawled into bed, "this completes my year."

p. 285

(Rachel's Tears: The Spiritual Journey of Columbine Martyr Rachel Scott
by Beth Nimmo, Darrell Scott, and Steve Rabey)

When I feel,
Your powerful presence,
I fall to my knees,
And cry in repentance,
All I feel,
Is your wonderful love,
And this only comes,
From heaven above.

p. 67

(The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart: And 1,501 Other Stories by
Charles R. Swindoll)

My Captain

Out of the light that dazzles me,
Bright as the sun from pole to pole,
I thank the God I know to be
For Christ the conqueror of my soul.

Since His the sway of circumstance,
I would not wince nor cry aloud.
Under that rule which men call chance
My head with joy is humbly bowed.

Beyond this place of sin and tears
That life with Him! And His the aid,
Despite the menace of the years,
Keeps, and shall keep me, unafraid.

I have no fear, though strait the gate,
He cleared from punishment the scroll.
Christ is the Master of my fate,
Christ is the captain of my soul.

—Dorothea Day, quoted in Hazel Felleman,
The Best Loved Poems of the American People

pp. 501-2

Quotes

- We are judged by what we finish, not by what we start. —Anon
- There is nothing so fatal to character as half-finished tasks.
—David Lloyd George
- If you aren't practicing, someone else is. —Anon
- By perseverance the snail reached the ark. —C. H. Spurgeon

Sources unknown

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

Those are the Ones

Those on the heights are not the souls
 Who never erred nor went astray,
 Who trod unswerving to their goals
 Along a smooth, rose-bordered way.
 Nay, those who stand where first comes dawn,
 Are those who stumbled—but went on.

J. S. Baxter, *Explore the Book*

Multiple, 10,000 Sermon Illustrations, (Dallas, Texas Biblical Studies Press) 2000.

(Logos Library System)

Persistence

We are not now that strength which in old days
 Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892), British poet, 1833.
Poems “Ulysses” (1842).

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The River
by Garth Brooks

You know a dream is like a river
 Ever changin' as it flows
 And a dreamer's just a vessel
 That must follow where it goes
 Trying to learn from what's behind you
 And never knowing what's in store
 Makes each day a constant battle
 Just to stay between the shores . . . and

Chorus:

I will sail my vessel
 'Til the river runs dry
 Like a bird upon the wind
 These waters are my sky
 I'll never reach my destination
 If I never try
 So I will sail my vessel
 'Til the river runs dry

Too many times we stand aside
 And let the waters slip away
 'Til what we put off 'til tomorrow
 Has now become today
 So don't you sit upon the shoreline
 And say you're satisfied
 Choose to chance the rapids
 And dare to dance the tide . . . yes

And there's bound to be rough waters
 And I know I'll take some falls
 But with the good Lord as my captain
 I can make it through them all . . . yes

Yes, I will sail my vessel
 'Til the river runs dry
 'Til the river runs dry.