

=THE CHRISTIAN LIFE=

Lesson 14

Perseverance

AIM: to teach my pupils not to quit.

POINT OF CONTACT: Turn to Judges 20:16 and tell the story of the 700 left-handed men who formed a particular regiment in the Old Testament. The men of this fighting force were chosen because they were left-handed; however, left-handedness was not the only requirement. We find that these men had been right-handed. Because the battles in those days were fought with spear and sword, the enemy would try to incapacitate the right hand or the right arm. These men had been so incapacitated that they could no longer use their right hands or right arms. They could have been discharged, but they would not be discharged! They could have quit, but they would not quit! Rather, they learned to throw with their left hands. The Bible says they could throw so accurately that they could hit a hairbreadth with a stone. Think of the tremendous perseverance these men had. They would not quit!

INTRODUCTION: Teacher, teach your class that it is a shame to quit. Luke 9:62, "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Quitters never win, and winners never quit. It is vital that a young person realize that it is always right to finish a job. So many start college and then drop out. So many start certain tasks and quit. The Apostle Paul said, "I have finished my course," II Timothy 4:7b. He meant that he had finished what God had called him to do.

I. JESUS TAUGHT THAT WE SHOULD NOT QUIT.

1. In Luke 11:5-10 we have the story of the man who came at midnight to his friend saying to him that a friend in his journey had come to him, and he had nothing to set before him. He wanted to borrow three loaves of bread. The man said, "No, my family is in bed with me and it is late." (Bear in mind, the easterners in those days all slept in the same bed: the mother, the father, and all the children. The bed was built across the end of the room, and if one were to wake up, all would wake up.) Again the fellow returned and said, "Please! Give me bread." The man said, "No, I cannot rise and get bread." The third time he came. Finally the friend gave him bread because of his much begging. We are not to give up. Jesus teaches in this parable that we are not to give up!
2. In Luke 18:1-8 we have the story of the unjust judge. A certain widow had been wronged by a person. She sought vindication, but the judge would not help her, so she kept on begging him, kept on bothering him, and kept thwarting him until finally the judge, because he was worn out, gave the widow what she requested! Jesus is teaching, "DON'T QUIT!" This is perseverance.
3. In Matthew 15:21-28 we read the story of the lady who begged Jesus to heal her daughter. He would not do it because she was a Gentile. She said, "But even the Gentiles can be healed." Jesus said, "No, for the Gentiles are dogs." (Here He was quoting the language of the Jews.) Then she said, "Even a dog has a right to sit under the table and beg bread." Jesus healed her because she, like a begging dog, kept on! She persevered!

II. JESUS TAUGHT PERSEVERANCE IN HIS LIFE. In Jesus' life there was one great goal, and that was to die on the cross. In John 12:24 He spoke of the corn of wheat falling into the ground. In John 12:19 He spoke of the destruction of the temple and raising it after three days. In Mark 9:1-13 we see that He talked with Elijah and Moses at the Mount of Transfiguration concerning His coming death. In Gethsemane He prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," Matthew 26:39. He was "persevering," and yet there was the temptation not to persevere. He said, "nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done," Luke 22:42. He wouldn't quit! He kept on until success came.

III. HOW NOT TO FAINT AND HOW TO PERSEVERE.

1. Day-by-day renewal, II Corinthians 4:16. In other words, we live "day by day." We don't faint because we ask for strength for today.
2. Waiting on the Lord, Isaiah 40:30, 31.
3. Encouragement, Deuteronomy 20:3.
4. Prayer, Luke 18:1.
5. Considering Jesus and the fact that He persevered, Hebrews 12:1-3.

6. Faith, Psalm 27:13, 14.

These and other verses teach us not to faint. In Galatians 6:9 the Apostle Paul admonished the Galatian people, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." We should not faint! It is important that we continue!

CONCLUSION: Teacher, take some time to discuss the times in the life of Christ when He persevered, when He could have quit, but did not quit; He kept on going. Find examples of perseverance in the lives of Bible characters and especially in the life of Christ. Jesus did not quit, and we should not quit. This is vital!