

What Keeps Christians From Quitting?

By Pastor Art Watkins

Galatians 6:9: **And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.**

The reason Paul wrote these words is because there are many saints who grow weary, faint and quit.

In Christ's day many quit.

John 6:66-67: **From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?**

In the book of Acts many quit.

2 Timothy 4:10: **For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.**

2 Timothy 1:15: **This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me.**

Many are quitting today.

There are about 45,000 churches in America and each year 3700 close. Each month 1700 pastors quit the ministry. Church attendance is at an all time low in America. In 2004, only 17 percent of the population attended a Christian church on any given weekend. Of the 17 percent only 25 percent of them come just 3 Sundays out of 8. This means they miss 5 Sundays out of 8.

*As Christians we are in a race: ***Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*** But what keeps us in the race? What keeps us from quitting and becoming a spectator in the grand stand?

*We are called to fight; ***Fight the good fight of faith.*** But what keeps us in the fight? What keeps us from throwing in the towel?

*We are called to be soldiers: **Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.** But what keeps us in the war? What keeps us from becoming AWOL?

*We are called to be **planters** and to sow the seed of the word and gospel: But what keeps us sowing the seed and witnessing and preaching?

*We are called to be laborers; **Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.** But what keeps us working instead of quitting?

There are 5 things that keeps me and I hope you in the race and in the fight, sowing and planting the seed.

Judgment

2 Corinthians 5:9-11: **Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.**

Why should we labor and work for the Lord? That we may be accepted of him. Suppose a Christian does not labor and work for the Lord in this life? Suppose he spends his life satisfying the lust of the flesh? Suppose he is entangled with the cares of this life and pursues pleasure and chases after money and brings no fruit to perfection? Will he be accepted? What is the opposite of accepted?

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

We have a date with judgment in the future. What will God judge?

The works we have done in our body

Eccl.. 12:14: **For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be good*, or whether *it be evil*.**

The words of our mouth

Matthew 12:36-37: **But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.**

The secret thoughts of our mind and heart

1 Corinthians 4:5: **Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.**

Romans 2:16: **In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men (the thoughts of your mind and heart) by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.**

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

Did you ever fear the terror of your parents when you did something wrong? We should also fear the terror of the Lord when it comes to this judgment. In that day all of our works, words and thoughts will be exposed and judged. This is very sobering and it should cause us to fear God.

As a pastor my duty is to persuade saved men to get ready now for this coming judgment and to get busy by laboring now to be accepted by the Lord when they are judged. Knowing about this coming judgment should keep us all in the race and to race even harder.

Love

2 Corinthians 5:14-15: ***For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.***

The terror of the Lord persuades us in verse 11 to labor, but here the love of Christ constrains us. The word constrain means to press on, to urge, to impel, or to excite. The love of Christ is the reason we press on. It urges us to never quit; it excites us to continue. It's the love he had for us when he died for us. His sacrificial love demonstrated for us on the cross is what constrains us.

When you consider who he died for and what he died for, it should constrain us.

Romans 5:5-10: **And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet**

peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Notice who Christ died for: Sinners-8. The ungodly-6. His enemies-10. Would you die for such people? Christ did and why? Verse 8 is the answer. LOVE.

Romans 3:19: **Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.**

It says the whole world is guilty before God? Guilty of what? Breaking every commandment of the law of God. We are guilty of every sin the law of God condemns. The law condemned every one of us. This means that when Christ died he died for law breakers. It means he died for people who hated him. He died for idolaters. He died for liars, thieves, murderers, adulterers, fornicators, blasphemers, sodomites, etc

He died for people who deserve to burn in hell forever and ever and he would be justified if he cast us all into hell. But instead of casting us all into hell he took our place on the cross and allowed his father to judge and condemn and execute him in our place so he could save us from the hell we deserve. That's the love of Christ that constrains us.

In verse 11 the terror of the Lord persuades us to labor for the Lord so that our works will be acceptable unto him in the Day of Judgment. But what does the love of Christ constrain us to do?

Verse 9: ***And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.***

Putting it simply: His love in dying for us should constrain and urge us to die. To die to ourselves and then to spend the rest of our lives living for him who died for us.

This is what it means to become a living sacrifice. It means you become dead and at the same time alive. Dead to your own selfish desires and ambitions, but alive to his desires and ambitions.

This is what it means to bear a cross. It means your ambitions and goals and aims in life are crossed out by his.

The problem with many Christians is that they have this turned around. They are dead to Christ and alive to themselves and Christ's will and ambitions are crossed out by theirs. This is why many have dropped out of the race and quit. The love of Christ no longer constrains them and the terror of the Lord does not faze them.

Fear

2 Corinthians 7:1: Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

What is it that we should fear? Of what will happen to us if we fail to cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the sins of the flesh and spirit. What will happen to us?

1 Corinthians 11:30-32: For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

The Corinthians are an example of what happens to Christians who fail to cleanse themselves from the filthiness of the sins and of the flesh and spirit. God chastises them with weakness, sickness and even death. This is why Paul said we should fear God in 2 Corinthians 7:1. Chastisement ought to strike fear in the heart of every believer.

Reward

1 Corinthians 3:11-15: For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (Christ himself is the foundation upon which we are built) Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; (different types of works Christians do in this life) Every man's work shall be made manifest: (revealed) for the day shall declare it, (judgment day) because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

There is a major reason to finish the race and to keep fighting to the end and to endure hardships as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. It's verse 14.

If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

God will reward the works we do in this life if they are the works he ordered us to do. Your works are never in vain in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:58: **Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, (Be firm, strong, confident in the faith) unmoveable, (Firm, fixed, stable, unmoved, unshaken) always abounding in the work of the Lord, (Always actively engaged in doing the will of God; in promoting the glory of God, and advancing the kingdom of God and the word of God and the gospel of God.) forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. Your labor is not vain for 1 Corinthians 3:14 says: If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.**

Hebrews 6:10: **For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.**

Notice; the work you do that benefits the saints is considered work done for Christ and his name. What you do for them, you do for Christ and God will not forget it.

The work you do in the Lord is noticed by the Lord even though it may be ignored by men.

The work you do for the Lord is not forgotten for it will be rewarded according to 1 Corinthians 3:14.

The rewards God promises those who work for him in this life should motivate us to stay in the race, keep fighting, keep planting,

Ephesians 6:8: **Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.** This verse is based upon the oldest law in the world; the law of sowing and reaping. Whatsoever a man sows thus shall he reap. If you sow good works in the name of Christ you will receive good from the Lord in return. Any price you have to pay in this life to reap rewards at the judgment seat of Christ will be worth it. The rewards will be exceedingly, abundantly above what we could ask of think.

Inspiration

Many people today were inspired by others to become what they are today. Many Nascar drivers were inspired by other drivers before them. The same is true of football players, doctors, nurses etc. There are three people who

should inspire us to stay in the race, keep fighting to the end, keep working, keep sowing the seed and never quit and one of them is the greatest inspiration of all.

The prophets

In Hebrews 11:33-38 Paul wrote about the Old Testament prophets and what they suffered to preach the word:

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

The apostles

Jesus said to the New Testament apostles in Luke 21:12-17: **But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and *some* of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake.** Those great men carried the gospel to Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and the utter most parts of the earth. They established churches all over the known world, 1000's of people were saved but they were persecuted, beaten, imprisoned and in the end they were all murdered.

Jesus Christ

Hebrews 12:1-3: **Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 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 is set down at the right hand of the**

throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Throughout his life Christ preached the gospel to 1000's, healed the sick and raised the dead and trained men to take his place. But he was persecuted throughout his life and in the end he was beaten, whipped and crucified for sinners like us. He is the greatest inspiration of all.

These are the men who should inspire us. These are the men God told us to follow and if we do, we will not become weary and faint and give up and quit. They all stayed in the race under the worst circumstances till the end. God help us to follow their example.

If you know of a brother or sister in Christ who has fallen out of the race encourage them to get back in. ***Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*** Galatians 6:1

If for some reason you have dropped out of the race, I encourage you to get back in and stay in the race till Jesus comes again. There is an old song that says: ***Sometimes the day seems long, Our trials hard to bear. We're tempted to complain, to murmur and despair. But Christ will soon appear to catch his bride away! All tears forever over in God's eternal day! It will be worth it all when we see Jesus! Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ. One glimpse of his dear face, all sorrow will erase. So, bravely run the race till we see Christ.***

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