

THE TEACHING
LEGACY
 OF DEREK PRINCE

Finishing the Race

“**T**ough times don’t last. Tough people do.” It’s a well-known saying, and very appropriate for our current Teaching Legacy of Derek Prince series, “Standing Strong.” The focus of our study has been on the quality of *endurance*.

Webster’s New World Dictionary defines *endurance* as “fortitude” and “the ability to last, continue, or remain.” We have learned that there is both a cost and a blessing connected to our ability to remain.

Two Suggestions

In the last letter, “Endurance Through Focus,” I offered two suggestions for cultivating endurance. The first was to make your commitment to Jesus a wholehearted one—what Barnabas spoke of in Acts 11:23 as “*purpose of heart*.” You make your mind up that you are going to stick with the Lord regardless—no matter who does or who doesn’t. Even if your friends don’t, you will. If your family doesn’t, you will. When tribulation comes, you refuse to give up. That is purpose of heart.

The second principle of enduring came

from Hebrews 11:27, where we saw that Moses “*forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible*.” Moses’ faith was related to the unseen. If you and I are going to hold out, the unseen world must be more real to us than what we see around us.

A Life-Changing Dream

Many years ago in London, the daughter of a Swedish pastor lived with Lydia and me for about three months. One of her goals was to learn English, which I taught her. She was a very beautiful, talented girl with a lovely singing voice. Her father was the pastor of the largest Pentecostal church in Sweden, and she had grown up in a very strict Pentecostal environment.

When this girl was about fourteen years old, she became more and more interested in what all her friends at school talked about—the pleasures of the theater, dancing, and other pursuits like that. One day, she went to her father and said, “Father, I want to thank you for the care you’ve given me, and for the way you trained me and brought



me up. But I want to tell you that from now on, I want to go another way. I want to find out what the world has to offer. I hear all my friends talking about it, and I want to find out for myself.” And her father, who was a wise man, said, “Barbara, your mother and I will pray for you.” He didn’t argue. He didn’t say it was wrong. He said, “We’ll pray.”

That night, the daughter had the most vivid dream of her life. In this dream she saw two cities. One was a big, modern, beautiful city. It was filled with lights which were flashing and glittering everywhere. Across a valley, there was another city that had a different kind of light. It didn’t flash, it didn’t glitter; but it was steady and calm.

While she was looking at the city with the glittering neon lights, a man introduced himself to her. He was very cultivated, very educated, and very well dressed. He said, “I’d like to show you around this city.” And she went with him.

The further she went with him, the uglier he became. Soon she realized it was the devil himself. As she stood there in horror, all the lights in this neon city began to go out one by one until the city was in total darkness. She turned to look across at the other city, and it was as bright and clear as it had always been. The next day she went to her father and said, “Daddy, I’m coming to church with you.” She was a wise girl. She gave heed to what the Lord was showing her.

Often when Lydia and I would be in a big, modern city, with all its neon lights, traffic, excitement, exhilaration, and pleasure, we would turn to one another and say, “Do you remember Barbara’s dream? One night, all those lights will go out. That is coming very

soon. All those lights will be going out.”

The Reality of the Word

In 2 Corinthians 4 Paul writes this:

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen” (vv. 17–18).

Those “things which are not seen” are eternal. They don’t change. They are in the Word.

I would encourage you to stay in the Word. Don’t take just five minutes a day with your Bible. Read it. Meditate on it. Believe it. Live in it. Ask the Holy Spirit to make it real to you. What will happen? That Word will become so real to you that there will be nothing in this world that could tempt you or attract you to any disloyalty to Jesus Christ.

I believe in enjoying life—in exercise and in pleasure. I have been delivered from the legalism in which I spent many years. Even so, I don’t want to love the world nor the things that are in the world. Because “*if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him*” (1 John 2:15). I owe everything to my Father, and I don’t want to be disloyal to Him. I want to show Him my gratitude and appreciation. He has made me His child and an heir of Christ, and I want to show Him that I appreciate His goodness. I want to keep my eyes on “the things which are not seen.”

Beyond This World

We must never forget that there is something

beyond time. There is an old song which says, “The cross before me, the world behind me. Though none go with me, still I will follow. No turning back . . . I have decided to follow Jesus.” The first time I ever heard that chorus was a November night in 1947 in the city of Jerusalem. Lydia and I and our eight daughters had just fled our home under cover of night and had taken refuge in an American mission in the center of that city. We were without food, without a home, without anything. We had walked out in the middle of the night and left everything. When I got to that mission, they were singing that song. It was the first time I had ever heard it, “Though none go with me, still I will follow.”

Don't Give Up

I have two endurance-builders to share with you. The first one is as important as it is simple: when you fail, don't give up. Others have failed before you—and I am one of them. One of the devil's cleverest tricks is to convince you that you are a failure and that you might as well give up. He will try to tell you that God has given up on you. Don't believe him. He's a liar.

The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, and He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the LORD upholds him with His hand. Psalm 37:23–24

Have you ever fallen? Remember that you will not be utterly cast down. Why? Because the Lord still has your hand. Do you know how David knew that? Because he had fallen. Terribly. Tragically. He had committed adultery and arranged for the death of the man whose wife he had stolen. Yet God

forgave him and restored him. David was able to say, “Even when you fall, don't give up. God will pick you up.”

In the New Testament, there was another man who fell. His name was Peter. Jesus spoke these two verses to him, knowing that Peter was going to deny Him three times.

And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail . . .” Luke 22:31–32

What depth we find in those verses! Jesus didn't pray that Peter would not deny Him. He prayed that his faith would not fail. If Peter's faith had failed, there would have been no way back. So when you fall, stretch out your hand and let the Lord pick you up. Please don't give up—because He hasn't given up on you.

Remembering the Prize

Here is the second endurance-builder: Remember the prize-giving. Not all the issues of life are settled in the here and now. There are some that remain for the future. Let's look at the words of Paul written from jail to Timothy:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 2 Timothy 4:7

Those three achievements go together. If you are going to keep the faith, you have to fight the fight. Faith is a fight. You cannot escape the fight and keep the faith. If you are going to finish your course, you have to fight the fight. Paul said, “I've done all three. I've finished the race. I've fought the fight. I've kept the faith.” Then he said, “From now on

I'm waiting for the prize-giving."

Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day . . . (verse 8)

Paul had been condemned to execution by a very unjust, unrighteous ruler—the Emperor Nero. There had been no justice in his trial. But Paul said, "That isn't the last word. There's going to be another judgment day. There's going to be a prize-giving. And the judge will be absolutely just. It will be the Lord Himself. He will give me my prize—my victor's crown."

For many years of my life, prize-giving was a very important part of my school days, and I won many awards. But there is one prize that still has to be won. That reward is only for those who keep the faith, fight the fight, and finish the course.

I believe Paul was true to the end because he saw something beyond time. He looked out into eternity and saw the great prize-giving. He saw the moment when the gold, silver, and bronze medals would be given out. We may be surprised at who gets the gold medals. They won't be given for the speed with which we ran. They will be given for the faithfulness

with which we served. That is the Lord's emphasis, affirmed by Jesus' words: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:23).

Standing the Test

The days which lie ahead of us are days that will test our endurance. They are not going to be easy. The persecution we endure is going to test one quality above all others: our loyalty—both to the Lord and to the body of Christ. I want to be able to look at my brothers and sisters and say, "I've kept the faith. I haven't been disloyal. I haven't betrayed you."

The test that lies ahead of us is one of character and loyalty. If you and I will stand the test, we will come out like gold that has been tried in the fire.

Is it your desire to stand the test and stand strong in these days? Let's ask the Lord together now to help us:

Dear Lord Jesus,

I ask You to help me in these trying days to stand strong in You, and to be loyal to You and to my brothers and sisters. Help me not to give up, but to remain faithful to the end of my life. Amen.



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