

justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces **perseverance**; **perseverance**, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

James 1:2- 4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops **perseverance**. **Perseverance** must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Hebrews 10: 35,36 So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to **persevere** so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

Marshall Field (2) once offered the following twelve principles for determining life's core values. He stated, "We need to understand: (1) the brevity of time (2) the power of perseverance (3) the rewards of hard work (4) the importance of simplicity (5) the worth of character (6) the fruits of kindness (7) the power of example (8) the call of duty (9) the value of economy (10) the virtue of patience (11) the development of talent (12) the joy of creativity."

Can you state your core values? In the Bible we find another list: "Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, **perseverance**; and to **perseverance**, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these

qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive..." (2 Pet 1:5-8 NIV).

Going back to our opening scripture in Hebrews 12:1 the author admonishes us "throw off everything that hinders." In other words participants in the race are to strip off every unnecessary weight that nothing may impede them from running the race.

Hebrews chapter 11 speaks about the deeds of faith and has been dubbed by many as the "Faith Hall of Fame." "Without faith," Hebrews says bluntly, "it is impossible to please God"(11:6).

The picture of faith emerging from these scriptures in Hebrews contains words and phrases like "persevere," "endure," "do not lose heart." So we find perseverance is an important additive to our faith.

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1. Papalou, "Faith For the Long Term" (2003)
 2. United Christian Broadcasters, " Core Values" (2002).

Perseverance: The Secret Of Persistence Pt. 2 of 2

Hebrews 12:1, 2 (KJV)

1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience 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 is

set down at the right hand of the throne of God. {author: or, beginner}

Above we mentioned that life is generally more like a marathon than a sprint.

Three Feet From the Gold

I heard this memorable story years ago

A certain Mr. Darby had a gold mine in Colorado during the gold-rush days. It served him well for a short while, and then apparently dried up. He drilled a little further, dug a little deeper, but nothing. So he gave up, and sold the mining tools and the land to a prospector for a few hundred dollars. Within three feet of the place where Darby stopped drilling, the new owner tapped into a gold vein worth millions.

The incident changed Darby's life. He never forgot his mistake in stopping only three feet from the gold. Years later, he said, "That experience was a blessing in disguise. It taught me to keep on keeping on, no matter how hard the going may be, a lesson I needed to learn before I could succeed in anything."

One of the most common causes of failure, is the habit of quitting when one is overtaken by temporary defeat.

Don't stop three feet from the gold.
Go back and dig some more.

To know this is a great advantage in life. Take actor Paul Newman, for example. Most of us would consider Newman to be a gifted man! He has enjoyed a superb career as an actor, and when he took up auto racing as a hobby, he proved to be extremely capable at that. Some people are just born with a lot of ability. Right? Not according to Newman.

When he talks about his successes, he describes early failures and lots of hard work. He says of himself, "I don't have a gift for anything. I've only had a gift of pursuit." That is a gift I would recommend to us all: the gift of pursuit (1).

According to Stedman (2) the secret of persistence is in this phrase, "looking unto Jesus." The word means "looking away unto Jesus." Look at these men and women of faith in Hebrews 11, yes, but then look away unto Jesus. Why? Because he is the author and finisher of our faith. He can begin it and he can end it, complete it. He is the pioneer, he has gone on ahead. He is also the perfecter of faith. He himself ran the race. He laid aside every weight, every tie of family and friends. Every restraining hand he brushed aside that he might resolutely walk with God. He set his face against the popular sin of unbelief and walked on in patient perseverance, trusting the Father to work everything out for him. He set the example.

In the Amplified Bible the first part of Hebrews 12: 2 reads as follows:-

" Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus..."

This reminds me of one of the first sermons I heard as a born again Christian; it was a 3 part sermon with these points :-

1. Look away from the situation or circumstances.
2. Look at God's promises.
3. Praise the Lord.

I heard it said in another place the quickest way to go under is to concentrate on the trial itself! As long as your printer connected to your computer is running smoothly, it' s a blessing. However, if it suddenly breaks down and stops, it becomes a burden. Suddenly, in the natural all of your attention may be focused on that printer.

The answer is:" Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus..."

Similarly, other things can break down one being a person' s physical body. While the body was working right it was a blessing but if broken down it can be a different situation.

The answer is:" Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus..."

Another common prayer request item is restoration of broken down finances. When a person tries to fix their finances with carnal answers, the burden can grow worse rather than better.

The answer is:" Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus..."

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1. Papalou, "Faith For the Long Term" (2003)
 2. Stedman, Ray, "The Epistle to the Hebrews: Series I (1965).

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Perseverance: An Important Additive To Faith Pt. 1 of 2

Hebrews 12: 1 (NIV) Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with **perseverance** the race marked out for us.

In the 1990 Tour de Trump, an eleven-day bike race, a little-known Soviet amateur held the lead for seven days (1). He took the lead on day three and did not relinquish it to any of the more experienced professional riders until the next-to-last day. At one point, he had a 12-minute advantage over the next closest rider.

However, this young rider found himself over half-an-hour behind by the end of the day on which he lost the lead. Likewise, he finished the race far down in the pack.

A few things in life are like a sprint, but most things are more like a marathon. The issue, then, is not how you start but how you finish!

Many of us are good starters. We have talent, we have enthusiasm, we start off with a burst of well-doing. But sustaining that beginning--that is the main issue. That's true in our commitment to Christ, to our partner, in our work and in a host of other endeavours. How are we at finishing?

We see from the following scriptures perseverance is a function of suffering, facing trials of many kinds and patience.

Romans 5: 1- 5 Therefore, since we have been