

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue (strength, valor, morality); and to virtue knowledge;" 2 Peter 1:5 KJV

Virtue in the biblical sense is diligent obedience to God's Word through faith. Hard goals are never achieved haphazardly. Earnest diligence and single-mindedness o purpose are required. Many are excellent starters, but never finish. In marathons, the leader at start seldom finishes first. If your motivation is short term, you will quit. Teaching Sunday school or being a pastor is an admirable goal, but if it's just to be in charge or to exhibit knowledge, it will be short-lived. If it's to serve God, it will never lose luster! Those who start with just good intentions become weary and quit. A believer's motivation is Jesus Christ. *"For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."* Not all short term goals are easy, but once achieved they are past tense. Without long-term purpose the first hardship that comes along derails us. If a runner's goal is only to win, then the first time they're passed they will quit. If the goal is to finish, they will not. *"Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, ALWAYS abounding in the work of the Lord."* Our goal is to finish the race in anticipation of the *"Crown of Righteousness (sinlessness)"* that awaits every believer.



"Which Hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast... Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." There is a difference between winning and finishing. We need not seek to "win" for through Christ, believers are already *"more than conquerors!"* We do, however, need to finish OUR course, whatever that may be. We do not work haphazardly, but diligently. We are to mind our path, clearly marked in Scripture, as we run. Be a "heads up" runner, not blindly following the runner ahead, but careful of the little stones and holes that cause stumbling. *"Let us run with patience the race (obedience to God's Word) that is set before us."* Patience sees the prize, not the present! The race is not to the swift, but to the diligent. The hare strutted and lost. We succeed through diligent obedience, by enduring our race. Jesus has already won the victory and waits with *"A Crown of Life (immortality)"* for every believer! He said, *"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life."* When you begin to doubt you have the strength to finish, remember; *"it is God (His Word in thought) that worketh in you; both to will (desire) and to do (enable) of His good pleasure. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."* His Word tells us, *"My strength is made perfect in weakness."* The weaker you are, the greater God can be in your life!

Diligence does not look around,
Does not flinch at every sound,
It paces steady in the race,
Sustained by Love and matchless Grace. -CGP

We run steadily towards Heaven by doing the *“works of righteousness. Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the Joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God. Faith is the substance of things hoped for.”* Obedience is the evidence of faith. Faith is the foundation of Hope, and virtue is the walls built by letting God’s Word *“abide in you richly”* through diligent study, meditation, obedience, and unceasing prayer. *“As he is in his heart (thoughts), so is he.”* What occupies your heart? Self or Saviour? Your life will exhibit your heart, so be careful to *“keep thy heart (mind) with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of Life.”* Let God’s Word be your walls and foundation!

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently SEEK HIM." Hebrews 11:6 KJV

C. G. Palmer