

## 2 Timothy 4:7 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, (*my course*) *KJV*, I have kept the faith.

Whether you are just starting to realize the will of God for your life or have been living on the path He has for you; this series will help you **Stay the Course**

Often, even if a person fully understands the will of God for their lives, it takes time mentally to adjust to what is revealed

The apostle Paul was one of the most unlikely candidates you could ever imagine being called into the ministry

- If God could use him, He can use you, and I

## Ephesians 1:4, 11 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup> just as **He** chose us **in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

<sup>11</sup> **In Him** also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the **purpose of Him** who works all things according to the counsel of **His will**

## Ephesians 2:10

<sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

God will always confirm what He tells you to do and give you further direction for the course of your life when you surrender to His call

Determination is one key factor in staying the course and finishing your race of faith

- God's power works in people who have a resolve
- It works proficiently through people who have decided to never turn back until the assignment is finished
- God delights in using people who are steadfast and unmoving in their conviction
- He takes pleasure in those who have stamina
- Tenacious and diehard in their commitment

You are the only one who can make you quit!

*“To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.” (Colossians 1:29, NKJV)*

- God's Spirit will give you the power and the equipment you need to accomplish the job
- But the requirement for this power is to never drawback

Satan can't make us quit. That choice lies in our hands alone!

God expects you to do something with the gifts and talents He has given you

- Significance is not achieved by simply existing
- The Parable of the Talents – **Matthew 25:14-30**

*“True significance is achieved when you know that you used what God gave you and that you did what God asked you to do”*  
– Rick Renner

God is calling you to a higher place

- God is speaking to you
- He is beckoning you to move out of your comfort zone

No sin, no flaw, no problem is so big that God cannot overcome it and lay His hand on your life in a big way!

- Change and transition are a part of life
- God is constantly calling us upward to a higher level of commitment and professionalism
- Go to the cross, deal with your flesh, and start your ascent to greatness!

Gideon thought God had the wrong man

*“Gideon said to Him, “O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.””*

*“So he said to Him, “O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.”” (Judges 6:13, 15 NKJV)*

- Is there an area in life that you are using as an excuse to not be used for something great?
- What if Jesus came right now and asked you to give an account of what you did with your life?

From Genesis to Revelation, God promises to protect you from all of the plots and plans of the enemy

- This doesn't mean the enemy won't try to attack
- Or that you won't face unfortunate events
- God promises to be our Divine Protector

*“You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah”*  
(Psalm 32:7, NKJV)

*“The name of the LORD is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.”* (Proverbs 18:10, NKJV)

*“But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head.”* (Psalm 3:3, NKJV)

*“As the mountains surround Jerusalem, So the LORD surrounds His people From this time forth and forever.”*  
(Psalm 125:2, NKJV)

*““The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.” ”*  
(Numbers 6:24–26, NKJV)

## Don't Let the Enemy Scare You Out of God's Will

When the Apostle Paul first went to Corinth the devil was attempting to abort what was happening there

- The Lord brought a clear word to him

*“Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”” (Acts 18:9–10, NKJV)*

- Being in the center of God's Will doesn't mean you will escape all trouble
- The devil will do his best to knock you off track

However, being in the center of God's will does provide you with divine protection in the midst of troubling situations

- God will surround you with protection and favor to keep you safe as you navigate the storm
- *“Do not be afraid”, “I am with you.”*
- Very similar to what the Lord spoke to Joshua as he was about to lead Israel into the Promised Land

*“No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you.”*

*“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”*” (Joshua 1:5,9, NKJV)

- When you are in the perfect will of God
- In the right place, doing the right thing
- You are assured as abiding sense of God’s presence
- God promised it to Joshua and the apostle Paul
- And he promises it to you and I as well
- He is the same yesterday, today, and forever
  - **Hebrews 13:8**
- He shows personal favoritism to no one – **Romans 2:11**

When we veer from the God ordained path for our lives, it can be a lonely, vulnerable place

- You will experience less protection from the enemy
- His hand will always be upon you because you are in Christ

But if we chose to go in a different direction from God we are giving the enemy unnecessary access to our lives

- Placing ourselves in jeopardy on many levels
- Stay on track in the Perfect Will of God!

That’s why we must be determined to stay in the middle of God’s will for our lives

- In the place of obedience
- You will have a rock-solid assurance that He will cover you!

*“Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; The LORD is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, Nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in From this time forth, and even forevermore.”*

**(Psalm 121:4–8, NKJV)**

When you’re tempted to leave your present situation, you need to stop and ask yourself some soul-searching questions

- Have I finished the job God gave me to do?
- Have I completed every part of my divine assignment in this place?
- What will happen to the work if I leave now?
- Will souls be missed for eternity?
- Can I leave with a clear conscience, knowing in my heart that my job is complete?

There may be times when you want to flee the place God has called you to

- Be determined to quiet yourself and hear God clearly
- He will give you a clear, reassuring word of encouragement
- If fear or pressure are in the picture the Lord is not behind it
- Its most likely the enemy pressuring you to quit prematurely
- The devil tries to manipulate us through fear
- God motivates us through FAITH!

*“When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, saying, “This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.”” (Acts 18:12–13, NKJV)*

- Here we see that Paul is having problems with the Jews who would not receive the message of Christ
- They instigated an insurrection stirring up a huge crowd to come against Paul with the intent to assault him and harm him

Motivated by anger, jealousy, and lack of understanding, these unbelieving Jews carried Paul to the judgment seat of Gallio, the Governor

- His place of rule was at the very center of Corinth

*“And when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such matters.” And he drove them from the judgment seat.” (Acts 18:14–16, NKJV)*

Remember God had spoken to Paul, *“I am with you, and no none will attack you or hurt you...”* – **Verse 10**

- Paul had been beaten many times for preaching the message of the cross
- This time, Paul experienced divine protection like never before

*“Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things.” (Acts 18:17, NKJV)*

- Gallio shut his eyes and let the Greeks beat the new ruler of the synagogue
- He was the very person who led the insurrection against Paul
- This is revealing a spiritual law in operation

*“Whoever causes the upright to go astray in an evil way, He himself will fall into his own pit; But the blameless will inherit good.” (Proverbs 28:10, NKJV)*

- Sosthenes eventually becomes a believer and traveling companion of Paul – **1 Corinthians 1:1**
- People that sometimes seem to oppose us can become our partners in the future
- God can work miracles even in the hardest of hearts
- Never underestimate the power of God’s grace to change a person’s life

*“When a man’s ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.” (Proverbs 16:7, NKJV)*

- Stay on track living for and pleasing God
- He will bring a great harvest through your life

On another occasion when the Jews tried to beat him

*“And he called for two centurions, saying, “Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night; and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring him safely to Felix the governor.”” (Acts 23:23–24, NKJV)*

- Once in Caesarea, Paul was held in a seaside palatial residence
- Some scholars say that this room overlooked the gorgeous manmade harbor that was world famous
- He likely had a marvelous view with a sea breeze
- From his room he could watch ships sailing in and out
- He would also have enjoyed watching the races in the city’s hippodrome just a short distance away
- He was supernaturally protected and blessed to live in the finest palace in Caesarea, while under assault

For two years he received this remarkable treatment

- This was not the normal treatment for a prisoner
- This was God’s favor and divine protection in demonstration, even in the midst of attack
- When the Jews finally attempted to bring charges
- Felix gave the order for Paul to be protected by a centurion
- His friends provided for him materially, with no restrictions and were even able to visit – **Acts 24:23**
- Felix expected some money from Paul – **Acts 24:26**
- That’s blessed!

This was the pattern in Paul's later years of ministry

Divine favor, provision, and protection even in the midst of bad situations was evident

Quite different from his early experiences in ministry to the Jews rather than the Gentiles to which he was called

*“Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him,” (Acts 28:30, NKJV)*

- Even though Paul was eventually beheaded he continued to live in a way that was not normal for a Roman prisoner
- Normally execution would have been crucifixion or burning at the stake

Stay Put Where God Has Placed You

*“For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.” (Psalm 27:5–6, NKJV)*

- God promises to never leave or abandon you  
– **Hebrews 13:5**
- He only asks us to stay put where he has called us
- Refuse to give up or give in to every scare tactic of the enemy
- Stand where He has planted you and refuse to budge

## Learn to See Every Crisis as a New Opportunity

Two of Paul's companions in Corinth were Aquila and Priscilla

- In **Acts 18** it says that they were forced to leave their home in Italy
- They were Jewish yet Christian

They were ejected by imperial Roman decree because of riots in Rome between Jews and Christians over Jesus

- Imagine – having lost everything
- Their home, their material possessions, their finances, and their familiar relationships
- It hadn't been in their plans to move to Corinth
- A brand new culture with new rules, new challenges, new faces, and very few Jews

Because their faith was Christian not Jewish they would have had a tainted name among the Jews in Corinth

They were outcasts as members of a suspect religious cult (Christianity) who had lost all of their rights in the eyes of the Roman Government

- Circumstances were against them
- Culture was against them
- The opinion of their Jewish peers was against them
- They had no money, no home, they needed a place to live
- Yet they helped start one of the greatest churches in the New Testament

*“Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure, ’” (Isaiah 46:10, NKJV)*

- God is always working on our behalf
- He is always helping us fulfill His plan and purpose for our lives
- The enemy may throw obstacles, BUT GOD will turn it around for good – **Romans 8:28, Genesis 50:20**

When Aquila and Priscilla arrived in Corinth (the right place) they found provision, purpose, favor, and divine connections

- It didn't matter how many strikes they had against them
- They had landed in the place God wanted them to be
- They stepped into a new season, right in the center of God's will
- Their crisis became a major opportunity for God to manifest His glory through their lives

***Share the forced move from Traverse City to Ionia***

All of us alive at the present time find ourselves in a challenging moment in history

- Some see it as a time of darkness and crisis
- We need to allow God to change the way we think
- We will realize that it is also a time of great opportunity

I believe that God is calling us to learn how to make this crisis moment in God's timeline into a great opportunity

*“Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you.”*

**(Isaiah 60:1–2, NKJV)**

At precisely the right moment of crisis, the Lord will rise upon us and His Glory shall be seen upon us as never before

*“The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising. “Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; Your sons shall come from afar, And your daughters shall be nursed at your side. Then you shall see and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy; Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.”*

**(Isaiah 60:3–5, NKJV)**

- We are going to see a revival that will cause all revivals to pale in comparison
- This will be the last great move of God!
- Jesus taught that the world would experience “*birth pangs*” like a woman about to have a baby
- Earthquakes, wars, rumors of wars, pestilence, nation rising against nation
- Paul confirms this in **Romans 8:20-22**
- The earth is groaning and travailing in pain for her final deliverance

*Morals are snowballing in a downward direction*

*World leaders are scrambling to avoid a total collapse of the world financial markets, while predictions increase every day that such a crisis is just around the corner*

*The volatile political scene in the Middle East seems to become more and more unstable from day to day*

*Television has become a weapon for progressive liberals to attack nearly every principle of Christianity, with blasphemy and disrespect blatantly broadcasted over the airwaves on a continual basis*

Rather than hide in fear this is a time for us to use these times as opportunities to reveal Jesus Christ to the lost world

- Time to step out of our wine vats
- We have hope and joy the world doesn't have
- We have knowledge about our future based on God's word the world cannot know
- We need to seize every opportunity to tell people the message of Jesus
- Every crisis is an opportunity for greatness!

*“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;” (1 Peter 3:15, NKJV)*