

CITY OF THE LIVING GOD

ENDURANCE

14

SERIES

In dedication to all the soul-winners that need a Bible study on strengthening your will to endure the Christian walk.

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City of ^{the} Living God



“Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:2-5, ESV).

Living for God requires a person to have a “made up mind” that he/she is determined to live for God no matter what comes their way. Whereas in our Christian walk, we will face sometimes challenges, we have this promise that if we persevere during the suffering that it will produce endurance which in turn produces character. We endure when we have our eyes on the goal of spending eternity with our Lord. We often use the cliché, “No Pain, No Gain.” This is true of the Christian walk. Finally, the character that is produced creates hope. Hope is the ability to have faith that things will turn out great. *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28).*

THE RACE

In 1983, 150 runners competed in the Australia's Westfield Sydney-Melbourne Ultra Marathon. It was an endurance race that spanned 543.7 miles and usually took at least five days running 18 hours per day and sleeping six hours in turn. When Cliff Young, 61-year-old potato farmer and shepherd showed up to the race in overalls and galoshes over his boots, no one even thought he would be one of the runners. He was given his number and off to the races he began. People described his gait as an "odd shuffle" He was behind everyone else in the race. Five days, fifteen hours and four minutes later, low and behold, to everyone's astonishment, Cliff came across the finished line as the winner of the race. The second person came 10 hours later. What was his secret to winning the race? He wasn't fast, but he just never stopped running.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (ESV).

Philippians 2:16

"...holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain" (NKJV).

Galatians 5:7

"You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?" (NKJV).

Hebrews 12:1

"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 [a]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” (NKJV).

ENDURANCE

Everyone is given the ability to endure. All of us are made up of intellect, emotions, and will. It is our intellect that provides us the ability to understand the word of God. It is our emotions that moves us to accept the word of God, but it is our will that helps us to endure and give in to His will. Learning to exercise our will is one of the keys to enduring to the end and not giving up.

Matthew 6:10

“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”

James 1:12

“Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him” (ESV).

Hebrews 10:35-36

“Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise” (NKJV).

Colossians 1:11

“being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy” (ESV).

1 Corinthians 10:13

“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it” (ESV).

HE WILL STRENGTHEN US

As we learn to live for him, he will strengthen our will through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is so important that we make consecrations that will help us to “endure to the end.” There are several things that help strengthen our persistence: a) being faithful to the house of God, b) praying during the altar call, c) daily prayer, and d) reading the Word of God.

Philippians 4:12-13

“I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (ESV).

Isaiah 41:10

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

Isaiah 40:29-31

“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

BE STEADFAST WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL IT

One of the biggest boxing matches of the twentieth century took place on November 25, 1980, at the Superdome in New Orleans, Louisiana. It was a rematch between Sugar Ray Leonard and Roberto Duran. Duran had won the previous fight and was the favorite the second time around. He had a record of 72 wins and just one loss and he had won his last forty-one fights. That is some winning streak.

The rematch was a close fight. Only a point or two separated the two fighters on the judges' scorecards. But then something unthinkable happened in the eighth round that no one expected. Roberto Duran turned to the referee and spoke two words: "No Mas." "No more." He quit. He wasn't injured. He wasn't cut. He was frustrated and he'd had enough. Here is a fighter who was one of the best to ever step into the ring. He won a total of 103 fights, but when anyone mentions his name today, the first thing that comes to mind is "no mas." People remember the day he quit.

We have all had times when we felt like quitting. Quitting your job. Quitting the class you teach. Quitting on your marriage. Some people even give up on God. Unfortunately, every year, thousands of people in this country give up on life itself. Over 959,000, almost a million Americans, attempt suicide every year.

Some of the greatest heroes of the Bible thought about giving up. Elijah said, "Lord, go ahead and take my life. I'm finished" (1 Kings 19:4). Job said, "Cursed be the day I was born" (Job 3:1). Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet. He said, "O that my eyes were a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night" (Jeremiah 9:1).

Yet, these men overcame the temptation to quit and served God faithfully. So when you are tempted to quit, remember, you are in good company. Hang in there. Keep serving. Keep being faithful. Keep doing what God wants you to do. Don't be known for the time you decided to quit.

For more Information

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