

6:7-10; 1 Corinthians 15:58). For, there is never a right time to do the wrong thing (1 Corinthians 10:13)!

Keep your eyes on the prize. Since the devil wants you to lose your focus, you must constantly remind yourself what your goal in life really is. For example, the apostle Paul was able to endure the loss of many things that were once important to him, suffer hardship for Christ, and push through discouragement because he knew his goal (Philippians 3:7-11)! So, he did not live aimlessly, but with great purpose toward the prize Jesus Christ has made available (1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Philippians 3:12-14; 2 Timothy 4:6-8). For this reason, you must keep your focus on Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2)!

Connect with others doing what is right. The devil's chances of convincing you to give up following Jesus faithfully will increase dramatically if he can isolate you from others who are committed to doing what is right! For, we must have like-minded people in our lives who will provide daily encouragement to live faithfully for Jesus (Hebrews 3:12-13). One way God has provided for this is through His design of the local church. It is crucial that you understand you are not the only one enduring the struggles of living faithfully for Jesus (1 Peter 5:8-9) and to connect in meaningful ways with others committed to doing what is right!

Know that everything works together for good. God provides great comfort through all the struggles involved in living faithfully for Him. For, He assures His people that no suffering we will experience in this life will be worth comparing with the glory waiting for us in Heaven (Romans 8:18)! So, everything will work out for your spiritual good if you love and faithfully serve Him (v. 28). You will get stronger in your faith and hope during your life and overwhelmingly conquer so as to receive eternal life in Heaven (vv. 31-39)!

Conclusion

You must not give up (Galatians 6:9)! Despite the obstacles, you must continue pressing toward the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Thankfully, God will never leave or forsake you through the troubles you experience in this life (Hebrews 13:5-6) and has made it possible for you to live so as to please Him through any and every difficulty you experience!

How To Not Give Up



Life is difficult – and often discouraging. To be “discouraged” is to lack the courage or confidence to do whatever needs done. While there are many areas in which you may be discouraged, none matters more than discouragement on a spiritual level. For, Satan would love to turn these seeds of discouragement (planted through trials, temptations, persecutions, etc.) into the fruit of you giving up on your faith – either entirely or simply not living it out like God desires (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23). For this reason, the Bible gives encouragement for Christians to not give up (Acts 11:21-24; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:9; Revelation 2:10)!

The purpose of this lesson is to learn how Christians can endure the discouragements of this life so as not to give up living faithfully for Jesus Christ.

Remember Your Why

God loves you. Discouragement and challenges do not change the love God has shown for you (John 3:16). Although you had sinned against God and deserve punishment for your sins, God still loves you and has made the greatest sacrifice for you anyone has ever made. This love God has shown for you ought to motivate you to serve Him (2 Corinthians 5:14-15; compare with 11:22-33)! How would you consider it if you sacrificed your life for someone – and that person turned away from honoring your memory when things in life were difficult? Surely, this would be an insult to your sacrifice. This is certainly the case whenever you turn away from faithful living for Christ when your life becomes challenging!

You have a greater purpose. Nothing you have gone through or will go through changes the purpose of your life. The things of this life are still empty and fleeting (read the book of Ecclesiastes). While such things often promise you happiness when you are sad, comfort when you are uncomfortable, distraction when you are overwhelmed, and relief when

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you are pained, they are *always* cheap substitutes for what Jesus offers! For, He offers joy that is not dependent on earthly circumstances, true hope for something that will not disappoint, peace that surpasses understanding, and fulfillment on a spiritual level. For example, God created us in His image (Genesis 1:26-27) so that we will seek Him (Acts 17:26-27). Only God can fill this spiritual longing He has created you to possess (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

You will reap what you sow. Nothing that is troubling and/or putting pressure on you can change the simple truth that you are a spiritual being headed for eternity in either Heaven or Hell. Although it may be compelling to take paths that are easy on this earth, God warns you that the easy path leads to a far harder eternity (Matthew 7:13-14; Mark 8:34-38)! Therefore, God urges you to remember that you will one Day reap the harvest of what you sow during your life on earth (Galatians 6:7-10). Although there are challenges during the time of sowing (when the reward is not yet visible), you must carefully plant and cultivate the proper things in your life if you desire the harvest to be a joyful event! For those who do remain faithful and do not give up, there will be a rest-filled reward (Revelation 14:13). For those who give up, there will be a terrifying destruction (Hebrews 10:26-39).

Your work has a reward. Although Satan wants your faithful service to Christ to seem worthless, God promises that the opposite is true. For, there is nothing you do in service to Jesus Christ that is ever for nothing (1 Corinthians 15:57-58) – unless you do not remain faithful to Him! In fact, God even sees the things you do for Him that no one else knows about (Matthew 6:4, 6, 18). Although it may be discouraging when you labor for the Lord and your labor seems to not be producing the results you desire, you must remember that your faithful work is acceptable to God (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). Whether this is teaching people the gospel, setting a godly example, doing your best, fulfilling your God-given roles, or anything else, your service to God will not go unrewarded so long as you remain faithful to Him (2 John 1:8)!

Think About Things Soberly

Sober-mindedness is key in fighting Satan. Satan wants you to lose the proper perspective, get caught up in your emotions, and be overwhelmed by circumstances of your life. Yet, it is interesting to me that one of the primary requirements to resist Satan and live faithful to God is sobriety (1 Peter 5:8-9). This involves much more than just abstaining from intoxicating substances. It also involves controlling your emotions and

keeping a clear head to process things in a way that fits with God's truth so you will not be deceived!

Expect there to be struggles and discouragement. If you have the perception that following Jesus will be easy in the sense that you will not experience frequent challenges and discouragement, you are setting yourself up for a big letdown! In fact, Jesus said the way to eternal life is difficult (Matthew 7:13-14). And, we see many people of faith in both the old and new testaments experiencing great struggles and discouragement (i.e. Job, David, Paul, etc.). Developing the proper perspective toward such challenges will help you respond appropriately.

Struggle and discouragement do not equate to failure. It is common for people to equate sufferings, discouragement, and struggles with sin and error. This was the perspective of Job's friends when he experienced great hardship (Job 4:7-8). This was also the perspective of the disciples when they saw a blind man (John 9:2). Yet, as Jesus's answer to His disciples indicates, these things are not always the result of some failure (John 9:3)!

Remember the nature of your fight. The simple truth about sufferings, discouragement, and struggles is that we all live in a fallen world. Things often do not happen on this earth as we or God want them to happen. There is an enemy of mankind trying to distract, discourage, and devour us (1 Peter 5:8-9). While he wants us to focus on our physical conditions and turn the battle into a physical battle, we must remember that our fight is spiritual (Ephesians 6:12). And, as a soldier of Christ, we must not lose this focus if we want to be victorious (2 Timothy 2:3-4).

Appreciate the blessings of struggle and pain. It is common to view pain, suffering, discouragement, and struggle as something we should try to avoid. While we should not seek to create pain just for the sake of having it, the Bible seems to present such trials of life as being invaluable to the development of our faith (Romans 5:1-5; James 1:2-4). Rather than Jesus and the apostles teaching us to avoid such at all costs, they teach us to embrace them as an valuable and essential part of the journey (Matthew 5:10-12; 19:29-30; 2 Timothy 3:12)!

Keep Doing The Right Things

Do what's right – even when you don't feel like it. Your faithfulness and devotion to serving Jesus should go much deeper than how you feel and what things are troubling you. Therefore, you must not use your comfort and/or feelings as the standard to determine your actions. Rather, what God simply instructs is for you to continue doing good and not give up regardless of what you are experiencing (Galatians