

CAN ONE PERSON MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

This Is No Time for Wimps!

1 Corinthians 15:58



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Most Americans who lived during the Second World War can still remember sitting beside the radio with family members, listening with rapt attention to the voice of a statesman with a British accent who did not know the meaning of the word *surrender*. Winston Churchill's first statement as prime minister to the House of Commons, May 13, 1940, was this: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."¹

In a unique speech to the London County Council, July 14, 1941, Churchill referred to "a comradeship of suffering, of endurance." He told Hitler and his Nazi forces: "We will have no truce of parley with you, or the grisly gang who work your wicked will. You do your worst—and we will do our best." And later, "We shall never turn from our purpose, however somber the road, however grievous the cost."²

And one more: "'Not in vain' may be the pride of those who survived and the epitaph of those who fell."³

As Churchill's words ring in our ears, we find that they actually echo what the apostle Paul wrote nineteen centuries earlier: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

As believers today, we must renew that same spirit of determination and commitment to faithfulness, to constancy, to endurance—no matter how somber the road or how grievous the cost.



Quotable

*The key to
doing something
great? Never be
satisfied with
mediocrity. Give
God your best.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. Hard Days Are Ahead

The challenge before us is to aim high, stand tall, be models of integrity and vision and responsibility and purity. Most of us are able to handle greater challenges than we ever place before ourselves. Our problem, which can become our peril, lies not in raising our sights too high but in setting our aim too low.

- Hard times are opportunities to recommit ourselves to the claims and cause of Jesus Christ.
- Tough times can spawn great character.
- Retirement is not a biblical concept.

2. Biblical Character Hall of Fame: When God Speaks, He Aims High

God asks something great of every one of us. Not something easy. Not something that comes naturally or something that will cost us nothing. But He asks of us something great so that we, too, may join the ranks of those in God's hall of faith. Here are some of God's great asks:

- When God spoke to Noah, who stood alone in a decadent generation, He said, "Build an ark."
- When God spoke to Joseph, He said, "Return good for evil. Forgive your brothers."
- When God spoke to Moses, He said to him, "Lead My people out of Egypt."
- When God spoke to David, He said, unequivocally, "Kill the giant."
- When God spoke to Isaiah, He said, "Who will go? Whom shall I send?"
- When God got Peter's attention, after he had fallen and failed, He said, "Feed my sheep."
- When the apostle Paul stood on the westernmost shores of Turkey, wondering what God wanted, He said to him, "Come over to Europe and help them."



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3. Moses: The Disciplines of Durability (Hebrews 12:23–27)

Moses' character and mainspring of service can show us how to aim for greatness. Moses' parents modeled courage; they were not hindered by the king's edict (Hebrews 12:23). Moses' eyes were on God; he endured (12:27). He kept his eyes on the goal and not the obstacles.



LET'S LIVE IT

Our Challenge: Endure!

Moses' example encourages every one of us to endure, to stand firm, to be steadfast, to model faithfulness:

- Even when conspirators seem to endure
- Even when the wicked seem to be winning
- Even when the pressure seems unbearable
- Even when the critics won't shut up
- Even when big people act contemptibly small
- Even when you feel as though you're all alone
- Even when wrong is enthroned and truth is fighting for existence

Name one challenge you are facing in your life right now. How can you demonstrate the principles you have learned as you deal with this situation?

ENDNOTES

1. Winston Churchill, as quoted in *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, 15th ed., rev. and enl., ed. Emily Morison Beck (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1980), 743.
2. Sir Winston Churchill, *Great War Speeches*, comp. Charles Eade (London: Corgi Books, 1978), 128, 129, 130.
3. Churchill, as quoted in *Bartlett's*, 746.



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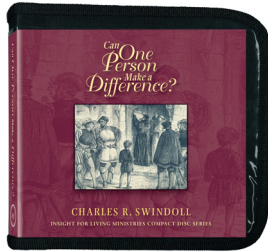
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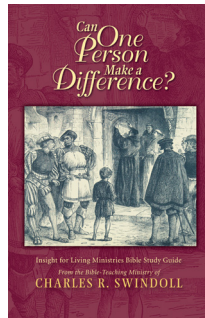


Tools for Digging Deeper



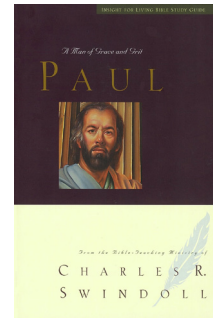
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