

Journey, 3 pgs

Son, I had thought to begin this communication by writing a description of the facts that ultimately resulted in your family's current state of mind and disposition. I realized that is way beyond my ability to do so. If you have already written such an account, it belongs here. **Do not allow the wrongs of others discourage you and ruin your life.**

These few remarks are addressed to you as my friend and brother, and head of a household.

In *The Pilgrim's Progress* [subtitled *From This World to That Which is to Come* by John Bunyan], **Christian & Hopeful** wonder into the domain of **Giant Despair** and are captured. They found themselves imprisoned far from friends and acquaintances. The Giant made them miserable, beat them mercilessly, and locked them in **Doubting Castle**. They were eventually able to get out by using a key named **Promise** and escaped to **the King's Highway** once again on track for **the Celestial City**. May God enable you to escape the cruelty of Giant Despair and again take up your journey to the Celestial City on the King's Highway.

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I once heard a sermon on **Gal.6:2**, *Carry each other's burdens [heavy loads], and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ [ie, love]; V.5*, *For each one will carry his own load [an individual responsibility each of us is to bear]*. The part that has stayed with me over the years was his admonition to those who have been discouraged or for some other reason have neglected their responsibility [laid their burden down]. His admonition was "pick it up!" Don't let Giant Despair keep you from moving on. You know you can't neglect this without harmful consequences, so "Go on, pick it back up!"

This is real spiritual warfare! We shouldn't expect not to be knocked down and hurt, but the battle rages on we're needed back on front lines. It's the burden we signed up for when we accepted Christ as savior, married, and had children.

... [as a matter of obedience, discipline yourself to] continue working out your salvation [figuring out how to live pursuant to your faith in an antagonistic world] with fear and trembling [a strong warning about doing what you know to be right], for it is God who is working in you [through the events and circumstances of your life] to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose, Phil.2:12-13. This calls for nothing less than a serious, ongoing, focused, intentional, transformational, personal effort trusting in God.

His divine power has bestowed on us everything necessary for life and godliness through the rich knowledge of the one who called us by his own glory and excellence. Through these things he has bestowed on us his precious and most magnificent promises, so that by means of [faith in] what was promised, you may become partakers of the divine nature [as his children], after escaping the worldly corruption that is produced by evil desire [lust] ... **Make every effort** to make your calling and election sure [certify, ie, virtue and holiness are the evidence of salvation]. For by doing this you will never stumble into sin. For *thus an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be richly provided for you*, **2 Pt.1:3-11**

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From James ... to the twelve tribes dispersed abroad [Jewish Christians scattered among the

nations because of persecution] ... consider it nothing but joy [Gk. all joy, full joy, or greatest joy] when you fall into all sorts of trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance^a [ie, it's not suppose to discourage you so you quit] . And let endurance have its perfect effect [outcome] , so that you will be perfect and complete, not deficient in anything ... Blessed is the one who endures testing, because **when he has proven to be genuine** [lit. having become approved] , **he will receive the crown of life that God promised to those who love him** , **Jas.1:1-4, 12** .

From Peter ... to those temporarily residing abroad [people who have been forced by persecution to flee their homeland] ... who are **chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by being set apart by the Spirit** for obedience and for sprinkling with Jesus Christ's blood [**Heb.9:11-14, 9-28**] ... By his great mercy **he gave us new birth into a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, that is, into an inheritance imperishable, undefiled, and unfading [a better homeland] . **It is reserved in heaven for you, who by God's power are protected through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time** . This brings you great joy [Gk. in which you exult] , although you may have to suffer for a short time in various trials. Such trials [are meant to] show the proven character [genuineness] of your faith ... and will bring praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. You have not seen him, but you love him. You do not see him now but you believe in him, and so you rejoice [exult] with an indescribable and glorious (having been glorified) joy, **because you are attaining the goal of your faith** —the salvation of your souls, **1 Pt. 1:1-9** .

... do not be astonished [surprised, taken aback] that a trial by fire [lit. burning] is occurring among you, as though something strange were happening to you. But **rejoice in the degree that you have shared in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice and be glad** . If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory, who is the Spirit of God, rests on you ... let those who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator as they do good, **4:12-19** .

We sent Timothy ... to strengthen you and encourage you about your faith, so that no one would be shaken by these afflictions. For **you yourselves know that we are destined for this. For in fact when we were with you, we were telling you in advance that we would suffer affliction** ... **1 Thes.3:2-4**.

... by building yourselves up in your most holy faith, by praying in the Holy Spirit [the means] **keep yourselves in the love of God, while anticipating [waiting for] the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that brings eternal life** ... Now to the one who is able to keep you from falling, and to cause you to stand, rejoicing, without blemish before his glorious presence, to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time, and **now** , and for all eternity. Amen, **Jude 20-21, 24-25**.

I've had a lot of occurrences in my life that jolted me: the fire that partially burned our house in Nicholson; the fire that totally destroyed our house in Dalton with all the games I had collected by visiting thrift stores as well as the ones I designed and built; all the Scooper/diggers that I designed and built for sale; the unique CRDW-APE clear plastic engine that I never got back from an engineer I loaned it to for evaluation; loss of the DVDs of my CRDW & CRDS – APEs running (simulated) via barbecue motors; the articles (essays) I lost when my computer hard drive crashed; snapped

rotator cuff tendon; kick-scooter accident that left me with permanent injuries; heart arrhythmia; enlarged prostate; etc.

Though the damage & loss of these things, time, money, and effort was painful, God used them to change my direction & move me along my journey. I am absolutely convinced that they were **necessary** for my progress in the faith. I can't even describe the joy those (and other projects) gave me after I became a Christian, married Charlene, and raised you boys. My cup has run over repeatedly.

... these assets [Paul's Jewish lineage, righteousness under the law, zeal as a pharisee] I have come to regard as liabilities because of Christ. More than that, I now regard all things as liabilities compared to the far greater value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things—indeed, I regard them as dung!—that I may gain Christ, and be found in him ... because I have ... a righteousness from God that is in fact based on Christ's faithfulness. **My aim** is to know him, to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings, and to be like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead ... **I strive**^a to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus also laid hold of me ... **I am single-minded: Forgetting the things that are behind and reaching out for the things that are ahead**, with **this goal** in mind, I **strive** toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus ... **Phil.3:7-14**.

a. Endurance is the ability to withstand or sustain prolonged stress or hardship without giving way, whereas perseverance is the steadfast determination to continue a task or goal despite difficulty or delay, actively working to overcome obstacles and achieve success. In essence, endurance focuses on resilience and holding on through a situation, while perseverance involves an active effort to move forward and adapt, resulting in growth and change.

I'll end this letter with the last lines from a famous poem by Robert Frost: **Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening**

The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep – miles to go before I sleep. Dad

COMPENDIUM: SOME OF THE THINGS LOST