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FOCUSED ON THE WORD

Four Pillars of Paul's Perseverance



As an elected leader, every day you grapple with monumental issues, work long hours, and do your best to make good decisions to benefit your state and nation. You have a difficult job. But overall, Paul had it much worse than you do. On his numerous sorties to start churches, he didn't get to fly around from place to place in a comfortable airplane and have food handed to him by attendants. He was shipwrecked, imprisoned, mocked, beaten with rods, stoned, betrayed, deprived of food, sleep, and shelter, yet he persevered.

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

White House Cabinet and Governors: Wednesdays 8am (EST), light breakfast served

Senate Members: Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served

House Members: Thursdays 8am, Natural Resources, Longworth 1334, hot breakfast served

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The views expressed in each Bible Study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study sponsor.



PUBLIC SERVANT
ENDORSEMENT

Steve Daines

U.S. Senator, Montana



“What distinguishes Capitol Ministries is its unwavering commitment to Scripture. Every study is a deep dive into God’s Word. It’s structured, intentional, and rooted in biblical truth.”

Four Pillars of Paul’s Perseverance

Read on as we attempt to peer into Paul’s mind on how to overcome adversities. You’re bound to find it fascinating, thought-provoking, quite helpful and, as we at CapMin pray, also encouraging for you.

Every believer is called by Christ to a purpose, and for you, it is to the political realm. Know what Paul knows, and you may see what looks like a series of defeats as part of His divine plan.

Read on, friend.

I. PERSEVERANCE RELATES TO ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The first pillar of Paul’s perseverance has to do with his clear sense of calling by God for the task at hand. Absent this, when the going gets tough, anyone will begin to doubt God’s will for his or her life. If the calling is settled beforehand, however, it never becomes a matter of internal questioning. Perseverance begins with clarity in the calling—acknowledging with confidence that God has you here for His purposes! This is His life assignment for you, not your own.

A. PAUL’S CONVERSION: ACTS 9:15

For Paul, conversion was perhaps an easier matter to resolve than for others because he was personally confronted by the second member of

the Trinity three times in the book of Acts. Notice his conversion in Acts 9 after Jesus physically blinded Paul (before his conversion his name was Saul) on the road to Damascus.

But the Lord said to him [Ananias], “Go, for he [Saul] is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.”

In this passage, Jesus sent a surrogate messenger to explain to Saul why he had previously been blinded by Jesus. This temporary blindness was an unmistakable event he’d never forget!

B. EVERY BELIEVER’S CONVERSION

For us today the situation is most likely different. Short of Jesus’ calling



you personally as in Acts 9:15, it is a matter of faith to believe what Paul says about God's perspective of your conversion—not in an experiential sense of physical blinding but rather in a theological sense of every believer's position in Christ! Jesus, Paul says, has personally called every believer! Note the following passages in this regard:

Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will (Ephesians 1:4–5).

C. THE BELIEVER'S CALLING

Ephesians 2:10, flowing from the kernel truths of Ephesians 1 above, drives home the personable aspects of, and the clarity of, every believer's calling in Christ:

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Accordingly, believers in office must know with confidence, based on what the Bible says, and have ensuing assurance that they won neither election nor appointment by chance, but by the sovereign act and will of God.

You must have confidence in these biblical truths and trust them to be true in order to have sustaining perseverance in office when the times get

tough. Look back on your calling; acknowledge your calling as it is stated clearly in these passages. For certain, Paul did that, and it was a pillar of his perseverance, his soldiering on during the tough times.

II. PERSEVERANCE RELATES TO ATTITUDE

The second pillar relates to the many descriptive words Paul uses to describe himself while in God's service. Each of the following points serves to reveal Paul's inner attitudes about himself. Each is rich with meaning, is quite descriptive of his self-perception, and provides insights into what compelled him and undergirded his forbearance in ministry.

A. BEING THE LEAST

In Ephesians 3:8, Paul reveals an attitude of compelling humility. He says he is *the very least of all saints* and that all he was enabled to do was related not to self but to God's *grace*. The same attitude is revealed with other words in 1 Timothy 1:15, wherein Paul states to his understudy Timothy that he, Paul, is the most undeserving of people:

It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

This attitude of personal humility, or lack of pride, is the basis of his ability to proclaim to the believers in the

VERSE OF THE WEEK



Galatians 1:10

For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.



Seek God's favor,
not man's, and the
opinions or criticism or
false charges of others will
not cause you to cower.



MINISTRY UPDATE

CapMin Training Conference: From Bogotá to the Nations



Most ministry conferences end with handshakes, hugs, and goodbyes. In Bogotá, the goodbyes marked the beginning.

As each participant boarded a flight home, the Gospel mandate of reaching those in authority was set to spread across Latin America—to Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, and Colombia. What had started as several days of biblical training was becoming something far greater: a growing movement of ministry leaders returning home with one purpose—to make disciples of Jesus Christ among those who govern their nations.

Like every Capitol Ministries training event, the Bogotá conference (July 21–25) was the culmination of months of prayer, planning, and teamwork.

“Seeing leaders from across Latin America gather with one purpose—to be equipped

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Four Pillars of Paul’s Perseverance

church of Galatia the following related inner attitude:

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Theologians refer to this as the “exchanged life.” Paul realized that nothing good dwells in his sinful self—that everything good that could possibly flow from his life is related to God’s living in him and doing things through him.

How this exchanged life relates to perseverance is this: if the believer in office is dead to self to start with, then for a time, nothing that goes bad along the way will kill him. Nothing from others nor from circumstances can deal him a death blow in his inner spirit because he is dead to self to begin with! He has already resolved that this is all about Christ, His glory, and what He is going to use him for in this place at this time.

As Galatians 2:20 shows, this is not about you and your attainment of personal significance. Oftentimes personal discouragement relates to our inability to achieve what we desire for ourselves. But notice in the following passages how Paul describes himself—and sees himself. Such attitudes reveal someone who is living not for self, but for the purposes of the One Who saved him!

B. BEING A PRISONER: EPHESIANS 3:1

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles.

The Greek word for *prisoner* (*desmios*) means “a person under custody.” Like being *the least of all the saints* and being *crucified with Christ*, Paul viewed himself in this particular passage as a *prisoner*, that is to say, someone who was under the custody of another. We will see this thought more fully developed in the next section, in which Paul refers to himself as a *bond-servant*. But notice Ephesians 3:2, where he states yet another insight into his understanding of self.

C. BEING A STEWARD: EPHESIANS 3:2

If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace which was given to me for you.

The Greek root word for *steward* (*oikonomia*) means “a household manager.” Paul saw himself as someone who had been given the responsibility of being a manager of God’s interests versus his self-interest.

D. BEING A SERVANT: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1–2

Yet one more insight into Paul’s evaluation of self is provided in his letter to the church at Corinth where he refers to himself as a *servant*. In Greek, the English word *servant* (*hyperetes*)



means “the servant of a magistrate.” States 1 Corinthians 4:1–2 in this regard:

Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

All these words taken together reveal a collage of Pauline self-perception insights, which are poignant perspectives as to what drove Paul. They are counter-intuitive to what the world propagates, i.e., the idea of being strong and prideful. These words show a meek and humble man through whom God’s power flowed in full measure. One commentator said, in effect, that the degree to which we are impotent is the same degree to which God’s omnipotence flows through us. Such is the testimony in these various passages as to the underlying attitudes that not only bred perseverance in Paul but also produce it in us!

III. PERSEVERANCE RELATES TO AUDIENCE

The third pillar of Pauline perseverance relates to how Paul viewed others. Empirical studies show that most people act according to how they think others will perceive their actions. If that is what motivates people from the get-go, they will inevitably lack courage and perseverance when others criticize them. Paul’s view of audience is different as the following passages show.

A. GOD IS MY AUDIENCE

In 1 Corinthians 4:3–4, the Bible student is provided with an insight into how Paul, in his grid of inner thinking, processed the criticism of others:

But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.

The views and opinions of others, Paul says, *is a very small thing*. Such a reaction to others is somewhat predictable, stemming from the previous points—how Paul viewed himself in the first place!

B. PEOPLE ARE NOT MY AUDIENCE

In Galatians 1:10 he states profoundly and even more dramatically why he possessed elephant skin.

For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

The Greek word for *bond-servant* is *doulas*. When used during the days of Paul, this word was a descriptor of “a state of being completely controlled by someone or something—subservient to or controlled by.” In the above passage its meaning is used in tandem with someone who has an “audience

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to reach government leaders with the Gospel—made every effort worthwhile,” said Brian Solomon, one of the conference teachers.

For many attendees, this was the first time they had encountered a biblical theology of missions focused specifically on government leaders. Studying “The Missing Mandate in Modern Missions” brought biblical clarity to convictions many had already begun to sense and helped them understand how Capitol Ministries fulfills a unique—and often overlooked—aspect of the Great Commission.

The impact was evident in the words of those returning home.

Oscar Muñoz of Bolivia wrote:

“Thank you to everyone at Capitol Ministries. May God’s will be done in every country, creating a nation that bows its knees before Your Majesty.”

Raul Ferreira of Brazil shared: “We are leaving with full hearts. We are very grateful to God for allowing us to share this time with you.”

These were more than expressions of gratitude. They reflected a shared conviction that God is raising up faithful laborers across Latin America to proclaim His Word to those entrusted with governing their nations.

One of the conference’s most moving moments came during the commissioning service. Ministry couples lowered their

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heads as Capitol Ministries pastors and trainers gathered around them, laying hands on them in prayer and dedicating them to the work ahead.

Alberty Reyes, who spent countless hours overseeing the conference's technology and production, summarized what many experienced throughout the week:



"The recent Capitol Ministries training in Bogotá was an exceptional success, marked by high engagement and deep immersion into our missiology."

Perhaps no testimony carried greater weight than that of the ministry couple from Venezuela. After years of political turmoil and national hardship, they returned home convinced that God is opening a fresh opportunity to reach their nation's government leaders with His Word. Before they departed, the entire group surrounded them in prayer, asking the Lord to bless and establish this new ministry.

For Regional Director Oscar

Continued on next page

of one." People who are persevering are seeking God's favor, not man's, and, therefore, the opinions or criticism or false charges of others don't cause them to cower.

C. EXAMPLES IN OTHER BIBLICAL CHARACTERS

The word *doulas* is, in fact, used in other passages to describe other New Testament men of God.

1. Timothy's Audience: Philippians 1:1

Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.

2. Epaphras' Audience: Colossians 1:7

Just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf.

3. James' Audience: James 1:1

James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.

4. Peter's Audience: 2 Peter 1:1

Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind

as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

5. Jude's Audience: Jude 1

Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ.

6. John's Audience: Revelation 1:1

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John.

If all these Bible characters—who possessed perseverance—viewed themselves as *bond-servants*, if they possessed an audience of the One to Whom they belonged, whom they were *striving to please*, should we not also? Is such a key to perseverance?

IV. PERSEVERANCE RELATES TO GOD'S AGENDA

Paul reveals yet another theological perspective that impelled him—one that reveals his profound understanding of one of the sweeping themes of Scripture! God the Father desires to award God the Son with a gift for going to the cross. That gift is a pure and undefiled church, the saints of yesterday and today who have no wrinkle, spot, or blemish. The apostle's understanding of the scope of this truth



and his part in it was undoubtedly motivational to his personal holiness and perseverance in his mission.

A. THE BELIEVER'S JUDGMENT

Notice what he says about the believer's judgment in 2 Corinthians 5:10 and how that profound truth proves motivational to a life of being pleasing unto God.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

B. THE REWARDING OF THE BELIEVER

In fact, at the believer's future day of judgment, known as the Bema Seat Judgment, every believer will be rewarded based on his faithfulness.

Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:12–15).

Such truths should and do prove motivational to personal perseverance!

C. THE BELIEVER IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

The next three passages indicate that the believer is indeed the future bride of Christ.

1. 2 Corinthians 11:2

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

2. Ephesians 5:27

That He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

3. Revelation 19:7–8

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Understanding God's agenda underscores our need to get with the program—and stay with the program! In one sense believers are only pawns in God's great, sweeping plan!

V. SUMMARY

Paul possessed a multifaceted theological construct that created a passionate perseverance to achieve God's

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Zamora and his wife Elizabeth, the week was deeply personal.

“For Elizabeth and me, this has been the most precious and rewarding time of the year so far,” Oscar reflected.

The momentum did not end in Bogotá.

Immediately following the conference, Oscar and Elizabeth traveled to Lima, Peru, where on July 30 they attended the nation's official Thanksgiving Prayer Service alongside the newly inaugurated president, members of Congress, cabinet officials, local government leaders, and the U.S. ambassador. Those conversations opened significant doors to introduce Capitol Ministries' vision to influential leaders and strengthen the foundation for future ministry throughout Peru.

A conference lasts only a few days. Its influence, however, can shape nations for generations.

Because of your prayers and faithful support, biblical discipleship is no longer confined to one meeting room in Bogotá. It is now being carried into legislative chambers, city halls, and government offices across Latin America as newly equipped leaders faithfully proclaim the truth of God's Word to those who govern.



*Making Disciples
of Jesus Christ
in the Political Arena
Throughout the World*



Capitol Ministries® provides Bible studies, evangelism, and discipleship to political leaders.

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Four Pillars of Paul's Perseverance

purposes in and throughout his life! The degree to which you, public servant, who name the name of Christ understand the mind of Paul and his attitudes is the degree to which you can be empowered to stay the course

and soldier on—even in the most difficult of times. May God grant us these truths, applied to our hearts and habits, to become more like Him Who endured even the cross. Amen.

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