



## A Publication of the Winnetka Ave. Church of Christ

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September 15, 2024

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## TALK ABOUT TENACIOUS

Who among you ever heard of Joop Zoetemelk? Well maybe Curtis Nay has knowledge of Joop, but the rest, most likely not. Joop Zoetemelk is known as Netherland's most intrepid and successful cyclist. He finished the grueling Tour de France bicycle race sixteen times. He placed second five times. One would hardly had thought less of him if he had quite enough, but he didn't quit. Finally in 1980 he won the prestigious race. Indeed there is a lot to be said for persistence.

Persistence carries the aspect of being stubborn and determined. It is a quality that many would do well to emulate, but sadly for most the mind set is "if at first you don't succeed, quit!" Such an attitude as that is a far cry from what it takes to be a "winner"; regardless of the endeavor. Perseverance is the quintessential key to victory no matter what one is doing.

*"And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."* (Romans 5:3-5)

James as he penned his epistle was well acquainted with the struggles Christians were facing in the first century. As he began to address the brethren, who had been scattered because of persecution, he called upon them to *"Consider it all joy my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance."* (1:2-3) He then would go on to explain, *"let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."* (1:4) The appeal is clear, don't allow any-

thing to overwhelm, dig deep inside and find a level of tenacity in order to press on to the goal.

Most are well acquainted with the thoughts of the apostle Paul as he faced death. His life had been one of perseverance overcoming severe affliction and persecution. *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."* (2Timothy 4:7) Clearly he seems to be imploring not only Timothy, but Christians down through the expanse of time to find the resolve to overcome whatever may serve as an impediment in order to lay hold of the *"crown of righteousness"* (see 2Timothy 4:8)



*"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* (Hebrews 12:1-2) What a powerful directive, especially in light of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and the "heroes of faith". Don't give up too soon, in fact of the matter don't give up, period!

Earlier in this article, reference was made to the writing of James in the first chapter of his epistle, note now what is found in the fifth chapter and verse eleven. *"Behold, we count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful."* Indeed the Scriptures do provide ample encouragement for all to gain the strength and wherewithal to press ever forward the race set before us. Accept the challenge that Paul sets forth in 1Corinthians 9:24-27, run in such a way that you may win. An attitude of persistence; tenacious.

THE BULWARK