

Fulfilling our God given Destiny

(The importance of PERSEVERING in our walk with the LORD)

EVERY Single believer has a unique God given destiny for their life that unfolds over time

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”
(Ephesians 2:10)

King David wrote,

“My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth (**that is your mother’s womb**). Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.

How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.” (Psalm 139:13-18)

Every believer has the potential to make a great impact in this world for eternity.

Given the uncertain times that we are now living in we can share the wonderful hope that we have in Christ with others. For with God nothing will be impossible

HOWEVER persevering in our walk with the Lord is crucial if we are to fulfil our full potential in Christ

The bible makes it clear that to finish our Christian walk strongly and to accomplish great things for God we need to be persevering and overcomers in our faith

In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.” **(Hebrews 10:35-36)**

In the book of Revelation we read,

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” **(Revelation 3:21)**

“And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations.” **(Revelation 2:26)**

GOD GIVES US ALL PROMISES AND DREAMS TO FULFIL FOR OUR LIFE

We all at times have been inspired by a message or during a church meeting or by reading about the exploits of Christians in the past as to what God can do in and through our lives

WHEN MARIAN AND I WERE IN INDIA IN 2011 WE HAPPENED TO BE IN BANGALORE WHEN THEY WERE CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF WILLIAM CAREY who was referred to as the being the father of modern missions

THOUGH HE EXPERIENCED MANY TRIALS AND SETBACKS IN LIFE, WILLIAM CAREY PERSEVERED IN HIS WALK WITH THE LORD AND ACHIEVED MUCH FOR GOD DURING HIS TIME IN INDIA

During his time in India, William Carey who had finished school at the age of just 12 to become a cobbler's apprentice before responding to God's call to become a missionary to India achieved much.

William Carey lived in India for 41 years at a time when the average life expectancy for a person from England once they moved to India was just 6 months.

Some of his achievements include:

He formed a team of colleagues who translated the Bible in 34 Asian languages, compiled dictionaries of Sanskrit, Marathi, Panjabi, and Telegu--respected even today as authoritative;

He started the still influential Serampore College; began churches and established 19 mission stations; formed 100 rural schools encouraging the education of girls; started the Horticultural Society of India; served as a professor at Fort William College, Calcutta;

He began the weekly publication "THE FRIEND OF INDIA," (continued today as "THE STATESMAN"); printed the first Indian newspaper; introduced the concept of the savings bank to assist poor farmers. His fight against the burning of widows ("SATI") helped lead to its ban in 1829. We could go on if space permitted, but you get the idea. Equally important is the vision that Carey raised for missions. William Carey's life inspired tens of thousands to give themselves for the spread of the Gospel

THE MOTTO OF WILLIAM CAREY WAS: EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM GOD. ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS FOR GOD

We have all at times responded to an alter call or drawing from God to give our life whole heartedly for the Kingdom cause – To do something great for Him with our life

But so often in the midst of life's battles and challenges we can lose sight of what God has called us to do and the dreams that He has given us and the promises that He has made to us.

We all at times will go through wilderness seasons in our life when we can so easily lose sight of what God has promised to us in the past

The enemy will continually try and target our mind and our emotions to distract us from fulfilling God's plan for our life and to influence our will to make wrong choices in life

All of us will at times experience:

- I) Discouragement** (*Especially if the enemy can get us focusing on our past regrets and failures*)
- II) Disappointments**
- III) Times of great testing and temptations**
- IV) Setbacks** (*When things do not work out as we had hoped or planned*), and
- V) People letting us down**

But what God has promised us WILL come to pass if we persevere in our faith and in our walk with the Lord

As Christians we are in a marathon (It is our daily consistency in our walk with the Lord that causes our life to bear much fruit over the course of a lifetime)

Today I want to look at three keys to help you persevere in your walk with the Lord so that you can realise your full potential in Christ

AGAIN GOD HAS MUCH IN STORE FOR EVERY BELIEVER'S LIFE

I will begin by looking at a short piece of Scripture in the book of Hebrews

“For God is not unjust to forget your work and labour of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, **but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.**” (Hebrews 6:10-12)

For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.” And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.” (Hebrews 6:13-15)

Here we see two very important keys:

1) Faith and 2) Patience

I will now look at these first two keys in turn.

1) Faith

(We must simply trust God at all times and in all circumstances)

We see an example of great faith in the Old Testament with three young men (Shadrach Meshach and Abednego) who when put to the test remained committed to trusting God

We see this in chapter three of the book of Daniel:

The Image of Gold

3 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height *was* sixty cubits *and* its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

³ So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. ⁴ Then a herald cried aloud: “To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, ⁵ *that* at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, **you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up;**

AND THEN IN VERSES 8 TO 13 WE READ:

Daniel’s Friends Disobey the King

⁸ Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. ⁹ They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever! ¹⁰ You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image; ¹¹ and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

¹² **There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.** ¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king.

AND THEN IN VERSES 14 TO 19 WE SEE THE COMPLETE FAITH AND TRUST THAT THESE THREE YOUNG MEN HAD IN GOD:

¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, “*Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?* ¹⁵ Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, *good!* But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who *is* the god who will deliver you from my hands?”

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, **we have no need to answer you in this matter.** ¹⁷

If that *is the case*, **our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace**, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king.

¹⁸ **But if not**, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”

¹⁹ Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.

THEN IN VERSES 22 TO 25 WE READ:

²² Therefore, because the king’s command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. ²³ And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

²⁴ Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste *and* spoke, saying to his counselors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.”

²⁵ “Look!” he answered, “I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, **and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.**”^[a]

(Here we see a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ – THE LORD PROMISES TO BE WITH US ALWAYS DURING OUR TRIALS IN LIFE)

THEN IN VERSES 26 TO 30 WE READ:

²⁶ Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace *and* spoke, saying, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come *here*.” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire.

²⁷ And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

²⁸ Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, **“Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel^[a] and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king’s word,** and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! ²⁹ Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.”

³⁰ Then the **king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego** in the province of Babylon.

IN THESE ENCOURAGING PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE WE SEE:

- i) How Shadrach, Meshach and Abed Nego completely trusted in the faithfulness of God and knew God's incredible love for them**
- ii) These three young men refusing to compromise when severely threatened for their faith**
- iii) How the LORD was with Shadrach, Meshach and Abed Nego during their fiery trial**
- iv) How God completely protected them when they stood up for their faith and convictions**
- v) How through their unwavering faith King Nebuchadnezzar's life was greatly influenced as he saw the faithfulness of God in their lives, and**
- vi) How after going through this test and trial these three young men were then promoted.**

So often just prior to a breakthrough and promotion in our life we too can experience great trials – HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT WE NEVER GIVE UP ON THE POINT OF A MIRACLE

When we trust God we will:

- Take steps of faith (**Hebrews 11:1**)
- We will allow God to continually direct our steps in life (**Psalm 37:23**)
- We will not be overcome by our challenges, (**Isaiah 26:3-4**) and
- We will see the miracles and open doors (**Revelation 3:7-8**)

Maintaining a strong faith helps us to persevere during the wilderness seasons of our life SO THAT WE CAN APPROPRIATE ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE

2) Patience

In the book of James we read,

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete lacking nothing.” **(James 1:2-4)**

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” **(Galatians 6:9)**

God is more concerned about changing us than changing our circumstances

Whatever God allows us to go through in life is for our own good

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” **(Romans 8:28-29)**

God prepares people for great tasks

Our character must first be developed before God can give us great tasks

When we are faithful in the little things God can then entrust to us greater things

Jesus Himself said,

“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.” **(Luke 16:10)**

WE MUST CHOOSE TO STAY ON THE POTTERS WHEEL AND NOT ALWAYS RUN FROM TESTING SITUATIONS THAT GOD ALLOWS US TO GO THROUGH BUT STAY PLANTED WHERE GOD HAS CALLED US TO BE

It is in the overcoming of trials and challenges that we grow most in our walk with the Lord and in character

As we CONTINUALLY ALLOW THE LORD TO DO THE WORK OF CHANGE IN OUR LIFE during life's challenges, we place ourselves in a position where God is able to promote us and entrust to us greater responsibilities

God is always able to turn our circumstances around but sometimes His timing is different to what we would like

We need to learn to always respond to our trials and challenges with a right attitude AND IN FAITH

King David wrote:

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.”

(Psalm 37:7)

Wait on the LORD,
And keep His way,
And He shall exalt you to inherit the land;
When the wicked are cut off, you shall see *it*.

(Psalm 37:34)

We must learn to enjoy the journey in our walk with the Lord and to be patient during the wildness seasons of our life and not deviate away from God’s plan for our life when nothing seems to be happening in our life

GOD’S TIMING IS ALWAYS PERFECT. We must simply be committed to allowing Him to continually direct our steps in life

Having patience in our walk with the Lord enables God to develop the character in our life that is needed for us to fulfil all that He has planned for our life and to see His promotions as we REMAIN faithful in the little things. IN GOD’S KINGDOM PROMOTION CAN ONLY COME FROM ABOVE

3) Persisting in our prayers

(Prayerless people are powerless people)

A third key to persevering in our walk with the Lord and seeing His plan for our life and family coming to pass is to be persistent in our prayers

We need to pray into being our God given destiny

We are in a continual spiritual contest

The Apostle Peter wrote,

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” **(1 Peter 5:8-9)**

We need to learn to continually take our needs and concerns to the Lord in prayer. We have a God who is both willing and able to help us in our time of need

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” **(Philippians 4:6-7)**

We see in the book of Daniel a reference to the spiritual opposition that we all also experience where we see how it took 21 days for Daniel to receive the answer to his prayer as the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood the heavenly messenger. The heavenly messenger said to Daniel;

“Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.

“But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes (A senior Angel), came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.” **(Daniel 10:12-13)**

As we are all engaged in a constant spiritual contest, we need to be persevering in our prayers for the lost and for the breakthroughs that we need when going through trials and struggles (Prayer helps us to give our cares to the Lord)

As there is a continual battle on for the souls of all people, we must be persistent in praying for our unsaved loved ones and friends and for the unbelievers in our community

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” **(1 Timothy 2:1-4)**

In the gospel of Luke we read about the need to be persistent in our prayers,

“Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’”

“And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me’”

Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said,

“And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?”

“I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:1-8)

"For with God nothing will be impossible" Luke 1:37

The bible makes it clear that the fervent prayers of a righteous man avail much and that God answers all of our prayers that are in line with His will for our life

The word of the Lord came to the Prophet Jeremiah in prison, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” (Jeremiah 33:3)

In the book of James we read,

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. **Elijah** was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.” (James 5:16-18)

The Apostle John wrote, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14-15)

IT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT WE ARE SPIRIT LED AND SPECIFIC IN OUR PRAYERS

As we pray in faith we will see answers to our prayers. No situation is ever impossible for God

Jesus Himself said, “Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” (Mark 11:22-24)

HAVING A LIFESTYLE OF PRAYER HELPS US TO CONTINUALLY STAY IN THE CENTRE OF GOD’S WILL FOR OUR LIFE SO THAT ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE COMES TO PASS

In the book of Proverbs we read, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

God has much in store for our lives

All Christians who have made a great impact in this world for God’s Kingdom have had to endure and overcome many trials and challenges along the way. Christians like Reinherd Bonnke, William Carey and Brian Hueston have all achieved much for God’s glory. But each one of them has and had to overcome many challenges along the way.

SO IN CONCLUSION

We all have a very real adversary who is out to oppose God's plan and destiny for our life

BUT IF WE:

- 1) Remain strong in our faith** (trusting God at all times and in all circumstances)
- 2) Remain patient when going through the trials and wilderness seasons of our life** (and allow the LORD to do the work of change in our lives to prepare us for what He has called us to do in life), and
- 3) Remain persistent in our prayers**

We will see God's Ephesians 3:20 plan for our life unfolding and His continual provision to meet our every need in life

I will finish with two Scriptures

The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,” (Ephesians 3:20) “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6)

HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT WE PERSEVERE IN OUR WALK WITH THE LORD SO THAT ALL THAT GOD HAS PLANNED FOR OUR LIFE COMES TO PASS

As we fulfil God's destiny and plan for our life we will also help many others to come to Christ and to fulfil God's destiny and plan for their lives