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Thinking of Quitting?

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I wish we could say Christians are immune to discouragement but we cannot. Good, faithful men and women suffer “low points” in their faith sometimes. Moses did (Num. 20:9-12). Elijah did (1 Kings 19). The great apostle Paul did on several occasions (Acts 18:9-10; 2 Cor. 1:8-9; 12:7-8). Yet the reason we remember them as “good faithful men” is because they did not quit even when they felt like it. Do you know how that feels? If so, I hope these three points help you.

There is much good in the world. Oh, how easy it is to develop a pessimistic and cynical disposition about life. True, there is much evil in the world, and most of it parades itself as good. The Bible acknowledges this without hesitation (1 John 5:19). Yet Christians are determined to set their minds on things that are true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and of good repute. “If there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things” (Phil. 4:8). Difficult as though it may seem in a world saturated with violence, immorality, and religious error, we must choose to dwell on the good.

You may ask, “what good is there in the world today?” Plenty! Look into the eyes of a child, for instance, and see the innocence and humility of spirit we all are to imitate. Find the good in your brethren; observe and take consolation in those trying to do right. Amidst a time of grave religious peril, John rejoiced to hear of other disciples walking in the truth (3 John 4). Be refreshed by the kind words or actions of a fellow worker, as Paul was numerous times (1 Cor. 16:18; 2 Tim. 1:16; Philemon 7). Better yet, become a source of refreshment to someone else; perhaps we need to stop waiting for a blessing from others and instead be a blessing. Don’t despair—there is good if we choose to see it.

Jesus has not given up on you. Anytime we feel like quitting, consider how Jesus endured the cross with such faith and grace. It was not easy to hang for several hours while being crucified; Jesus despised the shame. But He endured “for the joy set before Him” (Hebrews 12:2). “For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart” (Heb. 12:3). It may be that we have sacrificed a great deal for Him (Heb. 10:32-34), or that we have not suffered hardly at all (Heb. 12:4)—whatever the case, we have Jesus to look to as the author and finisher of our faith. If anyone can provide incentive to not give up, it’s Jesus.

Amazingly, Jesus has not given up on us even to this day, despite all our failures. He knew there was hope for Peter to repent and strengthen his brothers after he denied Jesus three times (Luke 22:31-32). In hindsight it must have been uplifting for Peter to remember Jesus’ words. Presently, Jesus continues as our great high priest who grants our petitions for help in times of weakness and need (Heb. 4:14-16). If you feel like giving up, Jesus is there reaching out his hand to provide the strength you need.

Your reward is worth too much to quit now. As I remember my parents encouraging me along as a young boy hiking in the Great Smoky Mountains, “You’ve made it this far. Why give up now?” We are regularly reminded in Scripture of the reward awaiting us: “the salvation of your souls” (1 Pet. 1:9), “the crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:8), “the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14), “a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor. 5:1). The list goes on and on. Our gaze must be steadily concentrated on what lies ahead. We must deliberately refuse to get distracted or sidetracked by the allures of the world around us. Nothing is worth giving up the “surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7) which God eagerly waits to show us in the ages to come.

“Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised” (Heb. 10:35-36). McRae Congregation – Camden, SC

Are You Lucky?

Mike Helms

Recently I heard a radio personality talking with people on the air about being lucky. Some callers said they were lucky and had won things or money many times. Others weren't so lucky. The radio guy stated first that he was not a lucky person. He never had won a drawing, came out good on buying a "grab bag" at an auction, or caught any fish. So he had quit those things. But he quickly followed that saying that in other ways he was indeed lucky. He is lucky to have a good wife. He is lucky to have a good family. This got me to questioning if these are merely by luck. I say they are not, but they are things you put effort into. You have a good spouse and family because you put forth effort to make it good.

Then he also says that he is "lucky to know Jesus personally". I stopped all other thoughts to consider this. And I came away believing that luck has no place in knowing Jesus. Yes, I agree that a relationship with Him is a personal thing. But that relationship takes action on our part, not luck. We have that relationship, that knowing Jesus, because we have invested time and study to learning God's word and Jesus' commands and submitting to Him in all things.

When people in the religious world say things like "know Jesus personally", what they nearly always insinuate is that they have salvation just because they know Him. And the man mentioned above attributes it to luck. He couldn't be farther from the truth . . . nor from a true relationship with the Savior. People who speak this way are really saying they have "accepted Jesus as their personal Savior". And many times, that's as far as it goes. Yes indeed, develop a personal relationship with Jesus but realize that a true relationship with Him will require submission to Him as well as service and obedience that will continue throughout your life.

Consider Luke 6:46-48, "*But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord' and not do the things which I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.*" So you see, a personal relationship is not by luck, but is built. And in John 14:15, Jesus says, "*If you love Me, keep My commandments.*" The loving relationship with Jesus is shown by the things we do, not by luck. The proper relationship with Jesus the Christ will lead to salvation. Don't depend on luck to get you to heaven!