

KEEP GOING!

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Many times in history men have become discouraged in their service to God. Men like Joshua, Jonah, and Jeremiah lost their determination to serve God, yet each found the courage to continue. We can also become discouraged, and the examples of these men should motivate us to be persistent in our service to God.

Joshua was a great leader of God's people. There is hardly anything negative written about Joshua in the Scriptures, but there was a time when he seemed to doubt the power and providence of God. After God's people fled before the men of Ai, Joshua rent his clothes, put dust on his head, and insinuated that God had neglectfully deserted His people (Joshua 7:4-9). God then said to Joshua, *"Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned. . ."* (Joshua 7:10-11). Just as there was no need for Joshua to become discouraged and doubt the power and providence of God, we should also trust in God always to take care of us if we put away the sin in our lives (Matthew 6:25-34).

God had commissioned Jonah to go preach in Nineveh, and Jonah foolishly thought that he could escape the presence of the Lord: *"But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord"* (Jonah 1:3). Of course God knew where Jonah was, and God punished Jonah for disobeying Him. In our service to God, we may be faced with a task from which we would like to run, but we should remember that there is no hiding from God. Jonah finally carried out his mission and the entire city of Nineveh repented! If God could make the great city of Nineveh repent because of the actions of one man, we should trust God enough to believe that He can make us successful in any task which lies before us (Philippians 4:13).

Like many of God's prophets before him, Jeremiah had faced adversity for proclaiming the message of God (Jeremiah 20:1-2). One might say that Jeremiah had become "weary in well doing" due to this persecution: *"Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay"* (Jeremiah 20:9). Although Jeremiah had considered quitting, the Word of the Lord was as a burning fire in his bones, and there was absolutely no way he could hold it inside. Paul wrote that the Word is to be in us also (Colossians 3:16), and the truth of God's Word should motivate us to serve the Lord just as it did Jeremiah.

These great men of God kept going, despite adversity and discouragement. Although we are not living under the same conditions as these men, there will still be opposition and adversities ahead of us if we faithfully serve the Lord (2 Timothy 3:12). May we always be persistent, and may our trust be in the Lord, not in ourselves (1 Corinthians 15:58; Matthew 19:26).

"And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

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