

Talent Plus Perseverance and Courage

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9

Perseverance Sustains Your Talent

Perseverance can be defined as “staying power.” Perseverance is about finishing. Talent provides hope for accomplishment, but perseverance guarantees it.

If you desire to be a talent-plus person of high achievement, here are some things you must understand about perseverance:

1. Perseverance means succeeding because of _____.
The greatest achievers don’t sit back and wait for success because they think they deserve it. They keep moving forward and persevering because they are determined to achieve it.

2. Perseverance is needed to achieve _____.
The winner is determined at the finish line. If you run every step of the race except the last one and you quit just before the finish line, then the result will be the same as if you never ran a step.

3. Perseverance draws sweetness from _____
Giving up when adversity threatens can make a person bitter. Persevering through adversity makes us better.

4. Perseverance has a _____ impact on life.
Great success lies just beyond the point where you are convinced you cannot succeed. Keep going. Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.

5. Perseverance means you don’t quit when you become _____.
Perseverance comes into play when you get tired. When you are fresh, excited and energetic, you approach a task with vigor. Work is fun. Only when you become tired do you need perseverance.

6. Perseverance demands _____ that we have.
Perseverance does not demand more than you have, but it does require everything you have.

The Five Enemies of Perseverance

Perseverance begins with the right attitude – an attitude of tenacity. But the desire to persevere isn’t enough to keep most people going when they are tired or discouraged. Perseverance can be cultivated, but you must first eliminate its five greatest enemies:

1. A lifestyle of _____.

2. A wrong belief that life should be _____.

3. A wrong belief that success is a _____, not a journey.

4. A lack of _____.

5. A lack of _____.

Clearing away the five enemies of perseverance is only a preliminary step to becoming a talent-plus person. You must also take the following steps:

1. Find your _____ in life.
2. Eliminate _____.
3. Develop _____.

Remember: Persistence is stubbornness with a purpose.

Biblical Case Study: Ruth (Ruth 1:1-22)

In the opening chapter of the book that bears her name, Ruth and her sister-in-law, Orpah, both widows, face an important decision. Will they remain in their homeland or go with their mother-in-law to Judah? Naomi insists that they stay in Moab. Orpah returned to her family in Moab, but Ruth declared stubbornly that she would not leave Naomi. Ruth said, *“Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; Your people shall be my people, and Your God, my God”* (v.16).

Ruth’s persistence paid off. She didn’t know it at the time, but her perseverance would lead to all kinds of open doors. What happened?

1. She found _____ in a difficult time.
2. She made _____ in a strange land.
3. She gained a new _____.
4. God included her in the _____ of Christ.

Discussion: Think about this statement: Ninety-nine percent of failures come from people who have the habit of making excuses. What are common excuses you make when you fail?

Courage Tests Your Talent

People think of courage as a quality required only in times of extreme danger or stress, such as during war or disaster. It is much larger than that. Courage is an everyday virtue that is essential every time we are tested.

To discover, develop and use our talent, we need courage. A great deal of talent is wasted because of the lack of courage. On the other hand, if we display courage, there will be many tests of our courage. Courage will be tested...

1. When we must face the truth about our own _____.
The truth we most need to hear is often what we prefer not to hear.
2. When doing nothing is more _____ than changing.
We will never take action if we love the comfort zone more than the faith zone.
3. When our convictions and values are _____.
We cannot really live unless there are things for which we are willing to die.
4. When taking _____ will display our weaknesses.
We must learn to move forward even when we are most afraid.

5. When we take the high road even as others are treating us _____.
We must learn to treat others better than they treat us.
6. When leading the way makes us an easy _____.
We must not allow criticism and personal attacks to stop us.
7. When we face _____ in our pathway.
Adversity is always the partner of progress.
8. When we move forward while our friends are _____.
Don't flow with the crowd; they are usually wrong.

If you desire to become a more courageous person, begin by taking these steps:

1. Look for _____ inside, not outside of yourself.
2. Grow in courage by doing the right thing instead of the _____ thing.
3. Take small steps of courage to _____ you for greater ones.
4. Recognize that a leadership _____ won't give you courage. Start developing courage in your daily decisions where you are.

Discussion: What recent failure could you revisit? How could you use courage to tackle the project or situation again with renewed perseverance?

Courageous Leadership

You have become a courageous leader when the following qualities are evident in your life and ministry:

1. Convictions are stronger than fears.
2. Vision is clearer than doubts.
3. Spiritual sensitivity is louder than popular opinion.
4. Self-esteem is deeper than self-protection.
5. Appreciation for discipline is greater than desire for leisure.
6. Dissatisfaction is more forceful than the status quo.
7. Poise is more unshakeable than panic.
8. Risk-taking is stronger than safety-seeking.
9. Right actions are more powerful than excuse-making.
10. A desire to reach potential is greater than a desire to please people.

Biblical Case Study: David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17:19-58)

The Bible states that King Saul and his army “were dismayed and greatly afraid” in the face of Goliath (v. 11). When David visited his older brothers who were soldiers in Saul’s army, he volunteered to fight the huge Philistine. How would he defeat the mighty Goliath? How could he transform the cowardly army into a fighting force that would conquer the seemingly invincible Philistine army? Courage is the key. Because of his courage, David acted differently from King Saul, his brothers and the other soldiers. What was different about David?

1. His past courageous _____ of defeating the lion and the bear.
2. His _____ that God would fight with him.
3. His _____ to honor the God of Israel.
4. His _____ in God’s covenant promises.
5. His _____ that saw Goliath not as an obstacle, but an opportunity.

Assessment and Application

Assessment:

Do you have the courage to face the truth about areas where you need to change or grow? Are you afraid to take risks? Do you fear failure?

Application:

Talk to your spouse or a friend and ask where you most need to change or grow. Don’t defend yourself. Don’t make excuses. It takes courage to seek a truth that may be painful. Then establish a growth plan.