

## “PERSEVERANCE”

**2018 Adventure Camp – Maroon Bells – Snowmass Wilderness, Colorado**

**Date:** Monday, August 6, 2018

**Location:** Backcountry

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### “Never Heard of Him”

I love the story of the high school basketball coach who was attempting to motivate his players to persevere through a difficult season. Halfway through the season he stood before his team and said, “Did Michael Jordan ever quit?” The Team responded, “No!” “Did O. J. Simpson ever quit?” Again the team yelled, “No! “Did Elmer McAllister ever quit?”

There was a long silence. Finally one player was bold enough to ask, “Who’s Elmer McAllister? We never heard of him.” The coach snapped back, “Of course you never heard of him – he quit!”

- *Speaker’s Sourcebook II, Glenn Van Ekeren (p. 281).*

In the study today we will examine the value of “perseverance.” We will discuss why this character trait is essential for success and *how to persevere* when the going gets tough.

### The value of perseverance

When backpacking in the backcountry at times you will get tired and the going will get tough. Rest if you must, but you must never quit – you must persevere.

***What are some examples – of how the going can get tough when backpacking and you will need to persevere?***

- Sore feet/blisters
- Sore & tired muscles
- Being winded/feel like you can’t breathe
- Heavy packs and steep terrain make for difficult going
- Etc., etc.

As Christians we must learn to be perseverant in our spiritual lives as well.

**Matthew 24:13** “But he that endures to the end shall be saved.”

*Note: We must endure if we are to be saved! Those who do not learn to persevere will not be in God’s kingdom. Learning to persevere when things get difficult strengthens our character. That’s what this life is all about – building character.*

**Romans 5:3-4: V3** “...but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;

**V4** And perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

- In order to build “perseverance” into our character it is necessary for us to go through tribulations. As the saying goes – “The stronger the wind the stronger the trees.”

### **Why is it so important to possess this character trait?**

Without possessing this character trait we will not “make it to the end” of our Christian race. It is a long and difficult race.

#### “Don’t Quit”

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,  
When the road you’re trudging seems all up hill,  
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 you mustn’t 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 might 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 to late, when the night slipped down,  
How close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out –  
The silver tint 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.

*-Clinton Howell*

### **How to persevere when the going gets tough**

“Even the woodpecker owes his success to the fact that he uses his head and keeps pecking away until he finishes the job he starts.”

- *Coleman Cox*

**Hebrews 12:1-3: V1** “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,

*Note: cloud of witnesses – refers to the men and women of faith mentioned in chapter 11.*

**V2** 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.

*Note: looking – here means “fixing one’s eyes trustingly.” Focus on Christ!*

*for the joy that was set before Him – Christ’s focus was not on the immediate pain and suffering that lay before him, but on the crown – the reward that awaited him.*

**V3** For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.”

- **When we are going through tough times – we must learn to look past the pain and focus on the reward at the end of the line. This is a KEY TO ENDURING PAIN!**
- If we lose sight of the reward – we will lose hope – and we will fail.

Notice that the heroes of the Bible all understood this key to enduring difficult times...

**Hebrews 11:13-16: V13** “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, **but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.**

**V14** For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.

**V15** And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.

**V16** But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.”

Another example of this is found in **verses 24-26:**

**Hebrews 11: 24-26: V24** “By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter,

**V25** Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,

**V26** Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; **for he looked to the reward.”**

- Life can be challenging! We will surely face trials and difficulties in life. How will we handle these hard times?

### **We must stay in the fight**

- We must learn to get back up when we fall! And we must continue to fight.
- Don’t ever quit!

**Proverbs 24:10** “If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.”

- We must keep chipping away. If we learn to be persistent and we persevere eventually we will be successful!

“When nothing seems to help, I go and look at the stonecutter hammering away at his rock, perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet, at the hundred and first blow, it will split in two, and I know it was not that blow that did it, but all that had gone before.”

*-Jacob A. Riis*

**I Timothy 6:12** “Fight the good fight, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.”

*Note: The reward is eternal life. That is what we are fighting for.*

**II Timothy 4:6-7: V6** “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

**V7** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

**V8** Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

“Many men and women fail because they quit too soon. They lose faith when the signs are against them. They do not have the courage to hold on, to keep fighting in spite of that which seems insurmountable. If more of us would strike out and attempt the ‘impossible,’ we very soon would find the truth of that old saying that nothing is impossible...abolish fear and you can accomplish anything you wish.”

*-Dr. C.E. Welch (Founder, Welch’s Grape Juice).*

**If God is for us, who can be against us – and with Him on our side nothing is impossible**

**Matthew 19:23-26: V23** “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

**V24** And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.’

*Note: Jesus used this figure of speech to emphasize the fact that a wealthy person is easily tempted to depend on earthly riches rather than on God. Those who have riches frequently also are those who trust in riches, a dangerous condition for one seeking the kingdom. Because many Jewish people believed that wealth was evidence of God’s blessing, Jesus’ statement would have been shocking to His audience.*

**V25** When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, ‘Who then can be saved?’

**V26** But Jesus looked at *them* and said to them, ‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

Christ also said in **Mark 9:23**, “Jesus said to him. ‘If you can believe, all things *are* possible to him who believes.’”

“When I was a young man, I observed that nine out of ten things I did were failures. I didn’t want to be a failure, so I did ten times more work.”

-George Bernard Shaw

- **Another KEY to persevere is – learning to commit our worries, anxieties, and problems to God in order to let him handle them.**
- God always expects us to do our part – but once you’ve done what you can do – learn to “cast your cares” upon God.

**Proverbs 27:13** “*I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.*”

**I Peter 5:6-7: V6** “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

**V7 Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”**

“Never Give Up!”

Sir Winston Churchill took three years getting through eighth grade because he had trouble learning English. It seems ironic, that years later, Oxford University asked him to address its commencement exercises. He arrived with his usual props. A cigar, a cane, and a top hat accompanied Churchill wherever he went. As Churchill approached the podium, the crowd rose in appreciative applause. With unmatched dignity, he settled the crowd and stood confident before his admirers. Removing the cigar and carefully placing the top hat on the podium, Churchill gazed at his waiting audience. Authority rang in Churchill’s voice as he shouted, “Never give up!” Several seconds passed before he rose to his toes and repeated: “Never give up!” His words thundered in their ears. There was a deafening silence as Churchill reached for his hat and cigar, steadied himself with his cane, and left the platform. His commencement address was finished.

*Never give up! That’s no doubt the shortest and most eloquent commencement address ever given. Those words should echo in our ears whenever challenges, tribulations, and opportunities come our way.*

-“*The Speaker’s Sourcebook*,” by Glenn Van Ekeren. (p. 276).

**Romans 8:31, 38-39: V31** “What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us?”

**V38** “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

**V39** Nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

*Note: Absolutely nothing can separate us from God's love. The Apostle Paul struggles for words to describe the absolute certainty of God's love for His people. Nothing hard or dangerous, neither death nor life, can separate us from Him.*

**Conclusion:** History rings with people who believed in their dreams and persevered to see those dreams come true. Often what appears to be an impossible feat can become a glittering reality. Outstanding achievement is only realized by those who exercise persistence and undying commitment to their goals.

For those who persevere the rewards far exceed the pain that must precede the victory. Let's learn to persevere!