



Perseverance

Going the Distance with God

By Bro. Cameron Staley

I've seemingly done it a million times...certainly more times than I can count, and quite honestly, that's probably enough times to call myself a professional. The problem is, "it" isn't something that I'm very proud of. The "it" that I'm referring to is quitting, otherwise known as giving up. I imagine that most of us – probably **all** of us – have given up on something during the course of our lifetime. This can happen because of frustration due to disappointment, loss as a result of hurt feelings, or sometimes even because of spite. Fear, anxiety, and wanting to avoid a potentially difficult conversation can all lead to "throwing in the towel".

Why Do We Give Up So Easily?

I've given up on everything from fitness goals to friendships and even from learning how to play an instrument to professional endeavors. I'll admit it - I've done far too many things halfway. As I have thought about many of those failures, I have really struggled to understand **why** I haven't followed through. After untangling and sifting through the usual excuses (mentioned earlier), I came to the conclusion that in each situation I had *consciously* decided to stop trying. Now some things are certainly more serious than others when you're talking about giving up. However, the fact remains that the reason that we fail or succeed stays the same, and the only thing that we can really control is our effort. "

Our Efforts and Residual Affects

If only I could control my effort – regardless of the challenge - then my effort (or lack thereof) will only have an affect on me, right? **Wrong.** Our efforts have a profound impact on others, both positive and negative. We can inspire or demotivate. We can encourage or discourage. We can comfort or add to pain. We can lift up or tear down. We can give hope or be apathetic. We



can teach or we can create confusion. In anyway that we choose, whether we want to accept the responsibility or not, we have an immense influence on the lives of others. All of those great things – inspiration, encouragement, and comfort, lifting people up – make up the equation of our **best efforts** plus the Spirit of God. They are the results of perseverance.

Perseverance is defined as “steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success”. In other words, it is “sticking to it” no matter what in order to achieve victory. If you want to learn a new skill, you need to persevere, because you’re very likely going to need to try more than once. If you want to fix a broken relationship with a friend, with your parents, or with your boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse, then you’re going to have to be steadfast, because

relationships don’t heal overnight. If you want to do something for God, for the benefit of The Church, it’s going to take determination and commitment, because you’re going to face adversity.

Looking to the Past & How It Applies to Our Future

The Word of God is filled with examples of men and women that achieved great things through faith and perseverance (check out Hebrews 11). How different would our belief system be if these people had given up when faced with challenging circumstances? We hear sermons and sit in classes week after week that describe miraculous things that occurred due to the faith and steadfastness of our spiritual heroes (Jesus, Noah, Moses,

Samuel, David, Ruth, Apostle Paul, Lehi, Nephi, Alma, Moroni, etc). Our Church’s history books are also filled with accounts of equally amazing events. We also share a pew, live in a home, or share meals with people that are living examples of perseverance. These people have suffered loss, had disappointments, and have been confused at times as well.

“...go to Church even when you don’t feel like it.”

But they’ve chosen to **never give up** and that’s how the good news of hope and salvation continues. That’s how we draw closer to God and grow spiritually.



Photo by Duane Werley

How Important is a Combined Effort?

When we talk about perseverance, we talk a lot about persevering by ourselves and forget that God and our Spiritual family is here along side of us every step of the way. It is so important to understand how necessary sharing our burdens with the saints is. 1 Corinthians 12 talks about "The Body of Christ" and how we are each active members with roles and duties.

We dare you to take this a step further and ask an older saint about a time when they had to persevere, but with the help of their spiritual family at the time. Here are some questions to get you started:

- How you feel after you shared your burden with your Brothers and Sisters?
- What did they do to help you?
- Could you have done this alone without your fellow saints?

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The next time you're faced with something that shakes your faith, that discourages you, or maybe just seems like it's too frustrating or uncomfortable to deal with: just keep going and push through it. Look to your Brothers, Sisters, friends, and loved ones for encouragement. Pray constantly for guidance and strength. Surround yourself people that you can draw strength from. And one of the most important things you can do: go to Church even when you don't feel like it. The blessings that God will provide after even the most difficult times will give us the faith to go on, and possibly the privilege of being an example for someone else in their time of need.

Ether 12:6 says – *"...I would show unto the world that faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore dispute not because ye see not, **for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith**".* That witness is worth the trial.

Never give up!



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