

The Value of Persistence
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Introduction: Most of the great men of history became great because of persistence.

A. What is persistence?

1. There are many synonyms that describe persistence: perseverance, tenacity, pertinacity. Each of these nouns means steadfast singleness of purpose, as in the pursuit of a goal, despite difficulties or obstacles. Perseverance suggests praiseworthy and enduring patience. - The American Heritage Dictionary
2. Still for persistence to have value, it must have an object. (Ex. Some are persistent in sin, not obeying the gospel, etc.)

B. The greatest good done in the kingdom of God are by men who are persistent, not the most talented.

1. I have know many who had a “time” where they were on fire and accomplished much. I have also know others who simply did all they could with what they had over their lifetime. Who did the work of the Lord?
2. We have not learned basic Christianity until we develop this long view of persistence. **(2 Pet 1:5-11)**

(2 Peter 1:5-11 NKJV) But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, {6} to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, {7} to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. {8} For if these things are yours and abound, *you will be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. {9} For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. {10} Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; {11} for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

3. How many enter marriage with a long term attitude?

I. Why Persistence has a Value

A. It does not quit. **(1 Cor 15:58)**

(1 Corinthians 15:58 NKJV) Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Never give in! Never give in! Never! Never! Never! Never! In anything great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense.

Sir Winston Churchill (1874–1965)

B. It has more value than ability. **(Matt 25:28-29)**

(Matthew 25:28-29 NKJV) ‘Therefore take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents. {29} ‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.

1. This does not eliminate ability. The persistent however will develop more ability.

Press on! Nothing in the world can take the place of perseverance. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.

Calvin Coolidge (1872–1933)

Perseverance can do anything which genius can do, and very many things which it cannot. - Henry Ward Beecher (1813–1887)

Few things are impossible to diligence and skill. - Samuel Johnson (1709–1784)

Genius, that power that dazzles mortal eyes,
Is oft but perseverance in disguise.
- Henry Austin

C. It is a great teacher. **(Rom 5:3-5)**

(Romans 5:3-5 NKJV) And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; *{4}* and perseverance, character; and character, hope. *{5}* Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

D. It get things done. **(2 Cor 9:8)**

(2 Corinthians 9:8 NKJV) And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may have an abundance for every good work.

Napoleon Hill, who studied the lives of many successful people, stated, "I had the happy privilege of analyzing both Mr. Edison and Mr. Ford, year by year, over a long period of years, and therefore the opportunity to study them at close range, so I speak from actual knowledge when I say that I found no quality save persistence, in either of them, that even remotely suggested the major source of their stupendous achievements."

E. God has commanded it. **(Rev 2:10)**

(Revelation 2:10 NKJV) "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Perseverance is the rope that ties the soul to the doorpost of heaven. - Frances J. Roberts

II. The Importance of Persistence in the Unseen Realm

A. Jesus was persistent in going to the cross. **(Heb 12:1-2)**

(Hebrews 12:1-2 NKJV) 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, {2} 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.

B. God is persistent in seeking sinners. **(2 Pet 3:9; 1 Tim 2:3-4)**
(1 Timothy 2:3-4 NKJV) For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, {4} who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

(2 Peter 3:9 NKJV) The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

C. Satan is persistent in seeking our destruction. **(1 Pet 5:8-9; Eph 4:26-27)**
(Ephesians 4:26-27 NKJV) “Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, {27} nor give place to the devil.

(1 Peter 5:8-9 NKJV) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. {9} Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

D. Angels know the consequences of failing in their persistence. **(Jude 1:6)**
(Jude 1:6 NKJV) And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

III. Parables and Examples that Teach the Value of Persistence

A. The Parable of the unjust judge. **(Luke 18:1-8)**
(Luke 18:1-8 NKJV) Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, {2} saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. {3} “Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ {4} “And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, {5} ‘yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’” {6} Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said. {7} “And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? {8} “I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

1. Are we diligent in our prayers?
2. Our neglect of worship is a sign of a lack of faith.

B. The Parable of the talents. **(Matt 25:14-30)**

C. The Syro-Phoenician Woman. **(Matt 15:22-28; Mark 7:26-30)**
(Matthew 15:22-28 NKJV) And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.” {23} But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came

and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." {24} But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." {25} Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" {26} But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs." {27} And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." {28} Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great *is* your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

1. Do we use what others have done as a reason for quitting?
2. If you use this excuse at the judgment, this woman will rise as an example for your condemnation.)

IV. How to Build Persistence in Our Lives

A. Know where you want to go. (Rom 8:24-25)

(Romans 8:24-25 NKJV) For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? {25} But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance.

B. Do not be afraid to start. (Rev 21:8)

(Revelation 21:8 NKJV) "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."

Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs even though checkered by failures, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory or defeat.

C. Always get back up after being knocked down. (2 Cor 6:8-10)

(2 Corinthians 6:8-10 NKJV) by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and *yet* true; {9} as unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and *yet* not killed; {10} as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

"It's not whether you get knocked down. It's whether you get up again." -- Vince Lombardi,

D. Be optimistic in the Lord's work. (Phil 4:4)

(Philippians 4:4 NKJV) Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, **rejoice!**

1. Fear and pessimism destroy more opportunities that we realize.

Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off the goal.

It Couldn't Be Done

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But he with a chuckle replied
That maybe it couldn't, but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so 'till he tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of grin
On his face. If he worried, he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.
Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it;"
But he took off his coat and took off his hat
And the first thing he knew he'd begun it.
With the lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.
There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure;
There are thousands to point out to you, one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle right in with a bit of a grin,
Then take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
That "cannot be done," and you'll do it.

-- Edgar A. Guest

E. Be willing to pay the price. (Rev 3:10-13)

(Revelation 3:10-13 NKJV) "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. {11} "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. {12} "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him* My new name. {13} "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.""

Death and sorrow will be the companions of our journey; hardship our garment; constancy and valor our only shield. We must be united, we must be undaunted, we must be inflexible.
-- Sir Winston Churchill, 1940

One half of knowing what you want is knowing what you must give up before you get it.

What we obtain too easy, we value too lightly; it is the cost that gives value.

F. Do not stop because of unjust criticism. (3 John 10)

(3 John 1:10 NKJV) Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church.

I do the very best I know how--the very best I can; and I mean to keep doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, then angels swearing I was right would make no difference. - Abraham Lincoln

It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done better.

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat. -- Theodore Roosevelt

G. Learn from your mistakes and seek wisdom!

H. Always give your best. (Col 3:23)

(Colossians 3:23 NKJV) And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

Bobby Knight, the colorful and controversial basketball coach at Indiana, drilled home his thinking on the subject of discipline:

Discipline is doing what needs to be done
doing it when it needs to be done,
doing it the best it can ever be done, and
doing it that way everytime you do it.

H. Do not accept quitting as an option.

1. This is an act of the will! **(John 6:66-68)**

(John 6:66-68 NKJV) From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. {67} Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?” {68} But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you 'til it seems as though you could not hold on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn. - Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811–1896)

Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up. -- Thomas A. Edison, Forbes Magazine, June 5, 1995, p. 198.

Don't Quit

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high.
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit --
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out,
Don't give up, though the pace seems slow...
You may succeed with another blow.

Often the goal is nearer than
It seems to a faint and faltering man.
Often the struggler has given up
When he might have captured the victor's cup,
And he learned too late when the night slipped down
How close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out --
The silver tints of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems afar;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit --
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit.

I. Build your faith in the promises of God. (Heb 13:5-6)

(Hebrews 13:5-6 NKJV) *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." {6}*
So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

Harold Sherman wrote a book entitled, How To Turn Failure Into Success. In it he gives a code of persistence. He says:

- 1) I will never give up so long as I know I am right.
- 2) I will believe that all things will work out for me if I hang on to the end.

- 3) I will be courageous and undismayed in the face of odds.
- 4) I will not permit anyone to intimidate or deter me from my goals.
- 5) I will fight to overcome all physical handicaps and setbacks.
- 6) I will try again and again and yet again to accomplish what I desire.
- 7) I will take new faith and resolution from the knowledge that all successful men and women have had to fight defeat and adversity.
- 8) I will never surrender to discouragement or despair no matter what seeming obstacles may confront me.

Conclusion: Let your life be one of effort and fruits for the Lord.

If well thou hast begun, go on foreright;
It is the end that crowns us, not the fight.
Robert Herrick (1591–1674)