

June 8, 2015

THE PREROGATIVE TO PERSEVERE

By Jim Langley

Perseverance, in our quick-fix, must-have-it-now society, is not a popular topic. But that does not mean it is not worth a good discussion. Throughout our lives, at work and away from work, we often must make a choice – either to persevere and stick with the process, or take a diversion. Many people see the choice as an easy one – find a diversion if results fail to come as quickly as desired.

However, I have always enjoyed taking what is sometimes called “the road less traveled.” This road is usually more challenging, but is also more rewarding once you have reached your goal. My friend, Chris Hedges, serves as an excellent example of this.

I met Chris a few months ago while he was making his first book tour. The book, *Average Joe's Story: Quest for Confidence*, is inspirational, but getting acquainted with the author inspired me even more than his literary work. You see, Chris has been battling cancer since he graduated from the University of Miami. Upon finishing his 20,000-mile national book tour, Chris “celebrated” by spending 10 days in a Florida hospital for treatment. He is already working on his second book, and it will not surprise me if someone tags him with the appropriate nickname, “Mr. Perseverance,” one of these days. Perhaps I did just that!

I never met the late Charles “Tremendous” Jones, yet stories about this successful insurance agent turned motivational speaker are plentiful. Charlie wrote nine motivational books and continued to speak into his 80’s. He went to be with his Lord and Savior in 2008. One of his best-known quotes about the insurance business is, “No one has endurance like the man who sells insurance.” He understood this firsthand.

Not all of my colleagues in the insurance profession have the endurance to persevere, but I have witnessed some exceptional people in my 30-plus years in the business. Actually, they were not exceptional – they were normal people like you and me, only they embraced the task of never giving up and strived continuously to reach one more potential client before calling it a night.

There is one person, however, who truly stands out to me as the epitome of perseverance. His name is Jesus Christ. He is both Savior and Lord to many, and one day we will bow down before Him. The Messianic prophecy in Isaiah 50:7 states, “*Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.*” When I consider the many trials Jesus endured as God in the flesh, persevering through trials I face in life seems inconsequential.

Jesus is more than the perfect example. He is the One who gives His followers power to persevere, with His Holy Spirit encouraging us daily as we muddle through life on this often-troubled earth. Life is not easy under any circumstances, but I know my life would be much more difficult without His presence in my life.

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MONDAY MANNA

Connecting Christian Business and Marketplace to Christ

I suspect some people reading this “Monday Manna” are attempting to get through life on their own – and that is certainly their prerogative. However, as a satisfied customer who has personally followed Jesus for many years, let me simply say there is great strength to persevere in this most important of all relationships found in Him alone. I highly recommend that you take this step of faith if you have been considering it. Then you, like the apostle Paul, can “*stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain!*” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

©2015, all rights reserved. Jim Langley has been an agent and chartered life underwriter (CLU) with New York Life since 1983 and an active member of CBMC of Santa Barbara, California, U.S.A. since 1987.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. In most cases, what is your first inclination – to persevere through adversity and delays, or to shift to a diversion when it presents itself? Explain your answer.

2. Why do you think perseverance is such a difficult quality to cultivate? What factors do you think influence us to choose a path of least resistance rather than the “road less traveled,” as Mr. Langley describes it?

3. Can you think of a time when you decided to doggedly persevere, ignoring discouragement, and were rewarded for your resolve? What was that experience like?

4. How do you think a personal relationship with God can make a difference in our determination to persevere despite obstacles and adversity? Do you believe knowing God does in fact make a difference? Why or why not?

NOTE: If you would like to look at or discuss other portions of the Bible that relate to this topic, consider the following brief sampling of passages:

James 1:12; Hebrews 12:1; Hebrews 10:36-39; 2 Thessalonians 3:5; Philippians 3:13-1

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