

DETERMINATION – Never Give Up

Bill Rudge

All through my younger years I was often told that what I planned to do was impossible. I was repeatedly told: “You can’t do it! You are too young, too small, too weak, too poor. You will never make it. You might as well give up!”

So, as one who never really had much potential and was often considered the least likely to succeed in high school and college, who would have thought that one day I would start a ministry that would grow into an international outreach which was to have an impact on tens of thousands of youth and adults?

My wife and I arrived at Bible college as new Christians, still in our teens, with little money and no jobs. Early on I was voted in one class to be the least likely to succeed in ministry. Nevertheless, I finished all four years with good grades, even though I had to work 40 - 60 hours a week on an assembly line at a window factory, along with classes and homework. By my senior year, I was running a growing youth group for a country church and teaching exercise and self-defense classes at the college and YMCA.

A few years later, the president of the college from which I had graduated called to book me at their new campus in Virginia. He asked me to address the student body on “Reaching Your Maximum Potential,” and how we had developed a successful, multifaceted ministry.

Since then I have been blessed to train hundreds of staff and volunteers—many of whom are serving in churches, ministries or missions—as well as training missionaries, pastors, chaplains, military personnel (enlisted men and women, and officers) and leaders of various ministries and organizations. The Lord has also opened doors for me to speak at several pastors’ and leadership conferences in the U.S. and other countries.

Bare Beginnings

In August of 1977, with virtually no money, staff or facilities—just a lot of God-given determination—Karen and I started this ministry in the upstairs apartment of my parents’



home. I used the kitchen table as a desk and Karen kept the ministry records in a file cabinet in our bedroom. Few people thought we would succeed. Many said, “Others have tried and failed; you will too!” Nevertheless, with God’s help we persevered and for over 45 years have witnessed Him do the impossible.

Recently, after speaking at a local church where I had mentioned in my sermon about being voted least likely to succeed at Bible college, an older man told me that he remembered when I started my ministry. He had said to his wife, “He’ll never make it.” He paused and said, “I am so glad you did make it!”

Philippians 4:13

There are many other stories I could share—examples of how God has enabled us to accomplish that which others thought impossible. In reality, people were right for thinking I did not have much potential. However, I have built my life and ministry on the belief that I can do all things because Christ strengthens me (Philippians 4:13). I think God chose me—the least of all—to display His transforming power and to vividly illustrate that if He can use me, He can use anyone!

One of the reasons we have such faithful volunteers and supporters is that they know I am going to do what I say I am going to do. If I believe God has led me to do something, then nothing or no one will stop me. I will persevere until it is accomplished. I will never give up until the Lord either fulfills what He led me to do, or gives definite, new direction.

I have always enjoyed a challenge. It seems the more obstacles I face and the more opposition I receive, the more determined I become. Countless times throughout my life and ministry, I have had to face the cold reality that circumstances say, “You cannot do it,” and people said, “You will never do it,” but God’s Word reminds us, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

Three-Legged Race

Speaking in the city of Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania, for a series of engagements, I designed a special outreach including relays and an obstacle course in a neighborhood



Photo by Bill Rudge

that was nicknamed “Hell’s Half Acre.” It was like a time warp back to the 1960s and was similar to the neighborhood where I had been raised. Both the youth and the adults loved the competition.

Before the start of a three-legged race, Steven, a youth of about twelve years of age, hobbled over to me with a crutch. His leg was badly crippled, yet he asked if he could compete in the three-legged race. He said, “I don’t need a partner as I already have three legs.” I told him to go for it. He competed with fervent determination and nearly won the race. Before sharing my testimony following the competition, I acknowledged this youth for his courage, determination and attitude, then awarded him a Reaching Your Maximum Potential T-shirt which he appreciated and greatly deserved.

What Is Your Dream?

Proverbs 29:18 says:

Where there is no vision [revelation], the people are unrestrained [out of control], but happy [blessed] is one who keeps the Law.

To have determination that never gives up, you must have goals, dreams and vision. Believe that through Christ you can do it. Be willing to pay the price at all cost, and be motivated and empowered by His Spirit to persevere no matter what the challenge.

What goals and vision has the Lord given you through study of His Word and prayer? If you do not have any, then spend time in Scripture, prayer and fasting, and God will put His goals, His dreams, His vision and His desires in your heart. One of the reasons I am still in the ministry and still excited is due to my goals and vision for the future. When I achieve one goal, God gives me one or two more. That keeps me motivated. I often pray: “Lord, put Your goals, dreams and vision in my heart. Give me unwavering faith to believe You and the motivation and determination to persevere.” And remember, anything worth doing is worth doing with excellence. Strive to be the best you can be at whatever you do.

Determination of a Navy SWCC and SEAL

My oldest grandson, like his uncle BJ, excelled in soccer; playing for two national traveling teams. However, he gave up a college Division I soccer scholarship to enlist in the Navy and try out for Special Forces. His determination and never-quit attitude was already honed through the many difficulties and hard training he experienced in soccer. His self-imposed intense workout routines helped prepare him for the severe and extremely rigorous training at Special Forces—crawling through

broken seashells and then, with open wounds, crawling through fresh sewage and repeatedly enduring freezing cold water.

My brother Ken gave an insightful quote: “If you want to be the best, you have to face the worst.” The additional challenges my grandson has faced for remaining faithful to Christ have been almost incomprehensible, but so far, with God’s help, he has overcome.

He enlisted in the Navy at age 18 with a goal and a dream to become a SWCC (Special Warfare Combatant Crewman). During Navy SWCC Selection, after many were either sent home or quit, a SWCC instructor asked him, “Are you going to quit?” “They will have to kill me” he replied. What he endured was horrific but he refused to give up and by age 19 he achieved his goal of Naval Special Operations Forces.

During the prestigious graduation ceremony in Coronado, the commander mentioned that my grandson gave up a college scholarship to play soccer. He then enthusiastically said to him, “Welcome to the pros!”

I have had the opportunity to speak several times at an Arab Center in California to people who have known suffering and persecution firsthand. The group consists of men, women and young people from various countries throughout the Middle East (some are Arabic instructors at the Defense Language Institute at the Presidio of Monterey in California) and U.S. military personnel. It is an

incredible place to speak because there is also a meeting of Jewish believers going on at the same time in the same building. People from both groups ask, “Where else can Arabs and Jews get along so lovingly?”

However, the point I want to emphasize concerns a Navy SEAL. Following my message, many waited to talk to me, to ask questions or obtain free copies of my books. One young man was halfway through his training to become a Navy SEAL (that along with SWCC is probably the most difficult and rigorous military training available). He asked me to pray for him. After doing so I looked him in the eyes and asked, “Are you going to complete the training to become a SEAL?” He responded without hesitation as he looked me in the eyes with confidence, “Sir, they will have to break every bone in my body before I will quit!”

The attitudes of determination and resolve modeled by both these young men are needed by all believers in our commitment and service to Jesus Christ!

Never Quit; Never Give Up

One of the most important exhortations regarding the end times—repeated several times in Revelation and elsewhere—is to persevere: be faithful even to the point

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After speaking at Petra Cafe in Fort Stewart, a young soldier said to me: “I want to go home, sir.” It was understandable for him to be homesick and want to quit the Army, but giving up should not be an option for a believer, nor even be in a Christian’s vocabulary.

My desire is to turn the hearts of the people back to the Lord and to inspire them to walk in faithfulness until He returns. As believers in Christ, we must have the attitude that no opposition or obstacle will cause us to give up in defeat. Instead, we must endure to the end in our commitment to Him. We must persevere, remain faithful and never give up until the Lord fulfills what He leads us to do or He gives us clear, new direction.

The Apostle Paul was in prison at Rome, knowing that his time on earth was about to end. Yet with faith and determination he wrote these powerful words in 2 Timothy 4:6-8:

...The time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing.

Paul’s commitment to Christ resulted in unwavering faith and determination—even to his death. Ask God to instill in you the kind of determination Paul had: to never give up and to remain faithful to the very end.

God has taken that little bit of determination in my youth; has redirected and increased it, and enabled me by His power to do what was seemingly not doable. In upcoming books on *The Impossible* and *Adventures in Missions*, I document some of the many difficult situations the Lord has enabled me to overcome through unwavering faith in Him, obedient determination and persistent perseverance.

Determination means refusing to give up no matter how daunting the obstacle, how intense the opposition, how rough the road, or how difficult the battle, but to persevere until the very end and victory is achieved. Never forget, if you consistently, persistently, incessantly and unrelentingly believe and never give up, you will accomplish what others thought to be impossible! 🍓

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Special thanks to **Mark and Paula Lyons** for donating four new tires for the ministry vehicle, **Dave Buchanan** for mounting and balancing them (as well as donating the snow plowing of the ministry center) and **Dan Glaize** for helping with the front end alignment. Also, thanks to **Tim McCall**, Sergeant First Class (retired) for donating military flags to BRM. And a very special thanks to **Lois Greathouse** for volunteering her services the past 37 years in doing an outstanding job of recording and receipting the ministry’s finances.

The Heart of a Coach

Many of you have read BJ Rudge’s testimony in the *Faith Through the Fire* book. Now read about “the heart of a coach” in the following article that was initially printed in Janor Bestwick’s newsletter for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes:

BJ’s Comments On Perseverance

Dictionary definition: “To continue in some effort in spite of difficulty; to be steadfast in purpose.”

My definition: An unrelenting drive and desire to overcome any obstacle or challenge in the pursuit of achieving a particular goal.

My favorite biblical passage that deals with perseverance: “Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us” (Philippians 3:13b-14).

Why I chose this passage: It reminds the believer, that just like a runner in a race, he must be persistent and steadfast in pursuing the goal of Christlikeness.

Application of this attribute in my life: While playing soccer as a youth, I came to understand the importance of perseverance. After three soccer related injuries, all of which required surgery and extensive rehabilitation, I had to overcome many obstacles in order to play soccer again. Through these challenges, God not only taught me the importance of never giving up, but always to keep my focus on Him.

How I apply this to my coaching: At the beginning of the season, I have my players write down specific goals that they want to accomplish. Then, when the team faces obstacles and difficulties during the season, I remind them of these goals. I do this to motivate them and help them recognize that they will only attain their future goals if they are willing to persevere through their present challenges.

In BJ’s words: “Success does not mean that you always achieve your goals, but that you give your best effort to attain those goals. Success is not what you do, but who you are.” 🍓

“Stick-to-it-tive-ness”

Jim Weikal

Being a Christian in today’s world has seriously changed since I was a nice Methodist boy in the 1950s. Following God was kind of a given. (“Doesn’t everybody do it?”) Nobody ever challenged my faith at school or at the small playground near the fire hall. To say it out loud, “I was seriously naive!”

Now, 70 years later, I live in an upside down world where evil is good and good is evil (see Isaiah 5). I now realize the importance of determination, aka “stick-to-it-tive-ness.” Today it is imperative for believers to set their minds on Christ while committing to a course of action without excuses, without doubting one’s commitment to Christ, or His commitment to you.

You need determination to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13).

Like Jesus who “set His face to go to Jerusalem,” we must “set our face” to finish the race and run with endurance and determination (Luke 9:51; Hebrews 12:1; 1 Corinthians 9:24). We must live the believer’s life with determination! 🇺🇸

The Path to Victory

The path that leads to the fulfillment of God’s promises requires faith and perseverance to walk. It sometimes leads through dark woods, deep valleys, high mountains, barren deserts and isolated wildernesses before ultimate victory is achieved.

Bill Rudge

Mary Ann Kekich 4/8/1938 - 1/4/2023

Mary Ann was a wonderful wife, mother, grandmother, and a loving and determined woman of God who served the Lord her entire life. It was an honor for Bill to officiate at Mary Ann’s funeral. The Lord’s presence was apparent.



The psalmist said: “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.” The apostle Paul assures believers that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Mary Ann has met Jesus face to face. She is in the presence of the One whose Word she read and to Whom she prayed. “In His presence is fullness of joy; at His right hand are pleasures forevermore.” Mary Ann is now delighting in the glory of God, exploring the incomprehensible splendor of the heavenly realm, meeting the heroes of the faith and other believers who preceded her, and reunited with her husband and loved ones who have gone on to be with the Lord.

Mary Ann knew she could choose to kneel before Jesus and accept Him as her Savior, or one day stand before Him as her Judge. She chose to kneel. Her constant prayer was that all her loved ones and friends would follow her path of receiving the One who said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” Even as her body grew weaker, her prayers remained powerful.

The apostle John wrote: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on...so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.” Mary Ann’s family and friends have a wonderful legacy and example to follow: her deep love of the Lord, her diligent study of Scripture, her love of end times prophecy and dedication as a prayer intercessor. May the Holy Spirit comfort Mary Ann’s loved ones as they cherish the wonderful memories of her life and legacy!

In Memory Of

Mary Ann Kekich
by
Ryan Blaney Family
Foundation
Arlene Evans
Diane Gardner LLC
Sally McKown

FOCUS

Our Life Mission

God has given Bill and Karen a dream and vision to reach the nations of this world. The focus of their lives and ministry is to proclaim the love and truth of Jesus Christ until every person in every nation has the opportunity to hear the Gospel.

The reason Bill speaks and writes – the passion that motivates him (and Karen) – is to lead people to Jesus Christ and to challenge them to faithfully serve Him all the days of their lives.

Their life mission is to honor the Lord Jesus, fulfill His will, accomplish His purpose, and advance His Kingdom.

Pray a special blessing for our staff and volunteers whose selfless efforts behind the scenes are helping BRM touch thousands of lives locally, nationally and abroad. (Acts 1:8)

Receipts

We so appreciate those of you who partner with us both prayerfully and financially! Donations are U.S. tax-deductible. **Receipts are sent annually in mid-January.** (Cash donations and special gifts are usually receipted immediately.)

Highlights from the Past Himalayas and Calcutta Outreach

This month’s “stone of remembrance” is from Bill, BJ and Rick’s Himalayas and Calcutta Outreach in December 1989 where many committed their lives to the Lord. We hope you will enjoy reading how God moved during this exciting trip. We are thankful to our printer for his donation of the extra flyers that we are glad to share with you.