

Determination

vs. Faintheartedness

Determination is looking at insurmountable obstacles as opportunities to cry out for God's supernatural intervention.

Definition

One Hebrew verb translated *determined* is *amar*, which means "to say in one's heart, to think, to command, to promise, to intend." Another Biblical term that helps define determination is the verb *purposed*. One Hebrew word for *purposed* is *yatsar*, meaning "to be predetermined." God used this word when He said, "I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isaiah 46:11).

Determination deals with a mind-set prior to a task, while endurance involves the completion of the task. Determination presupposes careful consideration of the cost and requirements of a task and a decision that the task is worth whatever expenses are necessary to achieve it.

Who Demonstrated Determination in Scripture?

- "Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the LORD, and an house for his kingdom" (II Chronicles 2:1).
- "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (Daniel 1:8).

- David determined to mourn over Abner's death with fasting until the evening. "When all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or aught else, till the sun be down" (II Samuel 3:35).
- The disciples "determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea" (Acts 11:29).
- Paul "determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2).

Why Is Determination Important?

Life consists of choices. If we make the right choices, we experience the blessings of God. If we make the wrong choices, we experience discipline, destruction, or even death. After wise choices are made, determination is needed to carry them out. Wise choices will often be challenged by difficulties and temptations.

Moses demonstrated determination when he chose to suffer affliction with the children of Israel rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin that last for only a season. On the other hand, Esau did not determine to protect his birthright and therefore sold it for a bowl of pottage. Years later, when he real-



Never give up!

"At first the task looks difficult, then it is impossible; then it is done." —J. Hudson Taylor

Reaching a goal requires more than skill—it requires determination. This means rejecting distractions, such as discouragement and doubt. Often, failure is due not to a lack of talent or ability but to a lack of persistence during difficult times.

"When God is about to do something great, He starts with a difficulty. When He is about to do something truly magnificent, he starts with an impossibility." —Armin Gesswein

Swimming against swift river currents and waterfalls, **king salmon** determine each year to travel hundreds of miles from the sea to their spawning grounds upstream.





Determination is purposing to exert as much energy as needed to reach a goal.

“‘I cannot’ on the tongue means mostly ‘I will not’ in the heart.” —Iran Panin

Determination is like a bomber pilot passing the point of no return, thereby cutting off the option of retreat.

“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” —Philippians 3:14

“To have failed once is not so much a pity as is to not try again.” —John Wanamaker

ized his mistake, he desperately sought to recover it, but was unable to, even after many tears. (See Hebrews 11:25, 12:16–17.)

How Do We Develop Determination?

We develop determination by recognizing the losses or gains resulting from a particular choice. Moses chose to suffer with the children of Israel. He recognized that “the reproach of Christ [brought] greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward” (Hebrews 11:26).

What Hinders Determination?

The fear of man is a strong hindrance to determination, because it does not allow us to decide with the Lord what is the best choice. Instead, we try to guess what other people think is right and what they will think of us if we make a different decision than they would. Fear brings torment (see I John 4:18), and this torment brings bondage. “The fear of man bringeth a snare” (Proverbs 29:25).

A double mind is another hindrance to determination. A double-

minded person is like a wave of the sea driven backward and forward with every passing wind. This makes determination impossible. “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8).

What Are We to Be Determined About?

1. Keeping vows

“When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands?” (Ecclesiastes 5:4–6).

2. Seeking the Lord with the whole heart

David was a man after God’s own heart. His determination to seek the face of the Lord was a constant motivation during his life. “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God” (Psalm 42:1). God promises a special reward for those who promise to seek Him with the whole heart. “Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart” (Psalm 119:2).

3. Maintaining a clear conscience

Paul charged Timothy to hold onto faith and a clear conscience, “which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck” (I Timothy 1:19). Regarding himself, Paul said, “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16).

Personal Evaluation

How determined are you?

- Do you determine to follow Christ, no matter what the cost?
- Do you have Biblical commitments that will direct your decisions in life?
- Do you commit to reach a goal and overcome any obstacles you encounter along the way?
- Do you have a motivating purpose in life?
- Do you persevere during tasks that are more difficult than what you expected?
- Do you allow problems or failures to keep you from trying again?