

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP – **Discovering God's Will for Your Life.**

Session Six – May 13, 2014

Don't Give Up

“For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.” Hebrews 10:36

Clearing the cobwebs: Have you ever finished a project that took a really long time—sewing a quilt, organizing your files, making scrapbooks from a pile of pictures, renovating a room, memorizing something for a presentation? What was your big job, how long did it take, and how did it feel when you finally completed the task.

We are probably all familiar with the concept that the Christian life is a race. You know: Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us (Heb. 12:1) and “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim 4:7) And of course, “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it” (1 Cor. 9:24). The gist of these passages is usually distilled into a plea for stick-to-itiveness, discipline, and endurance. Well, I'll never forget the Sunday when my pastor redefined the race for me!

Somehow, I had lived with the impression that I needed to press on ahead of those around me. I wanted to be the one who received the prize. Compared to some people I had met, I was doing great. I could impress God by running faster. I would prove that I had more discipline, more endurance. When others fell by the wayside, my pace just looked better and better.

That's where I had it all wrong. You see, our Christian “race” isn't a competition between fellow believers to see who can be more spiritual. God doesn't give out gold, silver, and bronze medals at the finish line. We run *together*. My pastor asked us to picture our little congregation as a pack, all bunched together and jogging along as a group. When somebody trips, the whole pack stops to lift that one up before picking up speed again. When one member grows weary under their load and begins to stumble, others come alongside to support them and help them carry their burden. We are here to help one another along toward the goal. That's why God gave us one another.

1. Who do you count as partners in this “race” of the Christian life? Name a few of the fellow believers that are in your little corner of the whole church.
2. The writer of Hebrews says, “You have need of endurance” (Heb 10:36) Why does doing the will of God require endurance? (The ability to do something difficult for a long time. The ability to deal with pain or suffering that continues for a long time)
3. How have the people you named earlier helped you to endure? How can you help them along life’s journey?

Thelma Wells: If you have days when you wonder where God is showing up, think about the believers he has placed in your life to influence you in a godly way. Give Him thanks for these evidences of His work in your life. Godly friends are one of God’s simple gifts to us.

4. What happens to folks who don’t hang in there? **Mark 4:17** gives us a picture of those who did not endure.

5. Paul encourages Timothy to endure, no matter what. What was Paul's earthly motivation for enduring (It's in **2 Timothy 2:10**) and then his heavenly motivation for enduring (it's two verses later in **2 Timothy 2:12**)

Sheila Walsh: Perhaps there is little immediate satisfaction in what you have been called to do but if you will faithfully push on through the night the Lord is the one who carries a reward in His hands.

6. If anyone would seem to have “arrived” at Christian maturity it was Paul. But what was Paul's attitude? **Philippians 3:12** shows his heart.

Nothing lasts the way it used to in the “good old days.” At least, that's what I am always hearing. When we rented a little old house from the little old man who lived next door, we were blessed with the use of his old stove. It was a huge, enamel contraption—the size and color of Moby Dick. We were stunned to learn that the sweet little couple next door had purchased it the year they had been married, and they had just celebrated their golden wedding anniversary.

That fifty-year old appliance had hung in there through the years like a trooper! During the time when I used that old stove, I went through two vacuum cleaners, two toasters, three hand mixers, and a popcorn popper. In this hasty society, with our throwaway mentality. I don't want to break down like my long line of mixers. I want to endure like my big old behemoth of a stove!

7. How does James describe Christians who are able to endure? Look in **James 5:11**.

8 Have you ever wanted to give up? Did your work in the church ever leave you burned out? Does your job wear you down? Why do you think burnout happens?

9 Paul give two messages of encouragement to his churches about pressing on in the Christian walk. They are in **Galatians 6:9** and **2 Thessalonians 3:13**. What does he say?

Luci Swindoll: *Consider this as a rule of thumb: God never calls without enabling us. In other words, if He calls you to do something, He makes it possible for you to do it. And, let me go a step further: if you don't sense His strength and ability within you to do it, I would question the call.*

Trinket to treasure: The trinket is a reminder of the lesson that we share together. It will serve to remind you of the things you have learned.

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, as we go about our work this week we ask you to put down roots. Give us some gumption, and enough strength to do everything that lies in our paths so that we can continue to move forward in our journey. Supply our needs and enable us to hang in there. Also make us mindful of those around us who are running alongside in the race. Help us to find a way to lift their burdens and to walk along with them on their journey.