

21-DAY FAST AND PRAY JANUARY 19, 2019

Billy Sunday, a former professional baseball player, was the Billy Graham of his generation. He once said: *"Stopping at third adds no more to the score than striking out. It doesn't matter how well you start if you fail to finish."* A real disciple finishes strong.

Paul communicated this same idea to his spiritual son, Timothy.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (II Timothy 4:7 NKJV)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, *"Words and thoughts are not enough. Doing good involves all the things of daily life."*

Finishing strong is a matter of faithfulness; day in, day out, constant devotion.

1. Be faithful in prayer. The Word of God tells us to be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer during the tough seasons of life.

If you are not faithful in prayer, you cannot be joyful in hope. If you are not faithful in prayer, you cannot be patient in affliction. Consequently, the key to successfully withstanding the seasons of adversity is faithfulness in prayer. Which is why in today's prayer time, I urge you to pray, and continue to pray.

"Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer." (Romans 12:12 NKJV)

Pray that even as our time of corporate prayer is coming to a close, that your individual prayer times will continue to increase in frequency and intensity.

2. Faithful in Giving. For many, this is a sticking point. Maybe they tithe a little, but any notion of consistent, faithful giving seems extreme. Faithful, personal generosity is not just expected by God, it will change you.

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." (II Corinthians 9:7 NKJV)

Pray that we will determine in our hearts to give more of the whatever resources we have right now – whether large or small. God has promised to bless the giver.

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Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” (Luke 6:38)

Pray that God will give you the courage to obey Him in the faithfulness of giving and tithing. He promised Abram to bless Israel in order for Israel to be a blessing to all nations (Genesis 12:1-3). I think He has the same thing in mind for us.

3. Faithful with our gifts and talents

God has given each of us a measure of unique talents and abilities. It is up to us to apply those talents and abilities in a way that advances His purposes and brings Him glory. Are we doing all we can with what we have been given or are we guilty of burying these talents? As in Matthew 25:14-31?

Pray that God would open doors, provide opportunities and give us confidence to use our gifts and abilities. Pray that each of us and all of us will determine to “take action” to serve rather than be served.

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10-11 NIV)

If we are faithful with the gifts He has given us, He will expand them. Maybe He will choose to increase the talents themselves or maybe He just will just expand their influence on those around us. It is up to God as to how He does this, but He will bring increase when we are faithful with our talents and abilities.

Let us pray that God will strengthen our resolve to be found faithful.

“...when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8 NKJV)