

The Greatest Moment of Them All

08/27/17

Galatians 6:9

9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Have you ever given up on something? Have you ever hung in there, and hung in there, getting no results, getting discouraged, and then just quit? It was too difficult, required too much effort, too much financial resources, and you decided it was not worth it any more.

I think we have all gone through something like that. We've heard the story about the man during the California Gold Rush of long ago who gave up his quest for gold too soon.

For months this man prospected for gold in the hills. Somehow he just knew that he would strike it rich. Every morning he got up early and walked the hills in search of his "fortune". He staked a claim and dug with his simple tools. He found some gold here and there, but never anything to write home about.

He became discouraged and tired of his lack of results and finally gave up digging because he was convinced that he could not find the "mother load" of his dreams.

Hearing this, another prospector came to him and offered to buy all his tools. The man agreed and sold all his tools for a

paltry sum of money.

This prospector then went on to hire a land surveyor, an engineer and geologist, all whom combined their knowledge and went to work on the mine where the first man had been digging without results.

It is told that upon studying the area and the mine, the men discovered that the first man had been literally three feet from where the real gold deposit was. Literally 3 FEET! The poor prospector who had given up was so close to the gold, he could reach out and touch it. But there was no way he could know that, and then he gave up too soon.

Norman Vincent Peale, author of *The Power of Positive Thinking* had his book rejected so many times that he threw his manuscript into the waste basket and ordered his wife, Ruth, to leave it there. Being the good wife, she left it in the trash...then picked up the entire waste basket and carried it and the manuscript to yet another publisher who liked it. It has sold over 20 million copies and has helped countless numbers of people. Ruth Peale, who died in 2008, said “I don’t have as much self-doubt as he had.”

History gives us numerous stories of people who quit too soon. I will even go so far as to say that anyone who has succeeded at anything - from building a business empire to riding a bicycle, from learning to speak to publishing a book – did so partially because they just didn’t quit.

Our culture offers excellent teachings about this quality of perseverance. It is important to us: Thomas Foxwell Buston said: With ordinary talent and extraordinary perseverance, all things are attainable.

When the world says, "Give up," Hope whispers, "Try it one more time."

Although he is often quoted differently, Winston Churchill gave a speech at Hogwart's , or maybe it was Harrow School, October 29, 1941, which included this sentiment: *"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."*

Thomas Edison's teachers said he was "too stupid to learn anything." He was fired from his first two jobs for being "non-productive." Brian reminded me of this quote last week. In a 1910 biography on Edison, his friend and associate Walter S. Mallory relates: "I said: 'Isn't it a shame that with the tremendous amount of work you have done you haven't been able to get any results?' Edison turned on me like a flash, and with a smile replied: 'Results! Why, man, I have gotten lots of results! I know several thousand things that won't work!'"

(See quotes at the end.)

Then there is a Buddhist saying: If we are facing in the right direction, all we have to do is keep on walking.

In our lives we have many opportunities to do things. We judge most of them, ranking them in our minds as to how much we like doing them, and then choose which to pursue.

The challenge with this is that our viewpoints are so narrow, we may only do things that are easy to do, which are of no earthly good at all yet become quite adept at them.

There was a time in my adolescence when I was proud of how loudly I could belch. I didn't do this around my parents; but with my friends – I was a champion belcher.

In addition to doing worthless things, we occasionally start things that, after careful consideration, we judge to be unworthy of our time, or we don't like it, or it is too hard, or does not bring us the recognition we desire, and the list goes on. Ralph Waldo Emerson stated: The great majority of men are bundles of beginnings.

One of the most difficult things for us to discern is the difference between what needs to be done and what we want to do; what is the right thing to do and the convenient thing to do. In many cases, these two ideas are far apart in distance.

Sadly, we usually have more energy for the things that we like to do and that are convenient, and grow listless at the thought of doing the important, necessary, worthy, and right things.

Once we find an opportunity to do good, to do the right thing, to help and serve people in a manner that resonates with our hearts, then the challenge is to develop the perseverance to stay the course... to “not become weary in doing good.”

I truly believe that God wishes to express through us massively, in the only way that He can, and that is – as us. God wants to express into Creation through us as us. When we are doing what our heart tells us is right, that is God’s guiding whisper becoming expression.

When we are facing that direction, in the flow of God, then all we need to do is keep walking, keep doing what we are doing, and listening for God’s guidance in case there is a change in direction. This path of God may take us through some troubled territory, some challenging situations, up steep mountains, and we may become fatigued and weary.

Remember two things at this point, when you become weary: the body may grow tired, but when you are doing God’s good, the heart will always persevere. Rest the body, and keep the heart and mind on God’s plan, and keep going after a spell.

And the second thing to remember is that despite how tired we are our biggest blessing is just around the corner. When we are doing God’s good, God’s good for us is forthcoming. It may be delayed, but it is on its way. In pursuing God’s good, if we may become discouraged, frustrated, and perplexed, we do well to remember the wisdom of Georges-Louis Leclerc:

Never think that God's delays are God's denials. Hold on; hold fast; hold out. Patience is genius.

The letters to God that we wrote at the beginning of the year, the New Year's resolutions that we promise ourselves, and the secret wishes we desire and could change about ourselves, are some of the good that God wants to bless us with and express through us. Some of our good will come through God's wonderful Grace; some will come from a co-creative effort with God through us. We must do our part. We must persevere; we must stay the course ... and we will as we make the decision to do so, as we choose to follow our hearts and the whispers of God's guidance.

There will come a moment, when we decide to move forward or not, to quit or keep going. There will come a moment when we either stand with God or we stand with our fears, doubts, and ego. This is a Holy Moment, where we acknowledge our collaboration with Christ and stop planning and forcing our will onto the situation. There are times when God whispers, "Enough. Enough of your taking control. Please, allow me." The old prospector had a Holy Moment and chose to quit. Every time we have quit something, we've faced our own Holy Moment. Was it our ego or God's guidance?

After having spent time with God in the quiet of prayer, and we feel it is God's Will to continue then we become resolved and committed. To me, this is the meaning of "With God, all things are possible." That verse doesn't mean that God is going to materialize and aid us. What it means to me is that

God IS perseverance. That quality being demonstrated is God expressing, saying “Yes!” again and again. Our egos counter with obstinance, saying “No!” over and over again. What we don’t realize is that we just might be saying “No” to the greatest moment of them all.

And of course, I would consider the greatest moment of them all to be when we shed the body and recognize that we truly are a spiritual being, and hear the voice of God say sweetly, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.” Marvin, Bill, and several others of our loved ones have recently experienced this great moment.

But while still in body, our good may arrive at any moment; in this next instant the peace, love, joy, power, abundance, Light and Life of God can come pouring into and through us. It is my prayer that we are ready, receptive, and responsive to it.

Let us pray....

Most people never run far enough on their first wind to find out they've got a second. ~William James

Don't let the fear of the time it will take to accomplish something stand in the way of your doing it. The time will pass anyway; we might just as well put that passing time to the best possible use. ~Earl Nightingale

Look at a stone cutter hammering away at his rock, perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet at the hundred-and-first blow it will split in two, and I know it was not the last blow that did it, but all that had gone before. ~Jacob A. Riis