

RESOLVE in the Face of Trials

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For the true Christian, the way of life can sometimes be *difficult*. “...*narrow is the gate and **difficult is the way which leads to life...***,” said Jesus Christ (Matt.7: 13-14). Also—from time to time—God Himself **tests us...** by *giving us trials* to overcome. “... ‘My son, do not despise the **chastening** of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the LORD **loves** He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you **endure** chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?” (Heb. 12: 5-7).

Likewise, the Apostle Peter said this: “Beloved, do **not** think it strange concerning **the fiery trial which is to try [test] you**, as though some strange thing happened to you; **but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.**” (I Peter 4: 12-13). “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been **grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,**” (I Peter 1: 6-7).

When an individual truly surrenders his or her life to God, that person must then strive to live according to the words of the Holy Bible. The way of the Christian life is **NOT** the way of the world! (John 15:19; I John 2:15). In fact, sometimes the Christian way of life can *even bring persecution from our families and friends!* (Matt. 10: 34-37).

So... as a Christian, do you ever feel *overwhelmed* and despondent? Do you become “weary in well doing” (Gal. 6:9 *KJV*)? Do you ever feel like just *giving up*?! If so, then you can take solace by such scriptures as these:

(Acts 14:21-22) [Paul and Barnabas] preached the gospel..., strengthening the souls of the disciples, **exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”**

(II Thess. 1: 4-5) so that we ourselves [Paul and others] **boast** of you among the churches of God **for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;**

(Heb. 12: 1-3) 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. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

(Philip. 3: 11-14) if, by any means, I [Paul] may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but **I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

(II Tim. 4: 7-8) I [Paul] have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

An Example From Modern History

The year was 1940. After a sweeping series of victories, **Nazi-Germany** now *ruled most* of central Europe... from Poland, to France, to Denmark and Norway. And it was only by God's "*miracle of the calm sea*" that the **British** forces had *escaped* from "total **annihilation**" at *Dunkirk*.

Now... the Nazi air force (the Luftwaffe) was inflicting a series of *vicious* attacks over the *airspace* of Britain. These vicious attacks lasted for about *2½ months*... and they were planned as a *prelude* to a **land**-invasion of Britain. Night bombings of London and other British cities lasted for *weeks*.

It was during this time of Britain's **darkest** hour, that Winston Churchill gave a stirring speech that helped his people *through* this tremendous trial. Part of Churchill's speech is as follows:

...we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on **to the end**, we shall fight in **France**, we shall fight on the **seas** and the oceans, we shall fight with growing **CONFIDENCE** and growing **strength** in the air, we shall **defend** our island, **WHATEVER THE COST MAY BE**, we shall fight on the **beaches**, we shall fight on the **landing grounds**, we shall fight in the **fields** and in the **streets**, we shall fight in the **hills**; we shall **NEVER** surrender...

Although *heavily outnumbered*, the British *air-force* put up a most *gallant* defense of their nation. In fact, this air war (known as "The Battle of Britain") proved to be the *first* major **failure** of the Germans in World War II. And... it *thwarted* Hitler's plan to force Britain into *either* accepting peace **or** face a *ground*-invasion.

Near the *end* of that 2½ month air-battle, Churchill spoke the *following* words:

...The gratitude of every home... goes out to the British airmen who, **undaunted** by odds, **unwearied** in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of the world war by their prowess and by their devotion. **Never** in the field of human conflict was **so much** owed by **so many** to **so few**. ...

In still *another* speech, about a year later, Churchill *boldly* spoke the following words:

... **never** give in, never give in, **never, never, never**...

Churchill's words spell one thing: **RESOLVE!** Yes, it was "**resolve**" that helped the British people *through* World War II. And it is "**resolve**" that will see you and I through any trials which *we* are facing! "**Resolve**" helps keep us *on the path*—to God's Kingdom!

Three Ways to BUILD Resolve

#1 FIX your mind on the **GOAL** of God's **Kingdom!**

We must **desperately WANT** to be in God's Kingdom... above **ALL** else!

Consider the extreme trials that were **endured** by some of the "heroes of the Bible":

...Others were **tortured**, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of **mockings** and **scourgings**, yes, and of **chains and imprisonment**. They were **stoned**, they were **sawn in two**, were tempted, were **slain with the sword**. **They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented**— of whom the world was not worthy. **They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth** (Heb. 11: 35-38).

How in the world, you might wonder, did those individuals gain the **resolve** to face their trials, and **endure** to the end? Verse 13 tells us: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off **were assured of them, embraced them** and confessed [or realized] that they were [merely] strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13).

Yes, those people of God clearly saw the **GOAL** of God's Kingdom... and they desperately **wanted it**... above **all else!**

As verse 14 says, "For those who say such things declare plainly that they **seek** a homeland"—that is, they **sought** the Kingdom of God! They viewed the Kingdom of God as "the pearl of **GREAT** price" (Matt. 13: 45-46).

What about you and I? Do *we* consider "being in God's glorious Kingdom" as "the pearl of **great** price"? Do we **focus** on that goal, **regularly**... and **desire** it—above **ALL** else?

#2 **REFUSE** to accept failure!

We must consciously **reject**... as **unthinkable**... that we will **FAIL** to reach our goal.

By developing *that* attitude, our trials **cease** to be “brick walls”... and *instead*, become “hurdles, to overcome.”

Consider the Apostle Paul. Paul experienced **many**, *extreme* trials—as exemplified by the following passage:

...[Paul said he had received] stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; *in* journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily... (II Cor. 11: 23-28).

Nevertheless, Paul said *this*: “*We are* hard-pressed on every side, yet **not** crushed; *we are* perplexed, but **not** in despair; persecuted, but **not** forsaken; struck down, but **not** destroyed—” (II Cor. 4: 8-9).

Elsewhere, Paul stated that we should have the attitude that **NOTHING** can separate us from God and Christ! “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8: 38-39).

Finally, let’s consider a third step in *building* resolve.

#3 Establish an *unshakable determination* to pay **any price!**

When we are discouraged, it is only through *much meditation* that we can *establish* this “unshakable determination”—this *resolve* to **push ahead** and ultimately *achieve* the goal of God’s glorious Kingdom! And, *along with* such meditation, *go to God in prayer*—ask Him to help you—ask Him to **strengthen your resolve**. “For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The LORD *is* my **helper**...’” (Heb. 13: 5-6).

Have you ever found yourself thinking, “I could **never** endure such and such a trial”? If so... then you have **not** made the commitment to pay **ANY** price!

Consider this: If **YOU** aren’t sure that you could endure a particular trial, then how can **GOD** be sure... **UNLESS**... unless, perhaps, He **brings** that *very trial* **upon** you?!

Instead of thinking, “I’m not sure I could bear a particular trial,” we should think about how we **would** bear that trial! **Meditate** on it. Think **positively!** **Resolve** to **TRUST** God... knowing that, “God *is* faithful, **who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able**, but with the temptation **will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it**” (I Cor. 10: 13).

As Paul said, “I can do **all things through Christ who strengthens me**” (Philip.4:13). Paul likewise said, “What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?” (Rom. 8:31).

In Conclusion

It was during Britain’s *darkest* hour, that Winston Churchill boldly declared, “We shall defend our island, **WHATEVER** the cost may be”! Churchill *resolutely* affirmed his willingness “to pay **ANY** price”!

Likewise, you and I must firmly “**FIX** in our minds” the **GOAL** of God’s Kingdom. We must *desperately* **WANT** it... above **ALL** else! We must *condition* ourselves to reject—as **unthinkable**—our *failure* to reach that goal. And... just as Churchill did—just as all the heroes of the Bible did—we must firmly resolve to pay **ANY** price!

With Christ’s help... we **WILL** endure! With Christ’s help, we **WILL** overcome—*any* and *all* trials! And, we **WILL** ultimately **inherit** God’s Kingdom—that true “pearl of *great* price”!

Yes, let each of us *remember* Winston Churchill’s admonishment: “**Never** give in, never give in, **never, never, NEVER**”!

References: Bernard W Schnippert, “Never Give In!” *Good News Magazine*, June-July 1982, Worldwide Church of God