

Don't Quit! Part II

The Attitude of Winners

The late Dr. V. Edmund Raymond, while president of Wheaton College, often told his students, "It's always too soon to quit." I say a good hearty "Amen" to Dr. Edmond's word! Write this down in the flyleaf of your Bible or some prominent place to help you never forget this simple, yet profound advice.

Last week we left off with reasons for self-sabotage in the heart of quitters. (1) It is a mis-guided quest of unconditional love. (2) They believe that crisis will jump-start a new life, so they quit. A sad example of this is when a marriage is going south and the offended party does something so destructive, that rather than clearing ground for a new foundation, they have devastated the ground in an act of emotional terrorism. Often times the self-sabotage of created crisis is not the bridge back to safety; it burns the bridge that the offender might have crossed. (3) They take the counsel of the immature in their confused state of mind. In the Bible we see this in the reign of young King Rehoboam. I Kings 12:8 says, "*But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him.*" Due to this foolish mistake of seeking the vitality of youth, they forsake the wisdom of aged counselors and split their kingdom of happiness. (4) They have entered an all-out state of rebellion. "*And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice...*" (I Samuel 15:22). Saul's human reasoning got in the way of God's plan. Through the prophet he was rebuked and told obeying God is better than doing things your way. It often comes down to the quitter foolishly reasoning a situation to be hopeless; he or she cannot go on and quits. It is important to understand that quitting the will of God for your life is direct disobedience to God.

Now that we have covered the world-view of quitters, let's examine the attitude of winners.

1. Winners accept the concept: there are no shortcuts to success.

Our Lord shows us in nature that success is a process. Jesus said, "*For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear*" (Mark 4:28). A great harvest is the result of patiently waiting on God until He makes all things beautiful in His time (Ecclesiastes 3:11). A well-meaning little boy observing a potential butterfly struggling to be free of its chrysalis wanted to help. He took a sharp little stick and aided the butterfly by breaking the chrysalis binding it. The butterfly soon burst forth. Immediately the boy noticed the normal gorgeous coloration absent and it was not taking to the air. His father then came by and when finding out what the boy had done said with instructive compassion, "Son, your attempt to help the butterfly actually hurt him. The struggle is what adds the gorgeous color to his wings and power in those wings to give him flight." The youngster learned a valuable lesson that day. Let us all remember the tribulum God brings into our life is to develop beauty and power.

2. Winners develop the power to see it through.

In Philemon, verse 24 Paul describes Demas as one of his fellow laborers. In Colossians 4: 14, Demas is teamed with Dr. Luke. The final mention of Demas almost brings tears to my eyes as Paul, who is about to die, says this, "*For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world...*" (II Timothy 4:10). Demas is a tragic commentary of one who did not seize the power to see it through. The power was available; he just did not take it. He went from being a fellow laborer to teamwork and then, in the crucible of trials, he quit. In the four Gospels, only Luke writes these words: "*For which of you,*

intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" (Luke 14:28). One cannot help but wonder, was Luke thinking of his old team member when he penned these words? The winner doesn't get bitter, he gets better! is a statement that Lockhart made or referred to in his *Life of Scott* that goes like this, "He was making himself all the time, but he did not know maybe what he was about till years had passed." "He was making himself all the time," that is, everything that was happening to him was part of his experience so that he became what he was by all of those things, but nevertheless he did not know what was really happening to him until the years had passed. The maturing Christian believes that all things are working together (Romans 8:28) and therefore develops the power to see it through.

3. Winners adopt the ethic of hard work.

"And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you" (I Thessalonians 4:11). *"For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat"* (II Thessalonians 3:10). The Bible clearly lays down the principle of hard work as necessary for advancement. Many are accused of being where they are and doing what they do as the result of "luck". I love what Player, the great golfer, said: "The harder I work, the luckier I get." Nothing can substitute for hard work. A quitter does not have the hard work ethic of a winner. The quitter often looks for the easy path of least resistance. The winner is not afraid to blaze the trail with his or her hard work and make a difference.

4. Winners are infused by the nature of God.

"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). Our Lord gives us insight into His Divine strength, reminding us that we too, as we rely on Him, will have the no-quit spirit. *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"* (Philippians 4:13). This is the nature of God!

5. Winners believe the supernatural is activated when human resources are eliminated.

It is only when we come to the end of ourselves, our provision and our answers that God comes through with the miraculous. In this Christmas season, it would do us all well to remember what the arch-angel Gabriel told Mary concerning the birth of John to a couple beyond their natural child-birth years and to the prophesied virgin birth of the Lord Jesus, *"For with God nothing shall be impossible"* (Luke 1:37). So if your situation looks impossible and you have come to the end of your proverbial rope.... just tie a knot and hang on. Don't quit, this state of affairs is the very atmosphere of miracles!

- Pastor Pope -

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