

SERMON SERIES *from NEW YORK TIMES* BEST-SELLING AUTHOR  
——— ANDY ANDREWS ———

*The*  
TRAVELER'S GIFT



*Seven* DECISIONS THAT DETERMINE  
PERSONAL SUCCESS

by JAN *and* RICK LOY

SERMON

VII

THE PERSISTANT DECISION:

“I WILL PERSIST  
WITHOUT EXCEPTION”

*“Great leaders—great achievers—are rarely realistic by other people’s standards. Somehow, these successful people, often considered strange, pick their way through life ignoring or not hearing negative expectations and emotions. Consequently, they accomplish one great thing after another, never having heard what cannot be done. That is precisely why one should never tell a young person that something cannot be done. God may have been waiting centuries for someone ignorant enough of the impossible to do that very thing.”*

—Archangel Gabriel, in *The TRAVELER’S GIFT*

ADAPTED FROM *The TRAVELER’S GIFT*, by ANDY ANDREWS



“I PRESS ON TOWARD THE GOAL”  
PHILIPPIANS 3:8-16

*“I press on toward the goal for the prize  
of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”—vs. 14*

Paul’s life is testimony to what can happen when a person soberly embraces the relentless pursuit of knowing Christ. This is the most important pursuit in life, and the disciplines that enable growth and progress in this pursuit are the same disciplines that enable progress in any meaningful pursuit or calling in life. We learn from Paul what it means to “press on” to know Christ, and those insights can equip us to “press on” to accomplish all God has designed for us.

- I Press on Toward the Goal...
  - By Intentional Choice
  - By Disciplined Action
  - By Unyielding Persistence

PRESSING ON BY INTENTIONAL CHOICE:

- Paul’s heart, mind, and will were captured by the risen Christ.
  1. He was converted – Acts 9:1-9
  2. He was called – Acts 9:15-16

3. He was compelled to preach – Acts:20-22; I Corinthians 9:16
  - a) Compelled by gratitude for God’s forgiveness
  - b) Compelled by the majesty of Christ
  - c) Compelled by the love of God in Christ for all men
- Paul chose to focus his heart, mind, and will on his calling – Philippians 3:8-16
  1. He was clear on his purpose in the Kingdom.
  2. He was committed to knowing Christ more fully.

Supporting texts: Acts 20:24, 21:13; 26:19, Romans 1:14-17;  
I Corinthians 2:2-5; 15:1-11

- Practical application for our lives:
  1. We are all called to Christ, and when we accept that call, we are given abilities and assignments to accomplish for Him – I Peter 2:9
  2. What is your calling, vision, mission, or assignment from God?
  3. All growth and progress is intentional. How intentional are you about accomplishing what God has called you to do?

*“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”* —Martin Luther King, Jr.

4. What is the next step forward in accomplishing your calling or vision?

*“Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races one after another.”*  
—Walter Elliott, *The Spiritual Life*

5. What is keeping you from forward progress?

*“Battles are fought in our minds every day. When we begin to feel the battle is just too difficult and want to give up, we must choose to resist negative thoughts and be determined to rise above our problems. We must decide that we’re not going to quit. When we’re bombarded with doubts and fears, we must take a stand and say: ‘I’ll never give up! God’s on my side. He loves me, and He’s helping me! I’m going to make it!’”*  
—Joyce Meyer

- Pressing on by Disciplined Action

## THE DISCIPLINES REQUIRED FOR FULFILLING THE CALLING/VISION – ACTS 26:19

1. Discipline of the mind – Romans 12:1-2; II Corinthians 10:3-5
  - a) A clear picture of what you are about – I Corinthians 1:22-24, 2:1-2
  - b) Forgetting yesterday; focusing on now – Philippians 3:13
  - c) A faith-filled view of reality and adversity – II Corinthians 4:6-12
  - d) Wise response to feelings, emotions, and circumstances  
– II Corinthians 1:3-11
  - e) Focus on the truly important – Philippians 3:13  
“...one thing I do...”
2. Discipline of the body – I Corinthians 9:27
  - a) Appetites of all kinds – I Corinthians 8:13; I Thessalonians 4:1-8
  - b) Affections of all kinds – Galatians 5:22-24
3. Discipline to act now and continue – Philippians 3:14
  - a) Acts 13:44-52; 16:9-10; 17:1-2; 17:22; 21:13-14
  - b) Matthew 25:26-28 – Intelligent action is an honor to God;  
slothfulness is dishonoring to Him

Supporting texts: I Corinthians 3:5-9, 4:1-2; II Corinthians 4:5-7; 5:9-11, 5:20-21;  
Galatians 1:15-17; Ephesians 5:15-21; Philippians 3:8-11; I Thessalonians 2:5-12;  
—I Timothy 1:12-17; II Timothy 1:8-14

- Practical application for our lives:

1. What issues—if any—from the past (positive or negative) are hindering your efforts today to accomplish your assignment?

*“You history is not your destiny.”* —Unknown

*“No one can go back and make a new start, my friend, but anyone can start today and make a new end.”* —John Maxwell

2. In what ways do you discipline your emotions and feelings so that they do not hinder your daily progress?

3. In rank order, what are the most important parts of your calling/assignment? Are you focusing on those, or on peripheral matters?

*“You have to decide what your highest priorities are and have the courage—pleasantly, smilingly, nonapologetically—to say ‘no’ to other things. And the way you do that is by having a bigger ‘yes’ burning inside. The enemy of the ‘best’ is often the ‘good.’” — Stephen Covey*

4. What is your plan for daily progress?

*“Our grand business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.” —Thomas Carlyle*

5. What specific actions are you self-accountable to complete today?

*“The chief condition on which life, health, and vigor depend on is action. It is by action that an organism develops its faculties, increases its energy, and attains the fulfillment of its destiny.” —Colin Powell*

- Pressing on by Unyielding Persistence – II Timothy 4:6-8
- Paul’s persistence was fueled by his passion for Christ – Philippians 1:21-26
- Paul’s persistence resulted in many coming to Christ
- Paul’s persistence created the joy of his confession – “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith” – II Timothy 4:7
- Practical application for our lives:

1. Is your passion for your calling/assignment sufficient to take you into persistent action?

*“Do not wait; the time will never be “just right.” Start where you stand, and work with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along.” —George Herbert*

2. What might be the positive outcomes of your having fulfilled your calling/assignment?

*“I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.”  
—Helen Keller*

3. How do you want your life to be assessed in terms of fulfilling your calling?

“Well done, good and faithful servant.” Matthew 25:23

CONCLUSION: In relationship to Christ and in our life calling/assignment, we have the privilege and thus the responsibility to choose to engage, discipline ourselves for action marked by excellence, and persist with joy until our course is run and our purposes fulfilled.

