

DETERMINATION vs FAINTHEARTEDNESS

DETERMINATION IS LOOKING AT INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLES AS OPPORTUNITIES TO CRY OUT FOR GOD'S SUPERNATURAL INTERVENTION

Solomon “determined to build an house for the name of the LORD, and an house for his kingdom” (II Chronicles 2:1).

DEFINITION OF DETERMINATION

One Hebrew word translated *determined* is *amar*, which means “to say in one’s heart; to think; to command; to promise; to intend.” Another Biblical term that helps define determination is the verb *purpose*. One Hebrew word for purpose is *yatsar*, meaning “predetermine.” God used this word when He said, “I have purposed it, I will also do it” (Isaiah 46:11).

Determination deals with a mind-set prior to a task, while endurance involves the carrying out of the task. Determination presupposes careful consideration of the cost and requirements of a task and a decision that the task is worth whatever expenses are necessary to achieve it.

WHO DEMONSTRATED DETERMINATION IN SCRIPTURE?

- Solomon “determined to build an house for the name of the LORD, and an house for his kingdom” (II Chronicles 2:1).
- “Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself” (Daniel 1:8).
- David determined to mourn over Abner’s death with fasting until the evening. “When all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or aught else, till the sun be down” (II Samuel 3:35).
- The disciples “determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea” (Acts 11:29).
- Paul “determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified (I Corinthians 2:2).

WHY IS DETERMINATION IMPORTANT?

Life consists of choices. If we make the right choices, we experience the blessings of God. If we make the wrong choices, we experience destruction and death. After wise choices are made, determination is needed to carry them out. Wise choices will usually be challenged by difficulties and temptations.

Moses demonstrated determination when he chose to suffer affliction with the children of Israel rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin that last for only a season. On the other hand, Esau did not determine to protect his birthright and therefore sold it for a bowl of pottage. Years later, when he realized his mistake, he desperately sought to recover it, but was unable to, even after many tears (See Hebrews 11:25; 12:16-17).

HOW DO WE DEVELOP DETERMINATION?

We develop determination by recognizing the losses or gains resulting from a particular choice. Moses chose to suffer with the children of Israel. He recognized the “the reproach of Christ [brought] greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward” (Hebrews 11:26).

WHAT HINDERS DETERMINATION?

The fear of man is a strong hindrance to determination, because it does not allow us to decide with the Lord what is the best choice. Instead, we try to guess what other people think is the right choice and what they will think of us if we make a different decision than they would. Fear brings torment (See I John 4:18), and this torment brings bondage. “The fear of man brings a snare” (Proverbs 29:25).

A double mind is another hindrance to determination. A double-minded person is like a wave of the sea driven backward and forward with every passing wind. This makes determination impossible. “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8).

WHAT ARE WE TO BE DETERMINED ABOUT?

1. Keeping vows

“When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it, for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands?” (Ecclesiastes 5:4-6, NASV).

2. Seeking the Lord with our whole heart

David was a man after God’s own heart. His determination to seek the face of the Lord was a constant motivation during his life. “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for thee, O God” (Psalm 42:1, NASV). God promises a special reward for those who promise to seek Him with the whole heart. “Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart” (Psalm 119:2).

3. Maintaining a clear conscience

Paul told Timothy that he was sending him out with faith and a clear conscience and that if he laid these weapons aside, he would make shipwreck of his soul. Regarding himself, Paul said, “In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men” (Acts 24:16, NASV).

HOW DETERMINED ARE YOU?

- Do you determine to follow Christ, no matter what the cost?
- Do you have Biblical commitments that will direct your decisions in life?
- Do you commit to reach a goal and overcome any obstacles you encounter along the way?
- Do you have a motivating purpose in life?
- Do you persevere on tasks that are more difficult than what you expected?
- Do you allow problems or failures to keep you from trying again?