

Pressing Toward the Goal

Introduction

Philippians 3:12-14

Hebrews 10:36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

1. **There are few, if any, endeavors in life where all the “starters” finish what they have started — the ability to “keep going” is obviously an important one.**
2. **The Parable of the Sower teaches that not all who begin the life of a Christian finish it faithfully.**
Matthew 13:18-23
3. **I want to touch on five major areas this morning that I believe that we NEED in order to keep going spiritually, to “press toward the goal!”**
 - A. **These are things that can each be acquired by any child of God.**

Have Faith in the Unseen

1. **As with Israel, “unbelief” is often the reason we fall short of our goals in the Lord.**

Hebrews 3:18-19 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

2. **True Christian life and service is a walk of “faith.”**

2 Cor 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

One night a house caught fire and a young boy was forced to flee to the roof. The father stood on the ground below with outstretched arms, calling to his son, “Jump! I’ll catch you.” He knew the boy had to jump to save his life. All the boy could see, however, was flame, smoke, and blackness. As can be imagined, he was afraid to leave the roof. His father kept yelling: “Jump! I will catch you.” But the boy protested, “Daddy, I can’t see you.” The father replied, **“But I can see you and that’s all that matters.”**

3. **We need a faith that will not only take God at His word and believe His promises, but consider the fulfillment of those promises so sure that they become “REAL” to us already.**

Romans 4:16-22

4. **Our ultimate goal is the same as for Abraham, our spiritual forefather**

Hebrews 11:8-10, 16

5. **We need to be able, by faith, to “visualize” the reaching of our spiritual goals so powerfully that this becomes a continual motivator to keep working toward them**

- A. **This is what motivated the apostle Paul as we read in our opening text.**

Exhibit Courage

Adrian Rogers tells about the man who bragged that he had cut off the tail of a man-eating lion with his pocket knife. Asked why he hadn't cut off the lion's head, the man replied: "Someone had already done that."

1. **A lack of courage is a serious thing: it can literally cost us our souls.**

Rev 21:8 "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death"

2. **Cowardliness is the fruit of failure to trust in God**
Numbers 13:30-33
3. **Reaching the end of our spiritual journey requires having the courage to forge ahead, regardless of the dangers that have to be faced.**

Gain Will Power

1. **To keep going when it would be easy to quit requires the ability to enforce a decision to keep going.**

Will is the whole man active. I cannot give up my will; I must exercise it. I must will to obey. When God gives a command or a vision of truth, it is never a question of what He will do, but what we will do. To be successful in God's work is to fall in line with His will and to do it His way. All that is pleasing to Him is a success

---- Henrietta Mears

2. **We need the kind of determination and strength of will that Paul evidently had.**
Acts 20:22-24; 21:12-14

Shoulder One Day's Burden at a Time

1. Likely none of us would keep going if we knew all of the obstacles that would face us in our whole lifetime — we would be overwhelmed by the immensity of the task.
2. But we can more easily manage *each day's difficulties* — we can be content to receive God's help for today's problems, and not worry about tomorrow's.

Matthew 6:34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble”

A. God took care of the Israelites “One Day At A Time”

Deuteronomy 8:3 So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

POEM: “ONE DAY AT A TIME”

3. We simply “*do not know what will happen tomorrow*” (Jas. 4:14) — we should leave that in the Lord's hands and keep going today, doing what we can today.

Learn to Have Self-respect

1. When we confessed the Lord we, in effect, made a promise to be faithful to Him for the rest of our lives.
 - A. Our confession of Christ should have been a bona fide commitment which integrity causes us to keep.
 - B. We ought to recoil from the very idea of being faithless, undependable, etc.
2. Surely it must have meant a great deal to Paul to be able to say that he had **"fought the good fight...finished the race...(and) KEPT THE FAITH"** (2 Tim. 4:7).
3. There is considerable joy involved in knowing that we have kept our commitments.

Conclusion

1. The generation of Israel that failed to enter the promised land probably illustrates a lack of each of these things.
2. But we are exhorted to learn from their example and do better.

Hebrews 4:11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

- A. **Hindsight is 20/20 and God expects us to use His word, open our eyes and press toward the goal.**

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us **lay aside every weight**, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us **run with endurance** the race that is set before us, **looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

One Day At A Time

“Man’s Version”

I’m only human, I’m just a man,
Help me to believe in what I can be and all that I am.
Show me the stairway that I have to climb.
Lord, for my sake teach me to take one day at a time.

Do you remember, when you walked among men,
Well Jesus you know if you’re looking below it’s worse now than then.
Pushing and shoving and crowding my mind,
So for my sake teach me to take one day at a time.

One day at a time, Sweet Jesus, that’s all I’m asking of you.
Give me the strength to do every day what I have to do.
Yesterday’s gone, Sweet Jesus, and tomorrow may never be mine.
So for my sake teach me to take one day at a time.

— Christy Lane