When you set out to accomplish God’s goals, the devil will do all he can to stop you from fulfilling God’s plans. Satan may use other people to discourage you. They may say you are “too young” or “not good enough.” Even well-meaning friends may not understand the value of your goals and say, “That’s a waste of time!” You may become disheartened when you overhear your sibling say that you are behind her in music or that you are a terrible speller. Even if you are not skilled at something now, you can practice and learn to do it better. When you are obeying God, know that He is on your side! Trust Him. God will give you grace to believe that “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13).
Determination Overview

What Is Determination?

Read aloud, study, and discuss what determination means and how it applies to life.

The operational definition of determination is “purposing to accomplish God’s goals in God’s time regardless of the opposition.” Determination is having the resolve to know God’s will, and the follow-through to do it, undeterred by competing desires, distractions, or resistance. This perseverance is not to be confused with insistence on our own way. God reveals His goals in His Word and through the Holy Spirit’s leading. When setting out to accomplish a goal, the determined Christian can expect challenges that will test his resolve and self-discipline. He looks for ways to overcome these obstacles and press on toward the goal. Breaking down large goals into achievable steps of action can keep him from being overwhelmed by a task. Sometimes God’s plan involves risk or loss, but the Lord is with His children through danger. Sacrifices will be small in comparison to the end reward.

The opposite of determination is faintheartedness. A fainthearted person may decide to do something; however, in response to the first distraction or hardship he encounters, he quickly forsakes his resolve. He readily abandons his course, succumbing to laziness, discouragement, or fear. Because he does not place sufficient value on the actual goal, he shifts to an easier alternative or quits altogether. He may start learning a musical instrument, memorizing a Bible chapter, or training for a race but fail to complete the endeavor. He lacks the inner strength to exert sufficient effort or make sacrifices necessary to finish. A common sign of faintheartedness is the use of phrases such as “It’s too hard,” “I would rather . . . ,” or “I don’t want to.” The fainthearted person may consider his own comfort or popularity to be more important than completion of the task God has given him.

Almost anything in life worth pursuing requires work. Exercising faith and exerting energy to develop your God-given talents will be well worth your time; you will be better equipped to serve God and others. Learning a skill demands steadfast effort and determination, and God will reward your faithfulness. When God calls you to a task, know that He will give you the grace to persevere, the strength to overcome difficulty, and the wisdom to find a way around obstacles. Listen to the Holy Spirit Who reminds you of God’s promises. Faith in God will keep you from being defeated by hardships or criticism. The Lord delights in your progress as well as your completion of the task. He will supply all that you need to achieve His goal. “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” (I Thessalonians 5:24).
Determination in Scripture

As you read and study God’s Word, see Who He is, and allow Him to work in you, your life will become a radiant expression of Him. God will be glorified as His character is seen in you.

The Character of God

We see examples of determination in God’s character in the following ways:

- God completes everything He purposes to do.
  (See Isaiah 46:11, 55:11.)
- God intends that the Church demonstrate the wisdom of His purpose.
  (See Ephesians 3:10–12.)
- Jesus will persevere until He has established righteousness in the earth.
  (See Isaiah 42:1–4.)
- Jesus, even as a young boy, made His Father’s business His first priority.
  (See Luke 2:49.)
- Jesus determined to obey the Father, despite great temptation.
  (See Luke 4:3–13, Hebrews 4:15.)
- Jesus resolved to go to Jerusalem to endure the cross.
  (See Luke 9:51, 18:31–33.)
- The Spirit of the Lord will prevail when enemy forces attack.
  (See Isaiah 59:19.)

DETERMINATION KEY VERSE

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness . . . .” II TIMOTHY 4:7–8

Determination in My Life

Now let’s examine some ways God wants us to live out determination daily.

- What can I remember about God when I encounter opposition?
  (See Psalm 118:5–7.)
- What is the key to pressing forward in spite of weariness?
  (See Isaiah 40:31, Galatians 6:9.)
- What should I remember when I’m tempted to insist on my way?
  (See Psalm 37:34, Luke 22:42.)
- What are God’s goals for me?
  (See Matthew 6:33, 22:37–39.)
- Am I relying on Christ for strength in all circumstances?
  (See Philippians 4:13.)
- As I live each day, how can I “run as a winner” in life’s race?
  (See I Corinthians 9:24–27.)
- What helps me resist immediate pleasures in order to gain long-term rewards?
  (See II Corinthians 4:17–18.)
Daniel lived a life that was fully dedicated to God. When the Babylonian army conquered Jerusalem around 600 B.C., Daniel and many others were taken captive. King Nebuchadnezzar selected certain captives, including Daniel, for training to serve in the royal courts of Babylon. When these young Jews were offered the king’s delicacies, Daniel determined to honor God by humbly requesting food that God’s Law permitted. After King Nebuchadnezzar died, his descendant Belshazzar ruled the empire. One day King Belshazzar held a pagan feast. He irreverently used the sacred golden vessels that had been seized from the Lord’s Temple. Suddenly, a hand from God appeared, writing words of judgment on the wall! The frightened king summoned Daniel, who explained the meaning of the strange writing. That night, the foreign King Darius invaded the city, killed Belshazzar, and took the throne. The new king chose 120 princes to rule over the massive kingdom. Over these 120 men he appointed three presidents, including Daniel, who governed the leaders. Would the other presidents and princes appreciate Daniel and his integrity? Who would attempt to intimidate Daniel? Would Daniel be discouraged from doing right, or despite opposition, would he maintain his resolve to be faithful to God?

Let’s read the Bible story in Daniel 6:1–28 and then discuss the following questions.

1. How did King Darius regard Daniel and why? (See Daniel 6:3.)
   What Christlike character encourages your authorities? (See I Timothy 4:12.)

2. Were the jealous men able to find fault with Daniel? Frustrated with his integrity, how did they try to ensnare him? (See Daniel 6:4–5.)
   Why might other people want to discourage or oppose you? (See James 3:16.) How should you respond? (See Psalm 37:1–9.)

3. What lie did the presidents and princes tell King Darius? Which president was not consulted? (See Daniel 6:6–7.)
   Have you ever been left out or misrepresented? Did you keep doing what is right anyway? (See Psalm 119:110.)

4. What did Daniel always do three times a day and why? (See Daniel 6:10, I Kings 8:28–30.)
   What daily disciplines do you purpose to do? What opposition might you encounter in keeping them?

5. What changes did Daniel make in response to the new law? (See Daniel 6:10.)
   Today, whom are you pleasing: God or others? Which one is more important? (See Galatians 1:10.)

6. Who noticed Daniel praying? What did they report to the king? How did the king respond? (See Daniel 6:11–14.)
   What should you do when others attack you for your commitment to God? (See I Peter 4:14–16.)

7. What had the king noticed about Daniel’s dedication to God? (See Daniel 6:16.)
   What would your parents say about your dedication to God?

8. When the king could not save Daniel, how did God show Himself faithful? (See Daniel 6:20–23, 28.)
   What enabled Daniel to overcome opposition? (See Hebrews 11:32–33.)
   What is the result of trusting in the Lord? (See Psalm 37:37–40.)
Memory Verse
II TIMOTHY 4:7–8

Play the game together to help the children commit II Timothy 4:7–8 to memory. In the section “Doers of the Word,” have the children record how they will apply the verse to their lives.

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness . . . .”

II TIMOTHY 4:7–8

MEMORY VERSE GAME

Hot or Cold!
Choose a child to be “It.” Have the child close his eyes while the rest of the children agree on a spot to hide an object, such as an eraser or a water bottle. Tell him now to open his eyes and begin to search for the hidden object. The other children are to give him hints by saying the verse softly or loudly, depending on where he is in relation to the hidden object. As he looks for the hidden object, have the other children guide him to the object by saying the verse softly when he is far away from the object (cold) and loudly when he is closer to the object (hot). Give different children the opportunity to be It until the children have quoted the verse often enough to memorize it.

DOERS OF THE WORD
In the blank below, write how this verse could be applied in your life, e.g., “recall why I am doing a task when it gets hard,” “quote Scripture to fight temptation,” or “complete a project even though I feel like quitting.”

“Dear Lord, I yield to You and am willing to apply this verse. Help me to ________________
________________________________________
_____________________________________________. I ask that You would develop determination in my life. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

When the Lord gives you an opportunity to apply this verse, write it in your journal to later recall God’s working in your life.
Instructions

Enjoy meditating on and thinking about the words of the determination key verse and definition as you fill in the crossword puzzle below. *Italicized* words fit horizontally and *underlined* words fit vertically. One word is already done for you. *(Answers may be found on page 12.)*

II Timothy 4:7–8

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith; *Henceforth* there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness . . . .”

**Determination**

*Purposing to accomplish God’s goals in God’s time regardless of the opposition*
Activity
RIGHT ON TRACK

Introduction
During this character study we are asking the Lord to develop determination in our lives. What a privilege to respond to the work He is doing to change us into the image of His Son! Today we are going to practice staying on track despite obstacles and distractions that could lead us to veer off course.

Supplies:
- Sidewalk chalk if playing outdoors
- Masking tape if playing indoors
- Shoes are required for this game (whether indoors or outdoors) so that the tape under your feet cannot be felt.

Instructions
You may each draw a long line for others to walk on. You may draw loops to follow or dashes to jump over. You may place a couple of objects as obstacles or distractions on your line. The goal is for someone else to walk on your line from beginning to end without getting sidetracked. Will everyone be able to stay the course while walking on the lines?

Each person will have several turns to walk on the lines made by the others. Each time, everyone will walk a different way. For example: (Read aloud instructions 1, 2, and 3.) After everyone attempts one of the actions from the list I just read, we will ask: “Does this action help me stay the course? Why or why not?” Then we will read and answer another (unbolded) question that relates this action to staying on course throughout our lives.

1. Look at the line and not at anything else.
   What happens when you focus on your task and ignore other interesting things?

2. Walk with your eyes closed.
   What happens when you close your eyes when you are supposed to be working on your writing assignment?

3. Look upward while you walk.
   What happens when you gaze out the window when you are supposed to be cleaning your room?

4. Encounter an obstacle, such as a chair, on the path.
   What should you do when you encounter an obstacle during your day, such as losing your pencil or misplacing your books?

5. Foresee possible problems, such as a branch falling on the line.
   When anticipating a problem, do you trust that God will make a way when the time comes?

6. Hop on one foot along the entire line.
   How can you finish a task even if you don’t have all the help or supplies you need?

7. When the line is partly missing, figure out the next step.
   Instead of giving up if some instructions are unclear or steps are missing, what can you do?

8. Walk with a book balanced on your head.
   How can you handle precarious situations carefully so that a mission can be successfully accomplished?
In a Nutshell

2. Our sin separates us from God (Romans 3:23).
3. God sent His Son, Jesus, to provide the way for our sins to be forgiven and for fellowship with Him to be restored (Ephesians 1:6–7). Jesus accomplished our salvation through His crucifixion on the cross, His burial, and His glorious resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3–4).
4. We can do nothing to earn salvation. It is a free gift from God that we receive by faith (Ephesians 2:8–9).
5. We receive that gift of salvation by confessing with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9–10).

Christ Our Righteousness

You will need the following items: sticky notes, pen, and a white bed sheet.

The Bible tells us about God. He is the Creator of the universe and He is holy. God loves us and created us to have fellowship with Him. (See Revelation 4:11.)

Select a volunteer who would not mind standing to represent the sin of all people. Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Sin is anything we think, say, or do that breaks God’s Law. Can you name some examples of sin? As the children answer, write their examples on sticky notes and place them onto the volunteer’s clothing (e.g., speaking unkind words, stealing, disobeying, doing good with wrong motives).

Because we have all sinned, and God is holy, we are eternally separated from Him. However, because God loves us so much, He sent His Son, Jesus, Who died on the cross to pay for our sin and Who rose again to conquer death! Now we can have fellowship with God forever through Christ. (See John 17:3.) If we accept God’s gift of salvation, Christ’s blood cleanses us from sin, and His righteousness is put upon us! (See II Corinthians 5:21.)

Remove the sticky notes and wrap the white sheet around the volunteer to represent Jesus’ robe of righteousness. Isaiah 31:10 describes what has happened this way: “My soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness . . . .” In Romans 10:9–10, we are told how we can accept this gift: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Are you trusting in Jesus Christ for your salvation? If so, your sins are forgiven and Christ is living in you! Your new, inward identity is one of righteousness in God’s eyes. The more you realize that you are a new creature in Christ and walk in the Spirit, the more your outward actions will demonstrate Christ living in you. Just as the Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20, you can also say, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” God gives us eternal life—sweet constant fellowship in the Spirit with our Savior—and then His righteousness is seen in us for His glory. (See John 15:4–10.)
**Hymn History**

**“Hold the Fort”**

*Sing “Hold the Fort” and read about the soldiers’ determination that inspired the hymn writer, Philip P. Bliss.*

The Confederate cannons boomed, hurling heavy ammunition that exploded in thudding, fiery, noisy bursts. The Civil War battle of Allatoona Pass, Georgia, was brutal. Union soldiers despaired inside the fort atop the hill. They were completely surrounded! Within the strong stone walls, their fellow soldiers lay wounded and dying. Confederate soldiers barraged the fort, skillfully shooting with accuracy as their bullets hit their marks. Only a few wayward bullets whistled past the ears of disheartened Union soldiers.

On October 5, 1864, the Allatoona Pass fort was attacked by the Confederates. The fort held the prized treasure of 1.5 million food rations for the Union army. The Union soldiers guarding this precious resource were now out-fought. Once thinking they were secure, the men now had lost all hope of survival, much less victory. Soon the demand for surrender came. The weary Union soldiers looked at both the fallen and those barely standing. Hopelessness was evident on each face.

Wait! Approximately twenty miles away, a tiny white speck waved from another high hill. Every eye strained to see. Some peeked cautiously over the stone wall and some peered through peepholes. What was the signaled message?

“Hold the fort. I am coming. Sherman.”

The general was coming! Help was on the way! With renewed hope, the fort’s defenders sprang to their posts on the wall. Seven words had reenergized the men! Encouraged, they mustered strength and repelled the Confederates’ relentless attack for three more hours until General Sherman and reinforcements arrived.

Six years later, Major D. W. Whittle shared this true story with an attentive Sunday School audience. His enthralled listeners felt the distress of the surrounded Union soldiers and gasped when they heard about the signaled message. In the audience was hymn writer Philip P. Bliss.

Inspired by the story, Mr. Bliss wrote down words and music before retiring that evening. The next morning, he spoke in a YMCA meeting. Writing the chorus on a blackboard, Mr. Bliss led the attendees in singing the newly composed hymn that encouraged those facing difficulties and spiritual battles. With its stirring tune and words, the hymn instantly became popular and was soon a favorite song during the Moody-Sankey evangelistic campaigns in the United States and Great Britain.

Determination is “purposing to accomplish God’s goals in God’s time regardless of the opposition.” The hymn’s powerful message reminds us to faithfully serve the Lord because He is coming! Regardless of opposition, let us determine to do God’s will, knowing He is our present and future Hope. He is able to help us when we call to Him.
Hold the Fort

Philip P. Bliss (1838–1876)

1. Ho, my comrades, see the signal Waving in the sky!
2. See the mighty host advancing, Satan leading on;
3. See the glorious banner waving! Hear the trumpet blow;
4. Fierce and long the battle rages, But our help is near;

Reinforcements now appearing, Victory is nigh.
Mighty men around us falling, Courage almost gone!
In our Leader's name we triumph over every foe.
Onward comes our great Commander: Cheer, my comrades, cheer!

"Hold the fort, for I am coming," Jesus signals still;

Wave the answer back to heaven, "By Thy grace we will."
"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Daniel 6:10).
Crossword Puzzle Answer Key

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Hymn History Bibliography


Recommended Resources

- 2020 Biblical Character Illustrated Calendar
- Hymns for the Family CDs
  (“Hold the Fort” is sung to piano accompaniment on Volume 1.)
- The Power for True Success
- Understanding Spiritual Gifts
- Character Cards
- Character Cards Memory Game
- Character Sketches, Volumes I–III
- Achieving True Success
  - “How One Man Can Change History” DVD by David Rogers
  - “Strengthen My Hands” (message by David Gibbs Jr., available at embassymedia.com)
  - “How to Wage Spiritual Warfare” (message by Otto Koning, available at embassymedia.com)
  - “Ready, Aim, Fire” (message by Dwain Swanson, available at embassymedia.com)

To view these resources and many more, visit us at: store.iblp.org