

....BUT LET US ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER-AND ALL THE MORE AS YOU SEE THE DAY APPROACHING.

HEBREWS 10:25

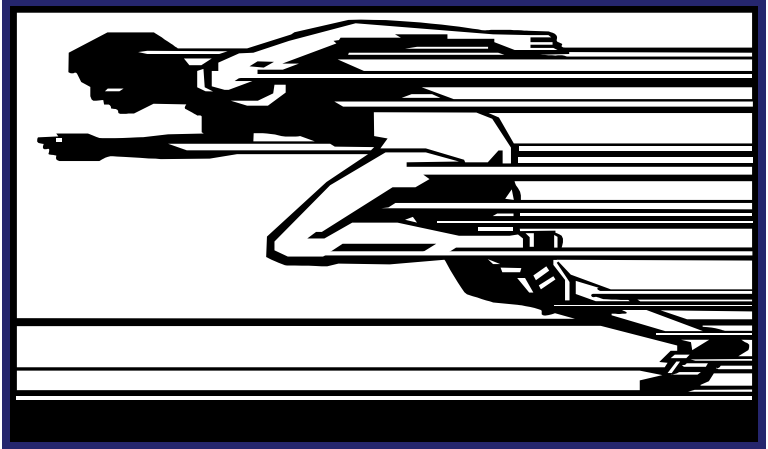
The Encouragement Newsletter

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PERSEVERANCE.....

Do you have a dream or vision to fulfill? How about some goals or purpose to pursue? What I am referring to are not only natural pursuits, but also the spiritual pursuit to really know the Lord. It is so encouraging to move forward, pursue my goals with ease and without any hindrances. However, there are times when things are going well and then suddenly, something happens and blurs my vision or something acts as a barrier to keep me from what I know I must accomplish. It can be so hard trying to wipe the dust from my eyes or move the barrier from my path. When I cry out to God about this thing that threatens my pursuit, I discover, when I am weak, He is strong. In the discovery of His strength, I find something amazing called



PERSEVERANCE.

What a long word...Twelve characters long. Ask a child, just learning the concepts of phonics, to pronounce this word and they may struggle. As I wrote the drafts for this issue, I kept misspelling the word. I like spelling, but it took some effort. The struggle to pronounce and accurately spell the word **PERSEVERANCE** in an indication that effort will be exerted to go from the "P" to the last "E", which is starting and finishing our goals and purpose.

Perseverance is one of the ingredients necessary to seeing purpose, vision and goals fulfilled. Without it, no one succeeds. **Perseverance** must be imbedded in the fibers of the soul in order to press through the obstacles that will surely come when pressing forward.

Let's look at some definitions from Webster's New Century. **Perseverance**—Persisting efforts of belief, especially in the face of opposition; steadfastness; (Christianity) continuance in

grace. **Persevere**—To persist, maintain effort, steadfastly, especially in the face of difficulties. **Persist**—To continue on in spite of obstacles or opposition; to persevere; to last. **Steadfast**—firm, fixed; resolute. In the word of God **Perseverance** is defined as endurance and to **persevere** is to remain, to be steadfast and patiently endure.

Perseverance begins with a mental paradigm to push and endure to the end. This is why we must renew our mind according to Romans 12:1 and remember Proverbs 23:7 - As a man thinks in his heart so is he. As we meditate and allow thoughts of **perseverance** to flow through our mind, we receive the power and the ability to stand firm without wavering and finish strong.

For everything positive, there is a negative. The negative is the enemy of our pursuit. You may be able to think of some enemies of **Perseverance**, but there are two that come to my mind. One is discouragement and the other is weariness. I want to focus on discouragement.

Discouragement will to come and go, as I know you are aware. There is not a one size fit all formula for dealing

with discouragement. You know, it would be really good if there was a pill that we could take "as needed" for the moments when we are discouraged (*you might want one right now*), but there is not a pill that can be prescribed or purchased over the counter. There must be, however, a determination to go on and **persevere**. There also must be a realization that discouragement will always knock at the door of our mind and opening the door a just little will be detrimental to **perseverance**. So, instead of opening the door, just say - "Keep knocking, but you can't come in!" Now, if you happen to open the door a little, shut it**QUICK!**

What else should be done about this enemy called discouragement? Strength to overcome and persevere during those times of discouragement can be gained by doing anything that will lift the spirit and soul. Like, listening to life giving music, reading, or watching a movie (a good comedy can work wonders on a low spirit and soul because laughter is medicine (see *Proverbs 17:22*), and spending time

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Run with Patience....



with those who will encourage during stressful moments. They may also bring laughter. 😊 The list can go on, but one of the major things to do is speak words of life found in the word of God. According to Proverbs 18:21, Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they who indulge in it shall eat the fruit of it [for death or life]. (Amplified) The New Living Translation put it this way - Those who love to talk will experience the consequences, for the tongue can kill or nourish life.

The very words we speak in our

moments of discouragement can either bring life to the soul or death. Speak life words that will bring about **Perseverance**. Words of life will combat the discouraging thoughts and negative emotions.

Consistent prayer is also essential to perseverance. While alone with the Lord and away from the noise, He will comfort, strengthen when weary and show a more excellent way to carry out the purpose, goals and vision. So pray without ceasing.

As I studied **perseverance** and endurance in God's word, I found that those who perse-

vered, like Jesus, the Apostles and others, were focused on the business of building the Kingdom of God. Their **perseverance** was not for themselves or motivated by selfish ambition. There will always be those who **persevere** to build their own kingdom, but, we are called to represent the King and build his Kingdom. As we embrace the spirit of **perseverance**, we must make sure we are building His Kingdom and not our own.

Next you will see the **perseverance** of Nehemiah and the children of Israel, God's chosen people. **BE BLESSED!**

Nehemiah and the Children of Israel

The book of Nehemiah (Neh.) is one place to go to learn about perseverance in the face of opposition and obstacles.

Nehemiah was really doing well for himself. He was "living large" in the king's palace and had the very prominent and trusted position as King Artaxerxes' cupbearer. Although he was doing well for himself, he was concerned about his kindred—the children of Israel. When he heard of their condition (broken down walls—no protection— and burned gates—open access for entry of the enemy), he was greatly distressed. He mourned, fasted, and prayed to God. (Neh. 1:2-4) I believe Nehemiah was well aware of the hatred others had for the children of Israel, but probably had no idea what he was about to face. Praying to God and humbling himself by fasting was his way to prepare for the journey ahead. These are our two vital keys to perseverance.

After seeking God and making his request known to the king, he was granted permission to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the desolate place. (Neh. 2:1-9) Although Nehemiah had the vision and goal to rebuild, the enemy also had a vision and goal. His enemies, Sanballat and Tobiah were so disturbed that someone would want to help Israel. The next few chapters show the intense opposition of Sanballat, Tobiah and another enemy Geshem, who later came on the scene. They were determined to discourage and kill the work Nehemiah set out to do. Nehemiah was resolute, confident and determined as he decreed the

outcome when opposition came. His response to the enemy in Neh. 2:20 was—"The God of heaven will prosper us and give us success; therefore we His servants will arise and build...." (Neh 2:20) Nehemiah had not even started the work, but the enemy was right there to abort the goal and vision at conception—before the hammer hit the first nail.

Nehemiah could not do the work on his own. He had to get the "buy in" or agreement of the children of Israel. In chapter 2, verses 17– 18, Nehemiah shares his vision with the people. They immediately agreed to arise and build. Once they decided to join Nehemiah in changing the circumstances, they too were placed in a situation where they would desperately need perseverance to complete the work. Further reading in the book of Nehemiah, we see the enemy of non-support from those who should have been greatest supporters (3:5). We see mocking and ridicule (4:1-3); and then anger and conspiracy (4:7-8).

In chapter 6 the wall was built, but the success did not come without perseverance. A lot of strategy took place to abort the enemy's plan of failure. The resolute determination of the people, Nehemiah's leadership and the hand of God on the work resulted in success as decreed.

I encourage you to study the leadership and life of Nehemiah and the courage of the children of Israel to build the wall with all perseverance. The things they encountered, we will encounter. Also,



realize that whatever we do to advance the Kingdom of God will not come without a fight. Advancing the Kingdom is the advance of His will in our life, our family and the world. As representatives of our King, we have to take heed to the words of Paul to Timothy to "Fight the good fight of faith" and "endure hardness as a good soldier." (I Timothy 6:12 & II Timothy 2:3) Then we have to "...run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us," (Hebrews 12:1—Amplified)

The word also exhorts, "...tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance proven character and character hope." (Rom. 5:3-4) II Peter 1:6 lets us know that perseverance is a quality that will render us useful and fruitful.

I will close with two more verses. Jesus said in John 16:33, "...In this life you will have tribulation (pressure, stress, anguish, adversity and distress), but take courage; I have **overcome** the world." Lastly, Revelation 3:10 says - **"Because you have kept My word of perseverance, I will also keep you..."**

GRACE & PEACE BE WITH YOU...

The following article was obtained from a devotional for women in ministry. I included it in this issue because it is an exhortation to the body of Christ —both male and female— regardless of the position.

With or Without Someone Else

"At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me... But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength..."
2 Timothy 4:16-17, NIV

When it comes to ministerial leadership, there are two categories of leaders: The first are dreamers; the second are visionaries. Dreamers dream about things being different, but visionaries (1) **see** things different, and (2) **make** things different — **with or without someone else.**

Even though we may sometimes feel alone in our ministerial vision, the Word reminds us that God is the Father of provision, and He is always present with us. Despite this understanding, often-times **the absence of supportive people impedes** our ability to carry out the vision entrusted to us. **Having the courage to stand alone — in the absence of** supportive people; **in the presence of** great adversity; **in the midst of** unpopularity; and **at the threshold** of controversy and alienation — is one of the key **differences between dreamers and visionaries.**

The Bible gives countless examples of great visionaries who display this vital characteristic. **Paul** carried out the vision entrusted to him — with or without the presence of supportive people. When Alexander the Coppersmith openly opposed him, Paul stood alone. He wrote, "At my first defense, **no**

one came to my support, but everyone deserted me... But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it." 2 Timothy 4:16-17, NIV

Phinehas was also willing to stand alone. While the Israelites were staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, who also invited them to make sacrifices to their gods. "...the people ate and bowed down before these gods. So Israel joined in worshiping the Baal of Peor. And the **Lord's anger burned against them.**" Numbers 25: 2-3, NIV

When an Israelite man, shamelessly and publicly, presented a Midianite woman to his family, Phinehas drove a spear through both the man and the woman. As a result of his willingness to stand alone, Phinehas **single-handedly stopped the plague** against the Israelites. The Lord said to Moses, "Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, **the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites;** for he was as zealous as I am for my honor among them, so that in my zeal I did not put an end to them." Numbers 25: 10-11, NIV

Are you willing to carry out the vision entrusted to you — **with or without someone else?** Is the **need to be popular** among your sheep impeding your ability to go where the Lord has sent you? Have **the opinions of other ministers and colleagues** left you dreaming and not doing?

One of the most successful 21st



RECOMMENDED READING:

2 Timothy 4:1-17
Numbers 25:1-11

century business minds once asserted, "You are not a leader to win a popularity contest — you are a leader to lead. **Don't run for office. You're already elected.**" As the Lord's elected daughters, we can only be the visionaries that we have been CALLED to be once we (1) **see** what God is showing us, and then (2) **make** things different — **with or without someone else.**

Our cry: Heavenly Father, I thank you for your unfailing presence and provision. Let Your vision be my vision. Like Paul and Phinehas, I will courageously fulfill my call — not fearing the reproach of men (Isaiah 51:7) — but always pursuing Your perfect will — and finding affirmation in your approval and love.

For I am your handmaiden; I am your servant.

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MAY THE LORD
BRING YOU INTO
AN EVER DEEPER
UNDERSTANDING
OF THE LOVE OF
GOD AND THE
ENDURANCE THAT
COMES FROM
CHRIST.

II Thessalonians 3:5
NLT

Jesus Christ is the Author
& Finisher of my faith

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If this newsletter has been an Encouragement to you, please let me know by e-mailing me at hisminstrl@yahoo.com . I'd love to hear from you.