

## RUN THE RACE WITH ENDURANCE

Hope and help to be an overcomer

**Entry into the good land:** Entry into Canaan by the exodus generation typifies entry into the future Sabbath rest (the 1,000 year Kingdom of Christ). See Heb. 3 & 4. An important lesson is given to us in Num. 13 and 14, when the spies went in to spy out the land in preparation for entry. Ten spies gave an evil report and discouraged the people from trying to enter (Num. 32:9). Two spies gave a positive report. The evil report was a lie. The positive report was the truth.

**The lie:** The ten spies stated that it would be too difficult to enter and the people believed them. They refused to press on to enter and rebelled against the Lord (Num. 13:31-33; 14:1-4,10)

**The truth:** "Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it.'" (Num. 13:30) Many times before that day God had told the people that He would bring them into the land and give it to them.

**The promise remains that we can make it into the Kingdom:** "Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard." (Heb. 4:11-2).

**1. Be single-minded in purpose.** "Run in such a way that you may win." (1 Cor. 9:27) "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but **one thing I do**: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13-14). "But **seek first His kingdom** and His righteousness." (Matt. 6:33) "Therefore **we also have as our ambition**, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." (2 Cor. 5:9-10) "Now for this very reason also, **applying all diligence**, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge" (2 Pet. 1:5) **We must exercise our human will to constantly seek after Him**, in order to **know Him and to experience His death and resurrection, which will result in gaining the Kingdom prize** (Phil. 3:8-14). **We use our will not to "achieve" (that is, keep the works of law), but to seek and receive His grace.**

**2. Realize the supply of God's grace.** (a) Know, use and agree with the identification truths that reveal the truth of our spiritual union with Christ (e. g., Jn. 15:5; Rom. 6:1-11; Col. 3:1-4). Walk by faith in these truths, not by feeling. We need to agree with our co-crucifixion with Christ, and experience this death by allowing the Spirit to put to death sin, love of the world, and self daily (Lk. 9:23; Rom. 6:11; 8:13-14; Gal. 6:14). We must believe that we have been raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). Learn to set the mind on the things of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5). (b) Confess sins sincerely and quickly (1 Jn. 1:9) (c) Serve by dependence and faith to experience grace, not by self-effort (1 Cor. 15:10). (d) Faith in God's truth, not our effort, brings in the supply of the Spirit (Gal. 3:5). (e) Live by opening your heart daily to God, meditating upon His word. Seeking nourishment from God's word each day is the most important habit of all (Deut. 8:3). (f) "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16) Prayer is the great expression of dependence upon God. "Looking away to Jesus" in full dependence is our moment-by-moment way to experience grace.

**3. Seek to recognize God's hand in all of our circumstances.** The children of Israel failed to recognize God's hand in their wilderness trials because they did not know His ways (Heb. 3:10). God's way is often to lead us into trials for the purpose of maturing us (Rom. 5:3-5; Jas. 1:2-8; 1 Pet. 1:6-7). When difficulties came in the wilderness journey, the Israelites hardened their hearts against God and complained and rebelled (Heb. 3:8, 15). When trials come, we should humble ourselves before the Lord. We should seek light upon our situation and ask the Lord how He wants us to respond and what He wants to accomplish in our lives to conform us to the image of His Son. Above all, we should learn obedience in our situation (see Heb. 2:10; 5:8). We must

see that every circumstance is sovereignly allowed by God in our lives, and He can use it for our good, if we love Him by obeying Him (Rom. 8:28-29). God will never give us a circumstance which we cannot endure victoriously. After recounting the wilderness testing of the children of Israel, Paul wrote: "But God is faithful who will not permit you to be tested or tempted above that with which you are able to cope, but will, along with the testing time or temptation, also make a way out in order that you may be able to bear up under it." (1 Cor. 10:13, Wuest)

**4. Do not be defeated by failure.** "For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again." (Pr. 24:16) The devil will try to convince us to quit, or to step out of the race, due to a failure. But, it is never God's plan that failure should stop us. He knows that failure can actually help us in that it makes us more dependent upon God in the future. Peter had two great failures within 40 days. Firstly, He denied the Lord just before the cross, although he had insisted that he would be faithful. The Lord knew that this failure was coming, so Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith might not fail. In other words, Jesus prayed that Peter would turn again to follow the Lord in the walk of faith after his failure. Jesus did not want Peter to abandon his discipleship due to being discouraged by great failure. Then, Peter failed again when he returned to fishing after Jesus had called him to be a fisher of men. However, the Lord came in great tenderness to Peter and His disciples and fed them on the shore. Then, He graciously once again gave an assignment to Peter – "Feed My sheep." Mark failed by abandoning Paul and Barnabus on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:13; 15:37-38). Yet, he was restored to usefulness in Paul's ministry and eventually wrote the gospel of Mark (2 Tim.4:11). The Lord does not abandon us after failure. He wishes to restore us and even use us. Yes, we may have confession to make, and sometimes there will be chastisement to endure because of our failure. But, God's heart is to restore us and to put us back into His service. Only the devil wants us to be defeated due to failure. After failure, we must confess our failure and then place our trust in His blood for cleansing and new access to God.

**5. Be encouraged and helped in a local assembly.** God has made each of us to be a member of the body of Christ. By actively seeking the Lord with others in the body, we are encouraged to run the race. "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near." (Heb. 10:25). "But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. 3:12) It is in the body life that we can begin to grasp the great dimensions of all that Christ and His love is: "So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend **with all the saints** what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:17-19). The truth is that God uses the body experience to help mature us, making us ready for His Kingdom.

Being prepared for the Kingdom is a matter of daily exercise in these matters. If we practice these things in a steady way daily, we will grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.