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FOCUSED ON THE WORD

Four Pillars of Paul's Perseverance



The apostles Peter and Paul, painting by Jusepe de Ribera, 1616, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Strasbourg.

As an elected leader, every day you grapple with monumental issues, work long hours, and do your best to make good decisions to benefit the nation. You have a difficult job. But overall, Paul had it much worse than you do. On his numerous sorties to start churches, he didn't get to fly around from place to place in a comfortable airplane and have food handed to him by attendants. He was shipwrecked, imprisoned, mocked, beaten with rods, stoned, betrayed, deprived of food, sleep, and shelter, yet he persevered.

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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

Governors: Fridays 9am (EST), Zoom

Former Cabinet Members / White House Senior Staff: Fridays 9am (EST), Zoom

Senate Members: Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served

House Members: Thursdays 8am, AG Hearing Rm., Longworth 1302, hot breakfast served



MINISTRY UPDATE

Kenya Pastor Named LGM Director for Africa



A Pastor from Kenya who yearns to serve unreached affinity spheres for Christ, has been named our Local Government Ministries (LGM) Director for the entire continent of Africa.

Pastor Emmanuel Makolo who is gifted in administration and committed to evangelism and discipleship, is charged with recruiting both ministry leaders and local government public servants with the purpose of establishing weekly LGM discipleship Bible studies for all African nations.

Brian Hanson, CapMin's Director of International Ministries who recruited Pastor Makolo, said he has the spiritual gifts, education, and experience to accomplish CapMin's goals to expand LGM across the vast continent.

Emmanuel Makolo (Manu) has served as an administrative pastor in Eldoret, Kenya for several years.

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Four Pillars of Paul's Perseverance

Read on with me as we attempt to peer into Paul's mind on how to overcome adversities. I think you'll find it fascinating, arresting, and quite helpful and, as I am praying, also encouraging for you.

Every believer is called by Christ to a purpose, and for you, it is to the political realm. What may look to you like defeats may be a part of His divine plan.

Read on, beloved.

Ralph Drollinger

I. PERSEVERANCE RELATES TO ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The first pillar of Paul's perseverance has to do with his clear sense of calling by God for the task at hand. Absent this, when the going gets tough, anyone will begin to doubt God's will for his life. If the calling is settled beforehand, however, it never becomes a matter of internal questioning. Perseverance begins with clarity in the calling—acknowledging with confidence that God has you here for His purposes! This is His life assignment for you, not your own.

A. PAUL'S CONVERSION: ACTS 9:15

For Paul, conversion was perhaps an easier matter to resolve than for others because he was personally confronted

by the second member of the Trinity three times in the book of Acts. Notice his conversion in Acts 9 after Jesus physically blinded Paul (before his conversion his name was Saul) on the road to Damascus.

But the Lord said to him [Ananias], "Go, for he [Saul] is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel."

In this passage, Jesus sent a surrogate messenger to explain to Saul why he had previously been blinded by Jesus. This temporary blindness was an unmistakable event he'd never forget!

B. EVERY BELIEVER'S CONVERSION

For us today the situation is most likely different. Short of Jesus' calling you



personally as in Acts 9:15, it is a matter of faith to believe what Paul says about God's perspective of your conversion—not in an experiential sense of physical blinding but rather in a theological sense of every believer's position in Christ! Jesus, Paul says, has personally called every believer! Note the following passages in this regard:

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will (Ephesians 1:4–5).

C. THE BELIEVER'S CALLING

Ephesians 2:10, flowing from the kernel truths of Ephesians 1 above, drives home the personable aspects of, and the clarity of, every believer's calling in Christ:

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Accordingly, believers in office must know with confidence, based on what the Bible says, and have ensuing assurance that they won neither election nor appointment by chance, but by the sovereign act and will of God.

You must have confidence in these biblical truths and trust them to be true in order to have sustaining perse-

verance in office when the times get tough. Look back on your calling; acknowledge your calling as it is stated clearly in these passages. For certain, Paul did that, and it was a pillar of his perseverance, his soldiering on during the tough times.

II. PERSEVERANCE RELATES TO ATTITUDE

The second pillar relates to the many descriptive words Paul uses to describe himself while in God's service. Each of the following points serves to reveal Paul's inner attitudes about himself. Each is rich with meaning, is quite descriptive of his self-perception, and provides insights into what compelled him and undergirded his forbearance in ministry.

A. BEING THE LEAST

In Ephesians 3:8, Paul reveals an attitude of compelling humility. He says he is *the very least of all saints* and that all he was enabled to do was related not to self but to *God's grace*. The same attitude is revealed with other words in 1 Timothy 1:15, wherein Paul states to his understudy Timothy that he, Paul, is the most undeserving of people:

It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

This attitude of personal humility, or lack of pride, is the basis of his ability

VERSE OF THE WEEK



Galatians 1:10

For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.



Seek God's favor, not man's, and the opinions or criticism or false charges of others will not cause you to cower.



Continued from page 2

He is skilled in the area of administration and has a vibrant heart for evangelism and discipleship,” Pastor Hanson said. “We are so glad to welcome Manu and know that God is going to use him mightily as we move forward together.”

Pastor Makolo, who speaks Swahili and English, has served in many mission fields in different parts of the world. Among them, he has served as outreach pastor for the Sirikwa Fellowship where he prepared annual missions plans and budgets, led the outreach team, and assisted in raising missionaries, among other duties.

Pastor Makolo is married to Faith Wangari and the couple has three children, Harim Benjamin 18, Moriah Ivy 14, and Gena Hadassah 6.

Pastor Makolo said it is a privilege to work with Capitol Ministries to help fulfill the Great Commission. “It is a wonderful opportunity to disciple political leaders who make the laws that govern countries,” he said. “Africa is a continent that is plagued with war and poverty and this is due to bad leadership. No one has the power to change the hearts of man, only God can do that. It is important for these leaders to know and follow Jesus who can change them and the righteous will prosper and the cities will rejoice (Proverbs 29:2).”

LGM is CapMin's latest initiative to establish discipleship Bible studies in the United States and around the world to leaders in local communities—city and county commissioners, mayors, school board members, city managers, and other appointed and elected officials.

to proclaim to the believers in the church of Galatia the following related inner attitude:

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Theologians refer to this as the “exchanged life.” Paul realized that nothing good dwells in his sinful self—that everything good that could possibly flow from his life is related to God’s living in him and doing things through him.

How this exchanged life relates to perseverance is this: if the believer in office is dead to self to start with, then for a time, nothing that goes bad along the way will kill him. Nothing from others nor from circumstances can deal him or her a death blow in his inner spirit because he is dead to self to begin with! He has already resolved that this is all about Christ, His glory, and what He is going to use him for in this place at this time.

As Galatians 2:20 shows, this is not about me and my attainment of or lack of attainment of personal significance. Oftentimes personal discouragement relates to our inability to achieve what we desire for ourselves. But notice in the following passages how Paul describes himself—and sees himself. Such attitudes reveal someone who is living not for self, but for the purposes of the One Who saved him!

B. BEING A PRISONER: EPHESIANS 3:1

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles.

The Greek word for *prisoner* (*desmios*) means “a person under custody.” Likened to being *the least of all the saints* and being *crucified with Christ*, Paul viewed himself in this particular passage as a *prisoner*, that is to say, someone who was under the custody of another. We will see this thought more fully developed in the next section, wherein Paul refers to himself additionally as a *bond-servant*. But notice Ephesians 3:2, wherein he states yet another insight into his understanding of self.

C. BEING A STEWARD: EPHESIANS 3:2

If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you.

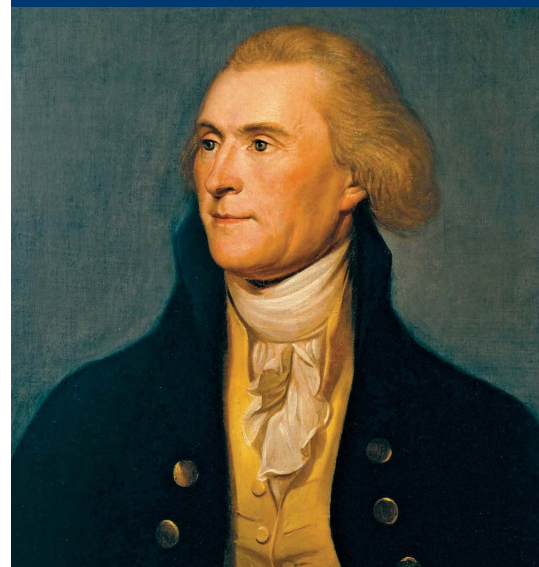
The Greek root word for *steward* (*oikonomia*) means “a household manager.” Paul saw himself as someone who had been given the responsibility of being a manager of God’s interests versus his own self-interest.

D. BEING A SERVANT: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1–2

Yet one more insight into Paul’s evaluation of self is provided in his letter to the church at Corinth where he refers to himself as a *servant*. In Greek, the English word *servant* (*diakonia*) means



Thomas Jefferson



“We do, then, most solemnly before God and the world declare that regardless of every consequence, at the risk of every distress, the arms we have been compelled to assume we will use with perseverance, exerting to their utmost energies all those powers which our Creator hath given us to preserve that liberty which he committed to us in sacred deposit and to protect from every hostile hand our lives and our properties.”

— Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States, signer of the Declaration of Independence, diplomat, governor of Virginia, secretary of state.

Thomas Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Edited by Julian P. Boyd 60 Vols., Princeton, 1950: “Declaration on Taking Up Arms, 1775,” 1:202.

“the servant of a magistrate.” States 1 Corinthians 4:1–2 in this regard:

Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

All these words taken together reveal a collage of Pauline self-perception insights, which are poignant perspectives as to what drove Paul. They are counter-intuitive to what the world propagates, i.e., the idea of being strong and prideful. Herein is a meek and humble man whom God’s power flowed through in full measure. One commentator said, in effect, that the degree to which we are impotent is the same degree to which God’s omnipotence flows through us. Such is the testimony in these various passages as to the underlying attitudes that not only bred perseverance in Paul but also produce it in us!

III. PERSEVERANCE RELATES TO AUDIENCE

The third pillar of Pauline perseverance relates to how Paul viewed others. Empirical studies show that most people act according to how they think others will perceive their actions. If that is what motivates a person from the get-go, they will inevitably lack courage and perseverance when others criticize them. To the contrary, Paul states in several passages how he viewed the matter of audience.

A. GOD IS MY AUDIENCE

In 1 Corinthians 4:3–4, the Bible student is provided with an insight into how Paul, in his grid of inner thinking, processed the criticism of others:

But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.

The views and opinions of others, Paul says, *is a very small thing*. Such a reaction to others is somewhat predictable, stemming from the previous points—how Paul viewed himself in the first place! In Galatians 1:10 he states profoundly and even more dramatically why he possessed elephant skin.

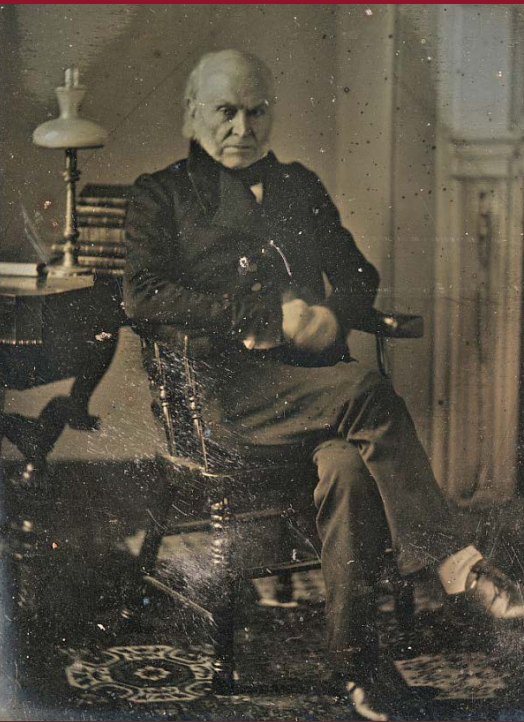
B. PEOPLE ARE NOT MY AUDIENCE

For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ (Galatians 1:10).

The Greek word for *bond-servant* is *doulos*. When used during the days of Paul, this word was a descriptor of “a state of being completely controlled by someone or something—subservient to or controlled by.” In the above passage its meaning is used in tandem with someone who has an “audience of one.” People who are persevering are seeking God’s favor, not man’s, and



John Quincy Adams



“Courage and perseverance have a magical talisman, before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish into air. These qualities have ever been displayed in their mightiest perfection, as attendants in the retinue of strong passions.”

— John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the United States, diplomat, secretary of state, U.S. senator, U.S. representative, “Old Man Eloquent,” “Hell-Hound of Abolition.”

John Quincy Adams, “An Oration, delivered at Plymouth, December 22, 1802, at the anniversary commemoration of the first landing of our ancestors at that place”, 13.

Four Pillars of Paul's Perseverance

therefore the opinions or criticism or false charges of others don't cause them to cower. The word *doulas* is, in fact, used by many other New Testament men of God to describe them.

C. EXAMPLES IN OTHER BIBLICAL CHARACTERS

1. Timothy's Audience: Philippians 1:1

Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.

2. Epaphras' Audience: Colossians 1:7

Just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf.

3. James' Audience: James 1:1

James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.

4. Peter's Audience: 2 Peter 1:1

Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

5. Jude's Audience: Jude 1

Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who

are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ.

6. John's Audience: Revelation 1:1

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John.

If all these aforementioned Bible characters—who possessed perseverance—viewed themselves as *bond-servants*, if they possessed an audience of the One to Whom they belonged, whom they were *striving to please*, should we not also? Is such a key to perseverance?

IV. PERSEVERANCE RELATES TO GOD'S AGENDA

Paul reveals yet another theological perspective that impelled him—one that reveals his profound understanding of one of the sweeping themes of Scripture! God the Father desires to award God the Son with a gift for going to the cross. That gift is a pure and undefiled church, the saints of yesterday and today who have no wrinkle, spot, or blemish. The apostle's understanding of the scope of this truth and his part in it was undoubtedly motivational to his personal holiness and perseverance in his mission. Notice what he says about the believer's judgment in 2 Corinthians 5:10 and how that profound truth proves motivational to a life of being pleasing unto God.



A. THE BELIEVER'S JUDGMENT

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).

In fact, at the believer's future day of judgment, known as the Bema Seat Judgment, every believer will be rewarded based on his faithfulness.

B. THE REWARDING OF THE BELIEVER

Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:12–15).

Such truths should and do prove motivational to personal perseverance! What follows are three passages that indicate that the believer is indeed the future bride of Christ, underscoring our need to get with the program—and stay with the program! In one sense believers are only pawns in God's great, sweeping plan!

C. THE BELIEVER IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

1. 2 Corinthians 11:2

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

2. Ephesians 5:27

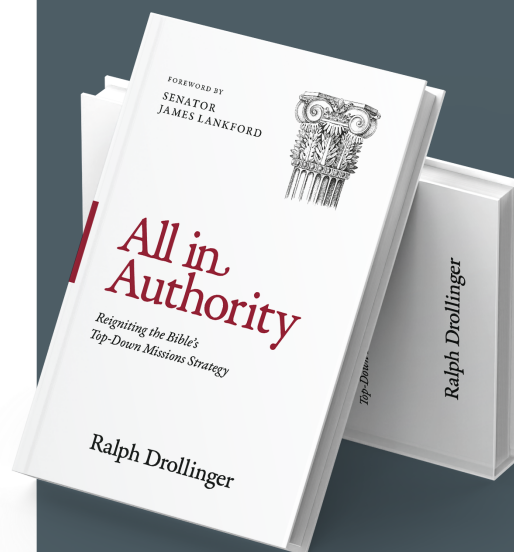
That He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

3. Revelation 19:7–8

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

V. SUMMARY

Paul possessed a multifaceted theological construct that created a passionate perseverance to achieve God's purposes in and throughout his life! To the degree we understand the mind of Paul and what he thought about is the same degree to which public servants who name the name of Christ can be empowered to stay the course and soldier on—even in the most difficult of times. May God grant us these truths, applied to our hearts and habits, to become more like Him Who endured even the cross. Amen.



NOW AVAILABLE

The book of Acts records how a small band of men—the apostles—in very short order *turned the world upside down* (Acts 17:6, KJV) during the first century in which they lived. This small team of uneducated, common men were not elite leaders, so how were they able to saturate the world with the gospel—changing lives, changing culture, and eventually changing the Roman Empire?

Scripture provides the answer: not only did they fulfill the Great Commission one soul at a time through a ministry of geometric evangelism and discipleship, but they succeeded *by concentrating on and impacting a particular element of society, specifically kings and all who are in authority* (1 Timothy 2:1–4).

All in Authority, Reigniting the Bible's Top-Down Missions Strategy provides the biblical exegesis for this missional strategy that is found in both the Old and New Testaments. The book provides a clarion call for the Church to make political public servants a priority mission field in our nation today. Request your complimentary copy at capmin.org.



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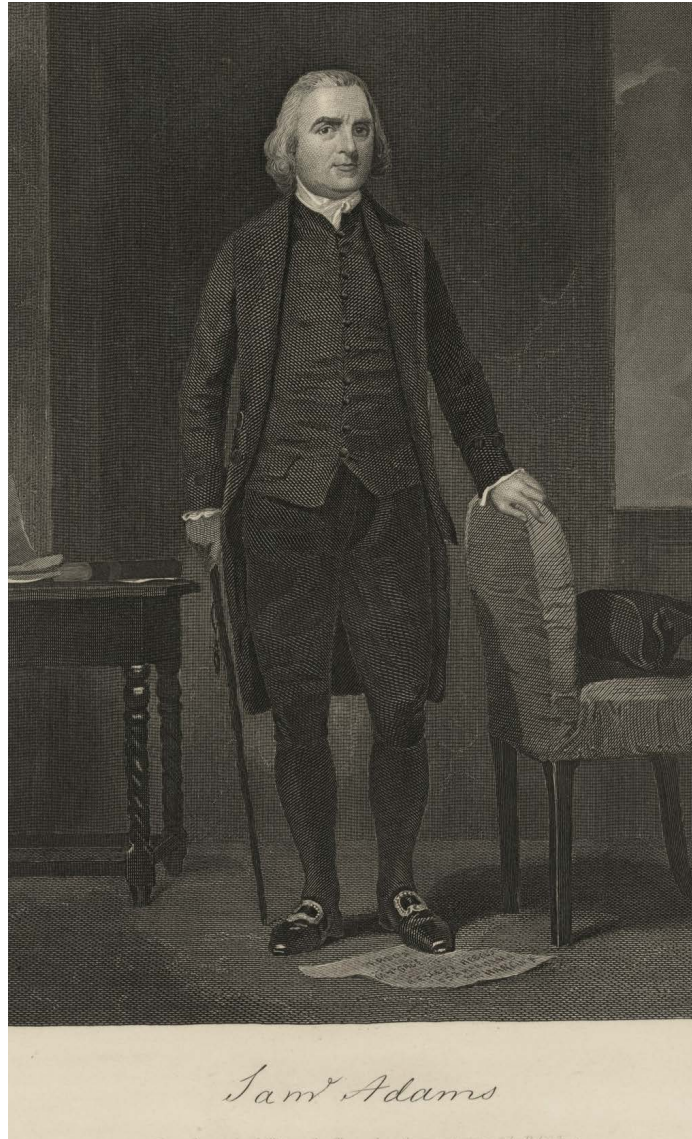
Capitol Ministries®
Mail Processing Center
Post Office 30994
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661.288.2622
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Four Pillars of Paul's Perseverance



**“The necessity of the times,
more than ever, calls for our utmost
circumspection, deliberation,
fortitude, and perseverance.”**

— Samuel Adams, signer of the Declaration of Independence,
Father of the American Revolution, ratifier of the U.S.
Constitution, governor of Massachusetts.

Samuel Adams, *The Writings of Samuel Adams, 1770-1773*,
first published in the *Boston Gazette*, Oct. 14, 1771.

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