

# NEVER GIVE IN!

**When severe trials come into your life, do you easily "give in"? Or do you "gird up your loins" and ENDURE ADVERSITY with unflinching faith in God? This inspiring article shows how YOU can develop that vital ingredient necessary for true success — PERSEVERANCE!**

**I**N this century. Winston Churchill was an epitome of perseverance — a colossus of refusal to surrender to the adversary.

"Never give in," he said, "never, *never*, NEVER, NEVER, in nothing great or small, large or petty — *never* give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. NEVER yield to force, NEVER yield to the *apparently* overwhelming might of the enemy!"

That "John Bull" determination to overcome any and all obstacles, coupled with his personal abilities and willingness to work, made Churchill's life an inspiration to millions.

And that same quality, *perseverance*, will make the difference between success and failure in our lives.

## When Things Go Wrong

Life has its bleak moments — when everything seems wrong — when even obedience to God's laws

seems, *on the surface*, only to bring more disheartening results. Sometimes years can go by, with no apparent "blessing" — as we mortals tend to reckon blessings. But we need to realize that God does not always see things as we do.

Take the example of Joseph, the elder son of Jacob and Rachel. One can hardly say he "deserved" his troubles. In his case, the envy of others was to blame.

Joseph's brothers could hardly tolerate his favored position in the family — they hated him for the beautiful coat their father had given him. But when he began to tell them of his highly implicative dreams — that they and their father would one day bow before him — they were "fit to be tied"! So they got rid of him — sold him as a slave and convinced their father that he was dead, stealing and ruining his beautiful coat in the process.

Later, in Egypt, Joseph was sold again — this time to the ruler's chief executioner. *Hardly a nice or encouraging*

position to be in. And all of this because he was one with whom God was dealing.

Soon, things got *worse!* The executioner's wife made a play for him, and he refused her. He wisely obeyed God. And what did he get for his staunch morality? The proverbial "woman scorned" then deceitfully forced her cruel revenge by seeing him thrown in jail. For obeying God he was thrown in a dark dungeon with no hope of escape or release — a "forgotten man."

### Darkest Just Before the Dawn

So there you have it. God begins to *deal* with the man. Things go well for a little while — and then EVERYTHING falls apart! Or so it appears.

Of course, when we read the rest of the story, everything becomes clear. In just a few more paragraphs, the whole situation is changed. All has worked out beautifully. Joseph was finally recognized, was made RULER directly in association with the chief Pharaoh of Egypt, his entire family was reunited and brought to Egypt to be near him, and was jointly given the best of the nation's land. The complete story is touching and beautiful.

But if YOU had been Joseph... Would you have patiently endured all the affliction, pain, discouragement and suffering, without "giving up" or losing faith in God?

Says the word of God, "If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small" (Prov. 24:10, *Amplified Bible*).

YOU wouldn't have been able to see the end from the beginning any more perfectly than Joseph could. The neat and encouraging paragraphs would not yet have been written. You would simply have been robbed of your favorite clothes and sold as a *slave* into the worst possible situation. You would not speak or understand the language of the man you worked for. His wife would have been making seductive passes at *you*. And YOU — if you had obeyed God — would have found yourself thrown in jail — and forgotten.

You would probably rue the day you got that beautiful garment from your father — and you might even wish you had never had those special

dreams. You would certainly wish you had kept quiet about them. But there you would be. In jail. In a foreign country. Separated from everything and everyone you knew and loved. A prisoner, not guilty, but punished.

This kind of situation is far from being an isolated case. God always deals with people as *He* knows is best. In everything, He wants His people to develop faith in the fact that He is in *control* — whether or not things may "look good" for the moment.

The golden sky comes at the *end* of the storm — the "silver linings" in clouds are not apparent at first. And only through our patiently enduring and USING the experiences that come our way do we develop *enduring faith* in God.

Trials must come, though in contrast to Joseph, we are often responsible ourselves for the troubles that come our way. We create our problems through our own shortcomings, or we force God to correct us when we disobey His laws or principles, even when we aren't aware of what mistake we may have been making until God makes it clear to us in His unmistakable ways.

But in either case, to let God do His incredible work in our lives we have to ENDURE chastisement, knowing that God punishes us for our eternal welfare and good, as a loving father spans his children (Heb. 12:5-11).

### The Trials of a Prophet

Jeremiah was a prophet of God — a man used mightily in his time. He constantly warned God's people of impending disaster — because of *their* sins. And then he lived through that same disaster!

Jeremiah had been thrown into a cistern by King Zedekiah's subordinates (Jer. 38:6; Lam. 3:52-57). He suffered terribly himself during the overthrow of Jerusalem — because *they* had refused to change. His personal reaction to severe trial is among the finest examples recorded in the history of God's people.

Notice Jeremiah's reaction — his suffering under the stress of God's wrath and his own subsequent change

of attitude and resolve to continue to seek God, to *trust* in Him.

At first, almost to the point of utter despair, he groaned: "I am the man who has seen the afflictions that come from the rod of God's wrath... He has turned against me. Day and night his hand is heavy on me. He has made me old and has broken my bones... He has walled me in; *I cannot escape*; he has fastened me with heavy chains. And though I *cry* and *shout*, He will *not* hear my prayers!" (Lam. 3:1-8, *The Living Bible*.)

Have YOU ever felt so "sure" things could *never* work out? Is there something in this experience that perhaps each of us might use at some time in our lives? There surely is!

Notice how Jeremiah continued his personal lament: "He lurks like a bear, like a lion, waiting to attack me... My own people laugh at me... He has filled me with bitterness... He has made me to eat gravel and broken my teeth; he has rolled me in ashes and dirt... I have forgotten what enjoyment is. ALL HOPE IS GONE; my strength has turned to water, for the Lord has left me..."

"I can NEVER forget these awful years; *always* my soul will live in utter shame" (verses 10-20).

A PROPHET OF GOD uttered those pathetic words — in personal anguish — under severe trial. Amazing, isn't it, that in the lives of those giants whom God has used as examples of success and spiritual power, there have been moments of terrible depression — of near loss of hope.

All hope certainly *appeared* gone. The prophet almost *gave in*. But not completely. He searched his mind for what he had learned of God through years of experience. He thought *beyond* his immediate trial. And he thereby endured, with the help of God. Notice:

"Yet there *is* one ray of hope: his compassion NEVER ends. It is only the Lord's mercies that have kept us from complete destruction. *Great* is his faithfulness; His lovingkindness begins afresh each day. My soul claims the Lord as my inheritance; therefore *I will hope in him*... The Lord is WONDERFULLY GOOD to those who *wait* for him, to those who *seek* for him. It is

good both to hope and WAIT QUIETLY for the salvation of the Lord!

"It is good for a young man [or woman] to be under discipline, for it causes him to sit apart in silence beneath the Lord's demands, to lie face downward in the dust; then at last there is hope for him [or her]. . . . THE LORD WILL NOT ABANDON HIM FOREVER. Although God gives him grief, yet he will show compassion too, according to the greatness of his loving-kindness. For he does NOT enjoy afflicting men and causing sorrow" (Lam. 3:21-33).

### Then Comes Deliverance!

Jeremiah was removed from the trial — just when he thought he was ruined. He cried desperately to God for deliverance, and at the last possible moment, God lifted him from the trial (Lam. 3:54-57).

Trials don't really end things — they make new and better things possible — when stronger, wiser character has been formed.

Remember Job's example? He had been seriously self-righteous and God had let him endure severe trial — to bring him to his senses. But as soon as the lesson was learned, as soon as Job recognized God's unspeakable greatness in contrast with his own helplessness, God could again begin to bless him. "Then, when Job prayed for his friends [he finally got his mind off himself!], the Lord restored his wealth and happiness! In fact, the Lord gave him TWICE as much as before" (Job 42:10, *The Living Bible*).

### After All, WHO ARE WE?

We know God made everything for one central purpose. He wanted a family. As human creatures we certainly understand that desire. God put that desire in us when He created us, even emotionally, in His image and likeness (Gen. 1:26-27).

God has *not* called us to hurt us, or to take from us the good things we really want. He didn't call us to run us through agonizing experiences. He certainly will not do us harm — or deprive us of any good thing — or subvert any good cause. He called us because He loves us. He wants us, spe-

cifically and individually, to be His children (Deut. 7:8; John 6:44). He wants us to succeed in every possible way — to enjoy total fulfillment, the desire of our (converted) hearts (Ps. 37:4-5). He lives to give us these things — just as quickly as He can train us to use and enjoy them properly.

If we will live by every word of God, we will be the apples of His eye — His special treasure — His SONS! (Zech. 2:8; I John 3:1-3.) And as His sons we need to realize that God is so intensely interested in us — so overwhelmingly fond of us, individually — that He will let us go through whatever is necessary to guarantee our success as His eternal sons in His Family!

### Will Endurance Endure — by Itself?

Endurance — perseverance, stick-to-it-iveness — is a law of success. It is indispensable. But *patient waiting* during a time of trial usually will not succeed of itself. Consider the contrast between David and Saul — two men who faced the same trial simultaneously.

The event involved David, King Saul, the armies of Israel and the Philistines with their titanic hero, Goliath — all of whom (except David) had waited for action for forty nerve-wracking days (I Sam. 17:16). David took right, swift, aggressive, *decisive* ACTION! He lost no time, but Goliath lost his head.

Saul was willing to wait, procrastinate — but while he waited, he did little, personally, to change circumstances.

On the other hand, David *seized* upon the circumstance, confidently used God's support (he had God's Spirit — he knew God would help) and employed every possible means at his disposal toward SUCCESS, while the king and the nation waited for someone else to TAKE ACTION! David's proper action during the trial allowed God to bring the situation triumphantly to its solution.

Thus we are introduced to the life of David — one of patient endurance under stress. But always David is taking *action*, every possible right action within God's law, to properly resolve

problems as they arise — with God's help.

David was a man whose very approach to life itself was one of success. And when he had to wait — as he did before God removed Saul from office — he applied himself diligently to every task during the interim, keeping loyal to God throughout the experience, and repenting deeply when he stumbled.

David knew that God keeps His promises — that every good thing would come his way in God's good time. So he confidently and patiently worked towards such ends. Any other approach would have been faithless — an insult to the character of God.

The same is just as true of each of us (Ps. 37:4-11). God has called each of us to SUCCEED in a calling which defies human imagination (I Cor. 2:9-11). And he lives to help us through every challenge along the way — IF we will PERSEVERE, always exercising *all seven LAWS* of success.

Elbert Hubbard once said, "The line between failure and success is so fine that we scarcely know when we pass it: so fine that we are often on the line and do not know it. How many a man has thrown up his hands at a time when a little more effort, a little more patience, would have achieved success. As the tide goes all the way out, so it comes all the way in. A little more persistence, a little more effort, and what seemed hopeless failure may turn to glorious success.

"There is no failure except in no longer trying. There is no defeat except from within, no really unsurmountable barrier save our own inherent weakness of purpose."

Because God is for us! (Rom. 8:31.)

### Why Succeed?

How about it? Is an overwhelmingly SUCCESSFUL life worth it? For you and me, is it worth it that we should PERSEVERE?

Think seriously for a moment of the millions of under-privileged people — sick people — starving people — war-torn people — halt and maimed people — ignorant, helpless, often innocent people. Think about THEM.

THEY wait for a perfect *you* (Rom. 8:16-21). A *you* whom God will have developed until you can help them — lift them from their helplessness and give them LIFE! That is your calling — my calling — our calling. And that calling is more than worth ANY sacrifice! We can fulfill that incredible purpose if we PERSEVERE, with God's help.

### How Jacob BECAME Israel

Jacob was an able person — a very successful cattle breeder. He had worked willingly for fourteen years in exchange for Laban's daughters in marriage. With God's help he had been able to gain equitable compensation for his work from his cheating, opportunist employer (Gen. 31:5-10).

God thought highly of Jacob — respected him for his good qualities. But Jacob had never had to try his mettle against anyone with abilities equal to his. So God needed to try Jacob's mettle in an *even* battle — one that would reveal his character under the greatest possible stress. So *God*, the One who became Jesus Christ, manifested Himself as a human and wrestled with Jacob. (The fact that Jacob actually wrestled with God is made clear from Genesis 32:30 and Hosea 12:3-6.) The account is startling — an incredible eye-opener.

Jacob was no quitter — no matter who the opponent. When faced in personal struggle with none less than God Almighty, he fought with zeal and relentless courage. *Nothing* could make him give up when he KNEW his tenacity was *being tried* — when he KNEW he should *HOLD FAST!*

God told Jacob, "Let me go, for it is dawn."

"But Jacob panted, 'I will not let you go until you bless me.'"

"What is your name?" the [One who became Christ] asked.

"Jacob," was the reply.

"It isn't anymore!" the man told him. "It is ISRAEL — one who has power with *God*. Because you have been strong with God, you shall prevail with men' . . . *And He blessed him there*" (Gen. 32:26-29, *The Living Bible*).

Jacob never forgot that he had wrestled — and PREVAILED — with God! The very God who is the same, yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). The very God who calls His New Testament Church — God's people from every race — spiritual *Israel!* (Gal. 6:16.)

The implication is clear. Jacob had to *qualify* for his new name — and so must we!

God's blessings can often come only after hardship and suffering. Character does not come easily. God expects us to *conquer* — not to give in until we receive our respective blessings. The Kingdom of God, and successful completion of every step along the way, is worth *fighting* for (Matt. 11:12). Certainly Jacob thought so — and God respected him for it. Blessed him for it. Gave him a *new name* for it — a name filled with HONOR!

### What to DO When Disaster Strikes

When trials and adversities come into your life, remember these men of God — their faith, patient endurance, and their works.

When your life looks "boxed in," hopeless — when nothing seems to work out right — then pause and consider that your Creator *loves* you and is deeply concerned for you and aware of your every situation. Remember that these trials and tests are really for your own *good* (Rom. 8:28-29).

Then seek God. Draw close to Him in prayer. Ask God to help you see if YOU are doing something wrong — something He forbids — and if you are, CHANGE! Or, if you are *not* doing something you are positively commanded to do, CHANGE!

Then after correcting whatever you came to see was wrong (or if you could clearly see that no sin was involved), *patiently endure* the affliction, committing the outcome into the hands of Jesus Christ — your Savior, Redeemer and High Priest — while you continue to *do all your duty*.

Let CHRIST solve it, and deliver you from it, in His own right time, knowing He would not allow it in the first place unless it were for your good and the good of others.

Christ lives to help, to intercede for, to liberate those who are cast down — *not* to destroy them. He may try our mettle — but He'll bless us, afterwards, for our endurance. We have seen how He helped others, and not being a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), He will certainly help you! So ENDURE, with God's help. Let God help you build your character — so He can bless you in due time.

Don't *ever* give up. Get "quit" out of your vocabulary, for you *cannot* see tomorrow from today's utterly inadequate, terribly limited, *human* viewpoint!

When you are depressed, or "down in the dumps," because of some trial, then pray as David did: "But O my soul, don't be discouraged. Don't be upset. Expect God to act! For I know that I shall again have plenty of reason to praise him for all that he will do. He is my help! *He is my God!*" (Ps. 42:11, *The Living Bible*). □