

NEVER QUIT!

Part 8 of IMITATE ME. 2 Timothy 3:10-11.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. November 12, 2023.

I WAS A QUITTER

When I was young, I used to quit when things got tough.

- The 800 meter race. Settling for second.
- The bumper sticker is correct: quitters never win, winners never quit.
- That is true in life and faith.

There are many “bad” reasons to turn away from Jesus. SO ...

- Make a rule that you will never quit.

Timothy was tempted to quit his ministry in Ephesus. Paul wrote to encourage him to remain steadfast under pressure.

2 Timothy 3:10-11 (ESV) You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, **my steadfastness**, 11 my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.

STEADFAST

“Steadfastness” is the final element in this series on spiritual growth.

- Steadfastness is “perseverance in the face of hostile forces” (Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words).

James 5:10-11 (ESV) As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 Behold, we consider those blessed who remained **steadfast**. You have heard of the **steadfastness** of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord (in Job’s sufferings), how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

- Steadfastness is possible because God has a good purpose for our hardships and provides mercy and compassion through it all.
- We will not grow spiritually mature until we develop steadfastness.

The Lord Jesus was steadfast.

- He did not turn from suffering and crucifixion.

Hebrews 12:2-3 (ESV) ... 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

The apostle Paul was steadfast.

- The promise of jail and suffering did not deter him..

Acts 20:22-24 (NLT) “And now I am bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. I don’t know what awaits me, 23 except that the Holy Spirit tells me in city after city that jail and suffering lie ahead. 24 But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.

- Paul was dedicated to his mission, so he remained faithful to his Lord.
- The Lord was faithful to Paul.

2 Timothy 4:17 (ESV) But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it.

- Jesus stands beside us. He strengthens us. So, there is never a good reason to walk away from the Christian faith.

GOD’S RESOURCES FOR STEADFASTNESS

We’re not asked to endure alone or in our own strength.

- Paul’s personal experience can guide us:

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (ESV) So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- Paul's thorn in the flesh was extremely challenging and satanic.

There are three resources for steadfastness:

- **Weakness:** Verse 9b: *"Therefore I will boast (rejoice, glory) all the more gladly of my weaknesses."* Verse 10b: *"For when I am weak, then I am strong."*
- **Purpose:** Verse 10a *"For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities."*
- **Grace and Power:** Verse 9: *"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"* See 2 Corinthians 1:8-10.

NEVER QUIT

Learn John Piper's A.P.T.A.T.

- A - Admit you can do nothing without God: John 15:5
- P - Pray for help: Psalm 50:15.
- T - Trust a specific promise: 2 Chronicles 20:20.
- A - Act: Philippians 2:13b.
- T - Thank God for his provision and goodness: Psalms 106:1

Turn hard times and temptations to quit into prayers for grace and power.

SMALL GROUPS GUIDE

GET STARTED

- What's the hardest decision you've ever made?

DIVE IN

- Review the study guide. What were Pastor Peter's main ideas, insights, or Bible passages related to steadfastness?
- How did Pastor Peter define steadfastness? Discuss some Bible passages that illustrate the concept. For example: Acts 4:1-32.
- Explore the many ways that Jesus was steadfast in the face of rejection, suffering, and crucifixion. For example: Luke 18:31-34.
- Review 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Based on the passage, discuss the following questions: What is weakness? What is grace and power? What is strength? How does our weakness clarify God's grace and power?

MAKE IT WORK FOR YOU

- Share with the group the reasons why you have been tempted to quit the Christian faith.
- Review the A.P.T.A.T. acronym in the study guide. Share promises that have helped you. Turn Psalm 121 into a prayer for each other to stand firm in the faith.

PRAY TOGETHER

Pray for the members of the small group, your pastors/elders, the Cornerstone family, and our outreach partners. And anything else the Lord puts on your mind.