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MONDAY MANNA
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LACK OF PERSEVERANCE AND ITS SEVERE CONSEQUENCES

By Robert J. Tamasy

Have you noticed how easy it is to start any kind of endeavor, but how hard it often is to finish it? This is one reason businesses fail. Someone has a brilliant idea and begins a new enterprise with boundless enthusiasm, but then adversity strikes, followed by discouragement and defeat. Doors that had opened with such high hopes suddenly slam shut.

As a journalist and author, I have written more articles than I can count, as well as nearly two dozen books that I have written, co-authored, and edited. However, there remain several book ideas that I once felt very excited about but remain unfinished. Many times in life, as in the world of sports, it is not how you start that matters but how you finish.

Leadership consultant and coach Tim Kight has observed, “The decision to start is easiest. The decision to continue is hardest. The first commitment is what gets you started. The many recommitments along the way are what keeps you going. Be relentless.”

I had never thought of it in quite that way. Beginning a project, especially one that will require lots of time and energy, does require commitment. But we hit bumps in the road, obstacles that inevitably threaten our progress. It takes recommitment to stay on track. This is why the adage, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try and try again,” is just as relevant for the 21st century marketplace as it was when Robert the Bruce, king of Scotland uttered those words before a major battle against the British in 1314.

Sadly, we can think of many instances when men and women lacked the perseverance to see their way through to success: Promising athletes who decided the hard work necessary for reaching the highest levels of their sports was too much. Talented musicians who refused to put in the many hours of practice needed to achieve excellence. Businesspeople aspiring to rise to the top of their professions but lacked the patience needed to continue advancing.

In reading the Bible, we find examples of both – leaders who rose to greatness through perseverance, and individuals with much potential who became sidetracked and suffered failure and disgrace. The difference? A determination not only to start but also to continue, no matter how difficult circumstances became. Here are two examples (among many) of what the Scriptures teach about persevering:

Facing difficulties eagerly. No one wants to go out of their way to encounter difficulties. However, maintaining a perspective that we grow and mature through those challenges makes it easier to endure. *“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, lacking nothing”* (James 1:2-4).

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Keeping the finish line in sight. The apostle Paul had a long and fruitful ministry of service to God. But he never considered himself to have “arrived.” *“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 3:13-14).

If something is worth pursuing, we must remember not only to commit to it at the start, but also to recommit and recommit as many times as needed until we achieve it.

© 2022. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship*; *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Pursuing Life With a Shepherd's Heart*, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and *The Heart of Mentoring*, coauthored with David A.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. If you were to rate yourself in terms of perseverance, with 1 being lowest and 10 being highest, what score would you give yourself? Explain your answer.
2. Is there anything you are involved in right now that you initially committed to, but now that difficulties have arisen, you find you must recommit to finishing it? If so, what is it – and how difficult will it be for you to remain committed until its completion?
3. Can you think of someone who has served as a role model for persevering in the face of adversity? What do you think about the idea of finding and embracing joy during great trials?
4. How might it help to keep the “finish line” in sight, even if it seems distant both in terms of time and the amount of effort that will be required to reach it?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Proverbs 3:5-6; Isaiah 26:3; Romans 5:3-5; 1 Corinthians 15:57-58; Galatians 6:9

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