

DO NOT LOSE HEART (02).

October 12, 2008.

Introduction.

The apostle Paul wrote in *Gal.6:9*, “Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.” Losing heart leads to weariness, that is, to a loosening of the will and discouragement. The final result is the stopping of doing good. Last Lord’s Day I began with you a study entitled : **Do not lose heart.** By way of brief review, I want you to note the following.

Firstly, the verb “to lose heart” literally means “*to give in to evil*”. It came to mean “**to give in to difficulty; to lose courage.**” The verb “to grow weary” literally means “*to loosen out*”. It describes the loosening of one’s spirit or one’s will. These are the marks of discouragement. It is not a neutral act to lose heart and stop doing good. It is to give in to evil. Paul’s exhortation assures us that we will reap. But the reaping will take place “in due time”, in God’s appointed time. In our study we took a Biblical survey of the use of the verbs “to lose heart” and “to grow weary”.

Under the second major point we looked at the causes for losing heart. **Firstly**, we saw from the prophet’s exhortation to King Asa that the distress that comes upon you for seeking spiritual reform in your own life and in the lives of others can cause you to lose heart. **Secondly**, we saw from Nehemiah that enemies will attack you when you are doing good. Such attacks have the potential for causing you to lose heart. **Thirdly**, we saw from the life of Jeremiah that telling people the truth can cause them to lose heart. **Fourthly**, we saw that prolonged physical trials can cause you to lose heart.

Fifthly, we saw that spiritual decline can cause you to lose heart. **Sixthly**, we saw that the reality of aging and all the physical debilitations that come upon you can cause you to

lose heart. **Seventh**, we saw that ongoing tribulations can cause you to lose heart. **Eighth**, we saw that God's discipline in your life and your wrong response to it can cause you to lose heart. We closed our study with a word of encouragement from *Heb.12:3*. This verse calls upon us to "consider [Jesus] who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

1). Doing Good.

Gal.6:9 exhorts us, "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary." "**Let us not lose heart**" is a negative verb in the present tense. The idea is that the pattern of our lives must not be one of losing heart. "**Do not grow weary**" is also a negative verb in the present tense. The verb is also passive. The passive says that something is acting upon you and bringing you to weariness. That something is "**losing heart**". The negative says you must not allow this to happen. *2Thess.3:13* exhorts us, "But as for you, brethren, do not lose heart in doing good." In this verse the verb "do not lose heart" is a negative verb in the aorist tense. This tells us that the Thessalonians were not guilty of losing heart. The negative with the aorist is a prohibition that forbids something that has not taken place as yet.

Let us now examine the expression, "doing good." In *Gal.6:9* Paul used two words. The verb "**doing**" is a present participle. This tells us the Christian's life must be characterized by "**doing**". In this verse Paul is saying that the Christian's life must be characterized by doing good. In *2Thess.3:13* "doing good" is the same two Greek words. But this time both words are combined into one word, a verb. Paul's verb is still a present participle and the meaning is still the same : the Christian's must be characterized by doing good.

The word "good" (Gk. *kalos*) also means "**beautiful**". The "**good**" described here is not only good in quality and character, it is also beautiful or attractive. When Jesus said, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good

works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (*Matt.5:16*), He used the Greek word **kalos**. In *1Pet.2:12* we read, “Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.” Peter used **kalos** twice in this verse. He said : “keep your behavior **kalos**, excellent.” And he added, “because of your **kalos** deeds” (or “good deeds”). Now note the following verses in which **kalos** is used.

In *Tit.2:7* Paul said we must be “an example of good deeds.” In *Tit.2:14* Paul said we who are redeemed by Christ are to be “zealous for good deeds.” In *Tit.3:8* Paul said those who have believed God must “be careful to engage in good deeds.” I want you to take note of Paul’s literal meaning. The literal idea is that we must take thought to be diligent in good deeds. In other words, being diligent in doing good deeds that are also beautiful and attractive takes careful thought. In *Tit.3:14* Paul said we must “learn to engage in good deeds.” Note the repetition of the verb “engage” in *vss.8 & 14*. This verb also means “to take the lead in; to be diligent; to busy oneself with.” In both instances the verb is present tense and this describes what our lifestyle must be as Christians.

If we are required to be carefully thinking about the doing of good deeds, to be an example of good deeds, to be zealous for good deeds and taking the lead in and busying ourselves with good deeds, you can see why there must be no room in the Christian’s life for losing heart and growing weary in doing good. If your focus is on doing good and your trust is in God to bring in the harvest, then you will not lose heart. You will not become discouraged and grow weary. If your focus is on doing good because it is God’s will and for His glory, then you will not lose heart. In *Matt.5:16* Jesus said when your good works are seen, your Heavenly Father is glorified. If you desire even a little glory, even a little recognition, you will begin to lose heart.

There is a second point I want you to note. Doing good does not mean that you are to overlook the wrong a person is doing. Doing good does not mean that you are to allow a person to exploit you. Paul’s exhortation in *2Thess.3:13*, “But as for you, brethren,

do not grow weary of doing good”, closes the context of Paul condemning laziness and an undisciplined life and clearly stating that those who do not work must not eat. In other words the doing of good to the lazy is not feeling sorry for them and allowing them to exploit you but firmly rebuking them and refusing to help them in their hunger and other needs.

Please turn to *Gal.6*. The exhortation in *Gal.6:9* comes to us within the context of Paul’s statements regarding sowing and reaping. (*vss.7-8*). If you do good and you will reap good. In *vs.9* the idea of reaping is also present with the addition that you will reap in God’s appointed time. In *vs.6* Paul made this specific application to your dealings with your pastors : “Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches him.” And in *vs.10* Paul made this general application : “So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”

The doing of good is not limited to charitable or benevolent works. The doing of good must be applied to all areas of your life, especially your relationships with others. Let me set before you an illustration. How do you, as a wife, deal with a difficult husband? You do not give up on your marriage. You do not lose heart and do not grow weary in doing good works, that is, works that are also beautiful and attractive. You do not cook his dinner because you have to do it. That will be doing that which is morally good without the beauty. **Kalos** good means you will cook his dinner because it is your delight to do it. You will do it with loving care and you will do it to the best of your ability. But at the same time you must not compromise his wrong behavior nor allow him to exploit you.

How do you, as a husband, deal with a difficult wife? You do not give up on your marriage. You do not lose heart and do not grow weary in doing good works, that is, works that are also beautiful and attractive. On those special days you do not spite her by forgetting or by bringing her a box of KFC or a box of Chinese fast food when you can afford to take her out to a well-planned evening that will be a delight to her. But at the same time you must not compromise her wrong behavior nor allow her to exploit you.

A verse that is often quoted and applied across the board is *Jas.4:17*. James wrote, "Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin." "**The right thing**" is "the **kalos** thing". The context of James' exhortation is the sin of arrogance and the arrogant making boasts without acknowledging God's sovereign rule over their lives. The truth is, the sin of arrogance makes a person ugly. Now the rich fool was an arrogant man. *Lk.12:13-21* tells us how he boasted, "*I will do this and I will do that.*" But God said, "You fool, tonight you will die." I point this out so you will clearly understand that doing the **kalos** thing is not limited to doing works of charity and benevolence. According to James, doing the **kalos** thing also means you will humble yourself and live your life under God's sovereign rule and authority while acknowledging your total dependence on Him.

II). The Antidote.

We come now to deal with the antidote for losing heart. The **first** point I want to set before you is that God does not grow weary with His elect redeemed children. We can come up with lots of good reasons for losing heart, becoming weary and ceasing to love, and care, and build, and forgive, and correct, etc., etc. We ask : "*How often must I do the same good things to the same person?*" And just as we can grow weary of people, we can also grow weary of God?

In *Isa.43:22* the Lord said, "you have not called on Me, O Jacob; But you have become weary of Me, O Israel." One commentator noted that the Lord called His people into His fellowship and this involved hearing and obeying His word. But to walk with the Holy One was too costly. The costliness made them lose heart in their walk with God and in their dealings with God. And so they chose another way, a way that they felt was easier. Because of their choice they ceased to call on God. They cease to pray. In a word, they forsook God.

On the other hand we read in *Isa.40:28*, “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired, His understanding is inscrutable.” The questions posed are a rebuke because they ought to have known. They are similar to the questions Paul asked the Corinthians over and over : “Do you not know that...?” (see *1Cor.3:16; 5:6; 6:2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19*). The Everlasting God never grows weary, never abandons His purposes in your life as unrealizable or takes a break from them because He is tired and frustrated. *Psa.138:8* says, “The Lord will accomplish what concerns me; Your lovingkindness, O Lord, is everlasting....”

The apostle Paul assured us in *Phil.1:6*, “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.” Paul’s confidence is certain and as solid as the God in whom he has put his trust. The work God began in you is a good work. According to *Rev.21*, when that work is finished, its beauty would be indescribable. God will never abandon this good work He has begun in you. There is nothing in heaven or on earth or in hell that can cause God to abandon that good work He has begun in you as a Christian.

Conscious of your ongoing failings, imperfections and sins, you ask : how does God put up with me? Why is it that God does not get tired of me? Why is it that God does not give up on me and walk away? Why is that God does not say to me, “*enough, no more. I do not want to hear. I quit. Just leave Me alone.*”? *Isa.40:28* says, “His understanding is inscrutable.” In other words, you cannot fathom God. You cannot fathom God’s mind, God’s thinking, God’s ways.

Paul knew this. This is why he wrote in awe, wonder and praise, “O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!” (*Rom.11:33*). God will never lose heart and grow weary and stop doing good to you. In *Eph.5:1* Paul wrote, “be imitators of God, as beloved children.” In other words, you as a beloved child of God must imitate your Heavenly Father and not lose heart, grow weary and stop doing good.

The **second** point I want to set before you is that losing heart is a sin. Losing heart is a giving in to evil. Since losing heart is intimately linked to discouragement, then discouragement is also a sin. Furthermore, I want you to see the grave dangers you face in losing heart and becoming discouraged. In ***Psa.73*** we saw the psalmist losing heart and becoming discouraged. Such was his discouragement he began to envy the wicked who were prospering and living at ease. He declared in ***vs.13***, “Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure.” He began to think that following God and living a godly life was useless.

Then he entered another stage – bitterness began to take control of his heart. He said in ***vss.21-22***, “When my heart was embittered and I was pierced within, then I was senseless and ignorant; I was like a beast before [the Lord].” Losing heart, discouragement and bitterness brought him perilously close to apostasy. This is his opening confession in ***vs.2***, “But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, my steps had almost slipped.”

Yes, I know, Brethren, that we are human. I know that we are all prone to lose heart, become discouraged and even depressed. But you can face grave dangers with these sins. And we can’t deal with these problems until we recognize and acknowledge that they are sins. They are not medical problems to be treated with medication. They are sins!

Turn to ***Heb.12:3***, “For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” The literal rendering here is, “in order that you may not grow weary in your souls and lose heart.” The example is Jesus. Jesus did not allow the hostilities He faced through the three years of His ministry to wear down His soul and lose heart. He triumphed over the hostilities He faced. The hostilities Jesus faced were from Satan himself, from demons, from the Jewish religious leaders, from the multitudes and finally from the Romans. The hostilities Jesus faced kept intensifying until they climaxed with His death on the cross.

Whatever it is that you are facing does not even come close in comparison to what Jesus faced on your behalf as He accomplished your redemption on this earth.

This is why the writer called on his readers and us to consider Jesus and consider Him with urgency. He is your example to follow. He is the triumphant One on whom your eyes must be fixed. As we noted in our last study, He is your sympathetic High Priest who was tempted in all things as we are and yet did not sin. (*Heb.4:15*). He is the One who is continually engaged intercessory prayers on your behalf before His Father. (*Rom.8:34; Heb.7:25*). But Brethren, to consider Jesus, you must know about Jesus and you must know Jesus. I will pick up this thought again before we end our study.

Turning your attention again to *Heb.12:3*, the verb “to grow weary” comes to us from athletics. It describes an athlete who collapses from exhaustion. This athletic description is being applied to your soul or mind and will. This verse is saying to us that weariness or exhaustion of soul or mind or will results in you losing heart. The physical picture is that of dropping your hands as an indication that you have given up. You cannot cure an exhausted, broken, discouraged spirit with medication. The problem is spiritual and the cure is spiritual. And the first step is recognizing and acknowledging the sin involved and confessing that sin in repentance and forsaking it. I will also add here that at this point you may need to heed Jesus’ invitation to His disciples in *Mark 6:31*, “Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while.”

Thirdly, we saw that spiritual decline can cause you to lose heart and become discouraged. So your next important step is to identify the particulars of the spiritual decline in your life and correct them. Please turn to *Lk.18:1*. We are told here that Jesus was telling a parable to teach us that “at all times [you] ought to pray and not to lose heart.” The context of this parable is found in *Lk.17* which deals with Christ’s second coming and the persecution and injustice Christians will have to face. Any seeming delay in Christ’s return, coupled with persecution and injustice will have the potential of producing in you spiritual decline and “**losing heart**”. Let us examine what Luke wrote.

Note, firstly, the word “at all times”. This is the translation of one Greek word and it emphasizes continual action. The emphasis here is the same as Paul’s exhortation in *1Thess.5:17*, “pray without ceasing.” This is a call for praying at regular intervals, of bringing everything to the Lord in prayer. Secondly, the verb “ought” (Gk. *dei*) is translated in other places as “**must**” and emphasizes that which is divinely necessary. To pray at all times is a divine necessity or a moral imperative. Thirdly, the verb “lose heart” is literally, “*to give in to evil*”. **Darrel Bock** says “do not lose heart” almost has the force of “*do not give up faith*”.

The word of God is showing us here that we have one of two responses to the persecutions and injustices we will face as Christians : **prayer and perseverance** or **losing heart and prayerlessness**. We have seen already from *Isa.43:22* that losing heart leads to prayerlessness and forsaking God. Losing heart and prayerlessness are clear evidences that spiritual decline is taking place. Losing heart and prayerlessness will be accompanied by any or all of the following symptoms : the disappearance of personal devotions and seeking God, the neglect of reading God’s word; poor church attendance; rejection of fellowship with the people of God; a refusal to seek counsel.

The clear point Jesus made in the parable is that spiritual decline, evidenced by prayerlessness, is not the right option for you. It is the wrong option that will lead you into deeper spiritual decline, greater discouragement and even bitterness of soul. Spiritual decline is a downhill slide you do not want to get into because apostasy waits at the end of that slide. The only solution to spiritual decline is to bring it to a halt by repentance, confession and seeking spiritual help. Jesus’ exhortation to the church at Ephesus is applicable here : “remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first.” (*Rev.2:5*).

Do not merely turn away from the wrong. Turn towards and start doing the right things again. Get back to prayer. Get back to reading your Bible and meditating upon and applying God’s word to your life. Get back to faithful attendance to the gatherings of the

church and to fellowship with the people of God. And humble your heart before the Lord and seek counsel and ask those close to you to pray for you.

The **fourth** and final point I want to deal with today is : know God. To know God begins with knowing about God. *Heb.11:6* says, “without faith it is impossible to please [God], for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” Faith is not a flight in religious fancy. Faith is not a leap into the unknown. Faith is rooted in the factual reality of God and the truths concerning God.

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved”, (*Acts 16:31*), is not belief in a name without content. That name represents a person. That person is the Son of God, the second member of the Triune God-Head. That person came into this world as a human being, lived, died by crucifixion, was buried and rose from the dead the third day. That person ascended to His Father and is seated at the right hand of His Father. To believe in the Lord Jesus is to believe in a person and all the facts and truths concerning that person. It is to believe that He is able to do what He promised to do.

To know God is a truth with two parts. Firstly, knowing God is your salvation. Jesus said, “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (*Jn.17:3*). To know God is to enter into a saving intimate personal relationship with God and His Son, Jesus. He becomes your Heavenly Father and you become His beloved child. Jesus becomes your Lord, Savior and elder Brother.

Secondly to know God is to pursue and build this saving intimate personal relationship you have with God and His Son, Jesus. God is a person whom you need to come to know experientially in all His attributes. *Psa.9:10* says, “those who know Your name will put their trust in You.” God’s name represents all that God is. God is faithful, trustworthy, dependable, reliable. In your daily ongoing dealings with God do you know that He is faithful? *Prov.3:5-7* says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do

not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes. Fear the Lord and turn away from evil.” Do you know what this means? Have you experienced the reality of the truths taught in these verses?

Moses prayed to God, “If I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You.” (*Exod.33:13*). Then Moses got a bit bolder and asked God, “I pray You, show me Your glory.” (*Exod.33:18*). This is the same Moses who had just spent forty day and forty nights with God in the mountain. (*Exod.24:18*). David prayed, “Make me know Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths.” (*Psa.25:4*). Paul prayed, “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” (*Phil.3:10*). Paul wrote this during his first imprisonment in Rome.

What was the sin that God charged the Israelites with? The Israelites here are that generation that God rescued from Egypt with an awesome display of His powers. This is the generation that God miraculously brought through the Red Sea. God said in *Psa.95:10*, “For forty years I loathed that generation, and said they are a people who err in their heart, and they do not know My ways.” What did God mean? Turn to *Exod.14:31*. (**read**). Now, how real was this? Did they internalize what they experienced? Was their trust now firmly grounded in this God who proved over and over that nothing is impossible for Him? *Exod.15:24* shows us that three days later they were grumbling. This would become the pattern of their lives : grumbling against Moses and the Lord.

Psa.106 says, “Our fathers did not understand Your wonders; They did not remember Your abundant kindnesses.” (*vs.7*). “They quickly for His works; They did not wait for His counsel.” (*vs.13*). “They forgot God their Savior, Who had done great things in Egypt.” (*vs.21*). “They did not believe in His word, but grumbled in their tents; they did not listen to the voice of the Lord.” (*vs.24b-25*).

Do you pray Moses, prayer, David's prayer, Paul's prayer? Paul knew Jesus. Paul met Jesus face to face on the road to Damascus. (*Acts 9:5*). After his conversion, Paul spent three years with Jesus in Arabia. (cf. *Gal.1:17-18*). Paul was caught up to the third heaven and saw things about which he was not permitted to speak. (*2Cor.12:2-4*). Now, after over **25** years of serving Jesus and preaching the gospel, Paul's heart's cry is still, "that I may know Him." To consider Jesus, you have to know Him. Do you know Him? Is your heart's cry, "that I may know Him"?

Dan.11:32 says, "the people who know their God will display strength and take action." **J.I.Packer's** powerful book, "**Knowing God**", is founded on this text. This is a book every Christian should read time and again. The context of *Dan.11:32* is great persecution and distress for the people of God. But here is the assurance. The verse does not say : "*the people who know their God will lose heart, give up, call it quits.*" The verse says, "the people who know their God will display strength and take action."

Now Brethren, I still several points I want to make under this major heading of the antidote for losing heart. Lord willing, I shall do so in a third study on **November 2nd**. But as I close I want to ask you : Do you know God? By this I mean – are you a Christian? Do you know the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom He sent into this world to die for your sins? It is clear that increasing and intensifying distress is coming upon this world. How will you deal with that distress apart from God? *Rev.6:12-17* shows us that the greatest distress that will come upon this world will be unleashed by the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. On that day men and women will run and hide and plead with the mountains to fall on them and cover them because the great day of their wrath has come.

But this distress is no comparison to the final distress that will come upon you if you do not know God. That final distress is the eternal fires of hell. Do you know God? Are you ready to meet God?

If you are a Christian, you know God in salvation. But have you pressed on to know the Lord? *Hos.6:3* exhorts us, “So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord.” Are you pressing on to know about the Lord, to grow in your knowledge of God? (*2Pet.3:18*). Are you pressing on to know the Lord in your daily experience, based upon your growing knowledge about God?

“The people who know their God will display strength and take action.” But the people who do not know their God will lose heart and grow weary in doing good.