

*Moving Ahead*  
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**Introduction:** We can allow the past to destroy us if we are not careful.

A. Our God will allow us to be tested so that good things may come into our lives.

**(Jer 17:9-10)**

1. One of the purposes of a test from God is for us to see ourselves!
2. When handled properly, this is always a humbling process that allows us to see both God and ourselves better.

B. We are in a constant battle for our hearts and minds. It is difficult to keep a heart tender and faithful before God.

1. You do not really know another or even yourself until you go through a test.
2. Do you have an approved character? **(Rom 5:3-5)**
3. The main cause of Christian's falling away in my experience is here. They allowed their minds to be consumed by their hurt rather than on the hope of heaven!

***I. We must constantly be moving forward***

A. Many make the mistake of stopping. **(Lk 9:62)**

1. We need to have the courage to face a problem and take the time necessary to do what the Lord has said.
2. I am not suggesting that we run from any problem. If we run from a problem it will only get bigger!
3. What do you do when you have responded as the Lord has instructed?

B. We often get bogged down in things that are not given for us to do by God!

1. Consider the limitations of teaching God's word. **(1 Cor 3:5-7)**
2. What has God given us to do? What do we do with the rest? **(Phil 4:6-7)**
3. This is where we learn if we are walking by faith or if we want to "whittle on God's end of the stick!"

C. How many Christians are burdened and ready to quit because of this?

1. We must accept the things that we cannot change! **(Phil 3:12-14)**
2. We can break down and act like a baby when we lose our focus. Consider Elijah! **(1 Kings 19:2-4, 14, 18)**
3. After instruction God put Elijah back to work. **(1 Kings 19:15-16)**

D. We can be satisfied with the past and allow that to be our focus. **(Rev 2:2-4)**

1. A living faith is full of zeal and moves you forward.
2. How do you identify yourself before God? **(Rom 1:14)**
3. When we remember what God has done for us and what He is doing for us, then we will with strength move forward! **(Titus 2:11-14)**

***II. We must win the battle for the mind each day***

A. Our minds are very complicated and not easily controlled.

1. Have you had occasions where you could not stop thinking about a matter when you really wanted to stop?

2. We must develop a daily renewal and focus on God's word with a personal application for my life. **(Rom 12:1-3)**
  3. Notice how the immediate warning of pride in our thoughts is given.
  4. We need to constantly be looking ahead with the word of God. **(Prov 4:20-27)**
- B. We must win the battle over fear.
1. Fear can change reality. You can easily create an image of another person or even an entire church! **(1 Sam 22:8)**
  2. Fear can be easily shared. How many have died because of shared panic of a crowd **(Num 13:30-14:9)**
  3. Fearful people do not want to see the truth. It is not uncommon for fearful people to be surrounded by "yes" men (or women).
    - a. When we are convinced that we cannot face a certain consequence then in our minds we will not! I have seen this in home studies. **(Lk 10:29)**
    - b. Fearful people do not want open communication!
    - c. The Lord will test our faith by our fears. Surround yourself with men of faith!

C. We must win the battle over anger and bitterness. **(Heb 12:14-15)**

1. Cled Wallace wrote this about bitterness and church conflict:  
 "Every observer of church troubles has noted conflicting reports of what actually happened by men who were considered reliable in matters where their personal feelings were not so deeply stirred. A truthful man can earn a reputation for being a consummate liar in a short time in the middle of a church fuss. And too often the reputation is deserved." – "Bitterness, A Form of Religious Insanity"
2. The terrible thing about bitterness is that it is very difficult to let go of. It will in time eat you up from the inside out. **(Gal 5:19-21)**
3. It is important for every member here to let go of your desire for vengeance and give it to God. Let it go and move on! **(Rom 12:17-21)**
4. When you do this, the bitter one who is attacking you with their words get to see 2 things: Your joy in the Lord, and more time to dwell on their own anger. **(Psa 23:4-5)**

**III. We must fully give our focus to the finish line of heaven**

- A. Do you think often about heaven and why you know you are going there?
  1. This is not just a good idea, it is essential! **(1 Pt 1:13; Rom 8:24-25)**
  2. How can I keep from losing heart? **(Gal 6:9; Eph 3:13)**
- B. What is before you and what is behind you?
  1. Judah had cast God and His word behind their backs. Future terror became a certainty. **(Ezk 23:32-35; Psa 50:17-23)**
  2. Jesus placed Satan and his thoughts behind His back. **(Lk 4:8; Mk 8:33)**
- C. God has fully equipped us to finish well. **(Heb 10:38-39)**

**Conclusion:** The resurrection of Jesus gives me complete assurance of the great finish that I am pressing ahead to find! **(1 Pt 1:3-8)**