

TRUNK OF THE TREE MAGAZINE

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Young People and Perseverance

Perseverance according to Webster is defined as "the act or quality of perseverance; persistence; steadfast pursuit of an undertaking or game." It is going forward with determination when faced with adversity. The Bible emphasizes the importance of this quality, and the Word of God gives us the following counsel:

"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need." Matthew 6:33

"And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you." Luke 11:9

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." Romans 12:12

"Test everything. Hold on to the good." 1 Thessalonians 5:21

An important aspect of perseverance is to know how to deal with the inevitable misfortunes. Proverbs 24:16 says: "The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again." Instead of giving up when faced with difficulties and failures, a persistent young person or adult gets up, persists and tries again. However, many young people today are unprepared to face difficulties and failures. Not having developed the desire to persevere many give up easily because they don't have a reference in their lives. According to statistics a great number of people of all ages react to failure in a manner that is harmful to themselves. Many people blame the whole world and give up on their goals. In Proverbs 14:23 it is written, "Work brings profit, but mere talk leads to poverty!"

We know that it is not always easy to begin again after a failure. Sometimes young people and even adults face up to problems that seem to have no solutions. The impression is that instead of coming closer to reaching our goals, we go further away from them. Sometimes we feel defeated, incapable, discouraged and even depressed (Proverbs 24:10). Besides that, the Word of God encourages us:

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Galatians 6:9

Tips that can help young people to persevere

1. Establish worthwhile and achievable goals

"Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing." (1 Corinthians 9:24-26)

2. How to reach your goals and what to do to attain them

"But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? Otherwise, you might complete

only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it! ' ' (Luke 14: 28-30)

3. Be constant

"He will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers." (Philippians 3:16)

It is imperative to be persistent. The Apostle Paul reminds us that God "will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers." (Romans 2:7)

Young men and women when thinking of your future persevere and maintain foremost in your mind the coming of the Day of the God. (2 Peter 3:11, 12) Don't be envious of those who are getting the most out of this world. Instead of that, pay attention to those who are the ones that truly love you. To persevere in gathering "treasures in heaven" is the safest investment and the only one with eternal benefits. (Mathew 6:19, 20; read 1 John 2:15-17.) Persevere in remembering the Great Creator; God will bless you for that.

Puzzles

Questions referring to the book of Matthew.

1. What is the meaning of Matthew 16:28 with reference to the coming of Christ?

A. Matthew 16:28: "And I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom." This verse has to be seen in the context of what follows -- chapter 17, where it gives the account of the Transfiguration. Here three disciples, in a vision, saw how Jesus would be like in his kingdom and what appearance he would have. Thus, they saw "the Son of man coming in his kingdom" in a vision, in which Jesus was transfigured before them.

2. What is the meaning of "this generation shall not pass away" as given in Matthew 24:34?

A. This refers to the generation that begins to see the signs in the heavens, when "the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken." (vs. 29). That generation will be the last one before the coming of Christ and it will not pass away. The final hour of that generation will not arrive, before Jesus returns. Some scholars say that a generation lasts 40 years, others say 70 and some 120 years. Judging by how God counts time it's a short time anyway.

J. Graham Davies

What is the moral of the story?

The Shepherd and the Lion

Author: Aesop

One day while counting his sheep, a Shepherd came to the conclusion that there were some missing. Very angry, shouting at the top of his voice, highly presumptions and arrogant, he said he would like to catch the one responsible and punish him with his own hands in a well deserved manner.

He suspected a wolf he had seen walking away towards a rocky region in the mountains where there were many caves infested with them.

However, before setting off he made a promise to the gods, saying he would make a sacrifice to them of the fattest and most beautiful of his sheep if they would help him find the thief.

After searching in vain no wolf appeared, when suddenly, while passing in front of a large cave at the foot of the mountain, a huge lion coming out of the cave carrying one of his sheep in its mouth placed himself in front of him. Terrified, the shepherd fell on his knees begged the gods: "Please have mercy on me kind gods, men don't know what they say! To find the thief I offered the fattest of my sheep. Now I promise the largest and most beautiful bull, as long as you make the thief go far away from me!"

Conclusion: When we find what we are looking for our initial interest fades away...

The Moral of the Story: If the benefits of something are not assured, we should think twice before desiring them.

David – A life of lessons

King David was a man who prayed a lot. In the Psalms, inspired by God, he sang: "for you answer our prayers. All of us must come to you" (Psalm 65: 2). God is capable of understanding the prayers of all the people that make up the nations of humanity.

David was a man whose life was far from free of difficulties. When a young man, David spent much time on the run, while the wicked King Saul and his body guards tried to kill him. (1 Samuel 23:7, 8, 19-23)

David also had to fight against personal weaknesses. He recognized this in Psalm 40: "For troubles surround me – too many to count! My sins pile up so high I can't see my way out. They outnumber the hairs on my head. I have lost all courage." (Psalm 40:12)

Truly, David had many difficulties, but he was not completely defeated by them. He used to meditate on the blessings he received from God in spite of his problems and he saw that they were far greater than his afflictions and resorted to God in prayer: "Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin." (Psalm 51:1)

King David of ancient Israel experienced the pain of sin and its consequences both in a public and personal manner. He was a man of God, blessed with talents and responsibilities. He knew that God was guiding his steps. He knew the promises of God with respect to knowledge and prosperity. And like every one of us he could chose between right and wrong. Unfortunately all this knowledge did not prevent him from falling and hurting himself and those dear to him.

The lessons learned from David's mistakes

1. David teaches us that a truly repentant person does not try to hide from God nor try to find excuses for his or her mistakes. Romans 3:23; Hebrews 4:16; Psalm 32:5.
2. David reminds us that to simply say we have a problem is not enough. True repentance includes genuine sadness for our mistakes with a desire for purification so that we no longer repeat those mistakes. Psalm 51:1, 2 and 10.
3. David demonstrates his faith in the promise of God to forgive and restore. Psalm 51: 11, 16 and 17.
4. David shows relief for being forgiven and his gratitude towards God by praising his name and proclaiming to others the mercies he found in the Lord. Psalm 51:13; Psalm 32: 10 and 11.

When we learn through the steps of David we may say: "For you are my hiding place; you protect me from trouble. You surround me with songs of victory. The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best

pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you." Psalm 32: 7 and 8.

Bible Quiz*

1. When did David take some cheese to give to someone as a present?
2. When did camels use necklaces?
3. Who baked unleavened cakes for an angel?
4. What kind of fruit did the prophet Amos harvest?
5. To whom did God promise to give blessings without measure?
6. How old was Esau when he married?
7. What city did Paul come from?
8. Who were the three kings who suffered from insomnia?
9. In what palace were the beds made of gold and silver?
10. In what Bible texts are instructions given about fishing?

* Look for the answers in the next edition of the YOUTH JOURNAL. Be sure to answer before the next edition is published!

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