

## **Persevering and Producing**

### **By David Feddes**

Some people who hear the gospel and make a decision for Christ continue all the way to the end of their lives in faithfulness to the Lord. But there are others who hear the gospel and at first get excited about it and make a decision, but then later on stop walking with the Lord, stop going to church, perhaps stop believing altogether.

There are different kinds of response to the gospel and different ways that people throughout their lives either stick with it or do not stick with walking with Jesus.

In these different results, there are some people who simply ignore or reject the word right up front. They never do claim to believe it, but instead, after they hear the gospel, they simply reject it, refuse it, and go on with their lives.

There are others, though, who receive the word and they are excited about it. They are happy. They feel wonderful about what they have just heard, and they make a commitment. They make a decision. But then when circumstances change or their life gets difficult, their faith shrivels up and they stop walking with Christ. They stop believing.

There are others who hear the word, but they do not mature in their faith because they have got so much else going on in their life. The things they worry about, the things they enjoy, and those things seem to choke out the effect of the word that they initially had responded to.

And then, of course, there are those who hear the word and understand and grow and grow and grow in maturity and produce a lot of fruit in their lives.

Jesus told a story about those four different kinds of results. He compared them to four different kinds of soil. He was telling his disciples, and all of us, right up front that you should not always expect the word of God to produce the result that you were hoping for. There are going to be some who reject, some who get excited and then turn away from it, some who get all occupied with everything else, and then there are those in whom the word really produces the result of salvation and growth.

### **Can someone be saved but then be lost?**

All of this raises the question, can someone be saved but then be lost? Can you receive salvation and then lose it again? Let us try to think about that, and then we will return to Jesus' parable of the four soils. First, then, this question, can someone be saved but then be lost?

According to Jesus Christ himself, a true believer cannot be lost. Eternal life cannot die away. Consider these words of Jesus: "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should **lose nothing of all that he has given me**, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him should have **eternal life**, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:39–40).

How many does Jesus say will be lost of those that the Father gives him? None. Zero. Nada. Nothing. If Jesus saves someone whom the Father has given to him, that person will be raised up at the last day, and that person will have eternal life.

Think about that phrase, eternal life. Does eternal life last for a day? Does eternal life last for two weeks? Does eternal life last until I get sick of it or wander away from it? No. Eternal life is eternal. It lasts forever. It never stops. If you have received eternal life by receiving Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit living in you, then you have an eternal life in you, and it cannot die away. It cannot be lost.

Jesus says, “I give them eternal life, and they shall **never perish**; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10:28–29). So you have the grip of Jesus himself. You have the grip of God the Father, and no one can perish if they are in the grip of God. “**Nothing will be able to separate us** from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:39). Eternal life is imperishable. We are inseparable from God if we have a genuine relationship with God at all.

### **Perseverance of the saints (eternal security)**

This teaching of Jesus, and the rest of Scripture, gives rise to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, also known as the doctrine of eternal security. Wayne Grudem states the doctrine this way: "All those who are truly born again will be kept by God’s power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives. Only those who persevere to the end have truly been born again." If you do not persevere to the end, it shows that you never were truly born again, because all those who are truly born again are kept by God and keep on going as Christians to the end of their lives. That is the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

Does the parable of the soils contradict the perseverance of the saints, or does it confirm it? Let us think about that. In looking at the parable of the soils, who is it that produces all of that good fruit? Jesus says, “But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and **understands** it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown” (Matthew 13:23). There are other soils representing other kinds of people. They hear the word and they have various kinds of responses to it, but they do not really understand it and take it to heart.

“But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop” (Luke 8:15). You see there again that the good soil stands for a noble and good heart, a heart that has truly been born again, a heart that beats with the life of God. Such a heart, by hearing the word, holds on to that word, understands it, and keeps on going, perseveres, and produces a crop.

Those other kinds of soils that did not persevere, and where the crop never reached maturity, were not good and noble hearts and were not truly understanding the word of God in the first place. This is what Jesus teaches about the hearts that receive the word of God, grow to maturity, and produce that wonderful crop.

## Why results differ

Now why are there different results? Why do some receive the word and persevere and produce a crop and others not? Jesus explains in the very same passage where he gives us the parable of the four soils and the parable of the sower. He says to his disciples, “**To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.** For whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or **understand**” (Matthew 13:11–13).

Some people are given to know the kingdom of heaven. Others are not given to know it, and they do not understand. Jesus says one reason he speaks in parables is for the very purpose that some will hear what he is talking about but not grasp it. We sometimes think parables are easy-to-follow stories where the point is obvious, and that Jesus was really good at telling illustrations that everybody could understand. But what does Jesus himself say? He says he tells the parables so that some will not see, that they will not truly hear, and that they will not truly understand. That may be hard for us to swallow, but this is what Jesus says in all the Gospels where the parable of the soils is given.

Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will... no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. (Matthew 11:25-27)

Jesus says elsewhere, “Many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14). The results differ because some are chosen and some are not. God the Father has hidden things from some and revealed them to others. Jesus reveals the things of the Father, the things of God, to some and not to others. This is why results differ, according to our Lord Jesus Christ.

## Four kinds of hearts

- **Hard hearts:** path
- **Shallow hearts:** rocky soil
- **Cluttered hearts:** thorny soil
- **Noble hearts:** good soil

Now, back to the parable of the four soils and the four kinds of hearts that are represented by those soils. First of all, there is soil that fell on the path, and that path was very hard. The seed never penetrated at all. It just lay on top, and birds came along and took it away. Jesus said that is like hearts that the word comes to, but then the devil comes right along and snatches the word away, and it never sinks in and has no impact on those hard hearts at all.

There are others where the word seems to produce an almost immediate effect. They are like rocky soil where there is a thin layer of soil on top of rocks, and because the seed goes in in such a shallow manner and is barely under the surface, it comes up right away. Jesus says that is like people who receive the word with joy and get excited right away, but their hearts are shallow.

Then a third kind of heart is the cluttered heart. This is illustrated by Jesus as thorny soil where the seed does come up, but then thorns and weeds come up and choke the good plants. Jesus says that is like hearts that are cluttered, and the word is choked out by the cares, pleasures, and other things of life.

Then there is the noble heart, which Jesus illustrates with good soil that has been well prepared. It is deep and rich, and it is not full of rocks and weeds. In that soil, the word grows and matures and bears a wonderful crop. Let us think about each of those kinds of soil, keeping in mind the fact that true believers with noble and good hearts are those who persevere and produce.

### **Hard hearts**

“When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart” (Matthew 13:19). That is Jesus’ explanation of the hard path. This can happen in a whole variety of ways. Let us think about a few.

One way that hearts are hardened is through anti-Christian education and anti-Christian entertainment. More than 90 percent of people, including churchgoers, send their children to public schools. In those public schools, children are taught again and again and again to think about all of life without reference to the word of God, without reference to Jesus Christ. It becomes harder and harder when you are educated to think about everything without Christ for you to ever be receptive. The same thing can happen in the world of entertainment, where there are many forms of entertainment that are anti-good and full of wickedness. These things can harden the heart. We need to be aware of what happens to our own hearts with a constant bombardment of anti-Christian education and entertainment. That kind of hardening can keep the word from ever even beginning to have an impact.

There are others who are hardened by something that has happened to them. They are hardened by skepticism and cynicism. What are skepticism and cynicism? A teacher once asked a very ornery student, “What is the difference between skepticism and cynicism?” The student replied, “I do not know, and I do not care.” That was the correct answer. Skepticism means I do not know and I do not want to know. Cynicism means I do not care. I do not give a hoot. Everybody is up to no good. That can be a kind of hardness where we do not even want to believe in any kind of truth at all, and we do not want to care at all.

Unfortunately, you can also get a hard heart simply by years of church attendance and listening to the Bible without responding. The word of God and fellowship with the people of God always has an impact. It will either soften you and challenge you and move you toward Christ, or it will harden you and move you away from Christ. It never has zero impact. Some people have been hardened by years of being where the word of God is proclaimed and yet letting it bounce off and not responding at all. They hear the urgent call to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to receive him as Savior, but they put it off and put it off, and they get harder and harder. They hear the challenges of the Bible to change their life and to walk with Christ, but they ignore it and go on with business as usual. As that happens, the heart gets harder and harder and becomes less and less able to receive anything from outside it.

We need to be aware of these hard hearts. If we are leaders in the church, we need to watch our own hearts and also warn others against the things that harden one's heart. We can also be hardened by repeated stubbornness. The Bible says that a man who remains stubborn and stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed without remedy (Proverbs 29:1). Repeated stubbornness can keep hardening and hardening until there is no room to receive, and the devil snatches the word away.

### **Shallow hearts**

Then there are the shallow hearts. This is the one, says Jesus, the shallow soil where the seed sprang up right away. "This is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy. But he has no root in himself and lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away" (Matthew 13:20–21). "They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away" (Luke 8:13).

Some young people who consider themselves Christians and were very much involved in church go off to college for the first time, often to a secular college. While they are there, they find that a lot of smart people think it is really dumb to believe the Bible and to be a Christian. They begin to think, "Yeah, that is a little dumb." It soon turns out that their hearts were very shallow because at the first sign of heat, the seed shrivels up.

In our time, there is a strong emphasis on feel-good faith, on instant gratification, on your best life now, as one best-selling book titles it. Instantly feel better, and Jesus just makes you feel good. If that is the kind of faith that is taught, it is going to find a hearing in shallow hearts, and there will be churches that are packed with people. But do they have the kind of faith that will stand up under difficulty, under hardship in their life, under persecution from others? That is the big question.

Here is a statistic. Five percent of people who go forward at a big crusade rally, five percent of those who go forward and were not already part of a church, only one in twenty-five join a church and stay in a church. That is a telling statistic. Ninety-five percent of people who were not already involved in a church and who make that quick commitment do not stick with it. Maybe there was something amiss with the kind of emotional pressures that were put on people to go forward at those evangelistic rallies in the first place.

Here is another statistic related to young people. There are different ways people talk about these numbers, but currently it is said that seventy percent of young people leave their church by the age of twenty-two and about eighty percent by age thirty. Is it possible that our churches have been doing things that appeal only to the shallow heart but never really cultivate greater depth? These shallow hearts can lead to huge losses. What is a megachurch at one moment, appealing to all sorts of wishes and the desire to feel good, can be a halfway house into unbelief. We need to go deeper. We need deeper relationships.

A leadership magazine published a survey and research and said, "Though research is ongoing, it is already revealing a promising pattern. Youth involved in intergenerational relationships in church are showing promise for stronger faith in high school and beyond." The surveys were

showing that just going to youth group or just going to Sunday school actually reduced the likelihood of staying with the church unless young people developed close relationships with older Christians. Simply having Sunday school material designed to be cute and fun actually made it less likely for them to remain in the church. It is important, really important, to have deeper relationships, intergenerational relationships.

One thing was lacking very severely in that article. It said almost nothing about parents, discipling children at home, beginning with in-depth reading of the Bible every day, and seeking to cultivate deeper relationships with fellow believers and with the Lord Jesus Christ himself. We need a deeper gospel. We need to plant real seed, which is the word of God, the Scripture. We need to cultivate real depth, real conversion, not a quick shallow response. What is the use of chasing bigness in numbers if it does not last? That is short-lived. That is one of the crises the American church is facing right now. It managed to get churches really big, and then those really big churches are losing many people in the next generation. It may be that there is a shallow soil problem.

### **Cluttered hearts**

Then there are the cluttered hearts. Jesus says, “The worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful” (Matthew 13:22). “They are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature” (Luke 8:14). That is an interesting combination. The cares are the hardships of the world, the worries, the things that are hard for you. Riches, or the deceitfulness of riches, trick you into thinking things are going well. Then there are the pleasures of life. On the one hand, you can be wrapped up in worries. On the other hand, you can be wrapped up in having fun. Or you can be all of the above, chasing money because it promises to take away worries and help you have more fun. These, says Jesus, are cluttered hearts.

We need to beware of worries, hassles, arguments, and busyness. Sheer busyness can destroy the human heart. These days we have many things we can do. We can spend time with family, which is good if it is done with the glory of God in mind. We have televisions and toys. We have studies and school and more school and graduate school. We have the work of our jobs. We may have golf instead of God on Sundays. We have Facebook and many other ways to spend time in front of a screen. We have friends, money, shopping. You name it. There are many things to keep our minds off God and the things of God and to keep our minds bogged down in the cares, riches, and pleasures of life. Then we have no space to study and to live the gospel. A cluttered heart is a heart that needs to be born again.

### **Noble hearts**

And then there are the noble hearts. This is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty (Matthew 13:23). This is a life where the word of God has really taken root, and it overflows in the doing of good deeds to the glory of God, in the winning of others to Christ, and in positive fruit in a person’s family and relationships. “The seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart” (Luke 8:15). We may not be used to hearing it put quite that way, a noble and good heart, but if you are a Christian, even though you have an old fallen nature, you also have a

noble and good heart that has been planted in you by God. Your heart has been cultivated and made receptive to the word of God.

You understand the gospel when it comes to you. You see the terribleness of your sin and you reject that sin. You count the cost of following Christ. You count the cost of not following Christ too, and you embrace Christ as Lord and Savior. A good heart is a heart that has been made ready by the work of the Holy Spirit. It is also a heart where we are cooperating with the Holy Spirit in the preparation of the heart. "The seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart" (Luke 8:15).

### **Soil preparation**

As Jesus so often does, he tells a story that picks up on statements made in the Old Testament. "Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns" (Jeremiah 4:3). Unplowed ground is hard ground. It is ground like the hard path or like shallow soil.

Plowed ground has deep soil, and plowed ground is rid of thorns and weeds so that the good seed can grow up. "Break up your unplowed ground, for it is time to seek the Lord" (Hosea 10:12).

When we hear the parable of the four soils, we hear of God's sovereignty in salvation and the word of God coming, but we also hear that the ground of our hearts needs to be plowed and made into good soil. "Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit" (Ezekiel 18:31). If God's word only produces its intended fruit in a noble and good heart, then we need a new heart and a new spirit as a gift from God.

### **Persevering by God's power**

This comes only by the power of God. "According to his great mercy, **he has caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, **who by God's power are being guarded through faith** for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5). You see the relationship of perseverance to new birth. The Lord causes us to be born again, and those who are truly born again are guarded by his power through faith until the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

We have been chosen by Jesus Christ to bear fruit. "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last" (John 15:16). We persevere and we produce fruit because that is what we were chosen to do.

"The one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing" (James 1:25). This is a fruit bearer. He does not simply forget the word of God after he hears it. He perseveres. In persevering, he produces a crop of good works to the glory of God.

If you are not persevering and you are not producing, you were never truly born again. That is the upshot of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. If you are not persevering and

producing, you were never truly born again. If you are truly born again, you will persevere and produce.

“The one who endures to the end will be saved” (Matthew 24:13). It does not say, “You can have a quick temporary response to the gospel and this will get you in no matter what happens with the rest of your life.” It says, “The one who endures to the end will be saved.” “For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end” (Hebrews 3:14). “If we endure, we will also reign with him” (2 Timothy 2:12).

So we must endure. We are called and directed and empowered to persevere. “Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls” (Hebrews 10:35–39). Genuine faith does not shrink back and is never destroyed. We must have faith, and then the Lord preserves our souls.

There is an amazing balance in the Bible, and it seems like a paradox, but both things are true: God preserves, and we persevere. You could almost call it the doctrine of the *preservation* of the saints because of God’s almighty hand in keeping us faithful to himself to the end. But it must also be called the doctrine of the *perseverance* of the saints because we must keep going by God’s power.

The apostle Peter says, “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness... Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities, you will never fall” (2 Peter 1:3,10). God’s divine power that gives us everything we need for life and godliness. Peter goes on to urge people that we must supplement our faith with virtue, virtue with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with steadfastness, steadfastness with godliness, godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love (2 Peter 1:5–7). He says that if you practice these qualities, you will never fall. These qualities are yours because of what God’s divine power is doing in you.

So you see, God is doing it, and yet you are active in living out the life God has given you. Paul says in Philippians 2, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). You have to work it out. You have to live it out. At the same time, you are not doing that on your own, “for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). You have to will. You have to decide. You have to choose. You have to make a decision. You have to commit. You have to work. You have to do good deeds. You have to serve the Lord. You have to will and work. But as you are doing that, it is God who is working in you. It is not only your own will and your own work, but God doing it all through you.

God is preserving and working in us, and at the same time we are persevering and practicing the qualities of godliness that he plants in us. In that way, the good and noble heart, transformed by Jesus Christ and born again through faith in Christ, perseveres and bears fruit to God’s glory and to everlasting life.

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**Different Results**

- Ignoring or rejecting the Word
- Immediate joy in receiving the Word, but shriveling when the heat is on.
- Hearing but not maturing because the Word is choked by cares and pleasures
- Hearing, understanding, growing to maturity, and producing fruit.

***Can someone be saved but then be lost?***

**A true believer cannot be lost. Eternal life cannot die away.**

“And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should **lose nothing of all that he has given me**, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have **eternal life**, and I will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:39-40)

**Imperishable, inseparable**

“I give them eternal life, and they will **never perish**, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.” (John 10:26-30)

**Nothing will be able to separate us** from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

**Perseverance of the saints (eternal security)**

All those who are truly born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives. Only those who persevere to the end have truly been born again. (Wayne Grudem)

***Does the parable of the soils contradict perseverance of the saints, or confirm it?***

**A reborn heart understands, perseveres, and produces**

As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and **understands** it. (Matthew 13:23)

But the seed on good soil stands for those with **a noble and good heart**, who hear the word, retain it, and **by persevering produce a crop**. (Luke 8:15)

## Why results differ

**To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.** For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, **nor do they understand.** (Matt 13:11-13)

I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will... no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. (Matthew 11:25-27)

Many are called, but few are chosen. (22:14)

## Four kinds of hearts

- **Hard hearts:** path
- **Shallow hearts:** rocky soil
- **Cluttered hearts:** thorny soil
- **Noble hearts:** good soil

## Hard hearts

*When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. (Matt 13:19)*

- Hardened by anti-Christian education and entertainment
- Hardened by skepticism and cynicism
- Hardened by years of church and Bible
- Hardened by repeated stubbornness

## Shallow hearts

*This is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. (Matt 13:20-21) ...they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away” (Luke 8:13)*

- Feel-good faith, instant gratification
- 5% of crusade converts join & stay in church
- 70% leave church by age 22; 80% by age 30

## Going deeper

**Deeper relationships:** "Though research is ongoing, it is already revealing a promising pattern: youth involved in intergenerational relationships in church are showing promise for stronger faith in high school and beyond." (*Leadership*, Sept. 2009) Yet the article neglects parents and home discipleship.

**Deeper gospel:** Plant real seed (Scripture), and cultivate depth (real conversion). Why chase big (but short-lived) numbers in shallow soil?

## Cluttered hearts

*The cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. (Matt 13:22)*

*...choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life (Luke 8:14)*

- Worries, hassles, arguments, busyness
- Family, TV, toys, studies, job, golf Facebook, friends, finances, shopping
- No space to study and live the gospel

## Noble hearts

*This is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty." (Matt 13:23)*

*The seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart (Luke 8:15).*

- Understands gospel and counts cost
- A good heart has been made ready

## Soil preparation

*The seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart. (Luke 8:15)*

Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns. (Jeremiah 4:3)

Break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord. (Hosea 10:12)

Rid yourselves of all offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. (Ezekiel 18:30-31)

## Given new birth, guarded by God

According to his great mercy, **he has caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and

unfading, kept in heaven for you, **who by God's power are being guarded through faith** for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-5)

### **Chosen to bear fruit**

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last (John 15:16).

But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. (James 1:25)

### **Persevering and producing**

*If you are not persevering and producing, you were never truly born again.*

But the one who endures to the end will be saved. (Matthew 10:22, 24:13)

For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. (Hebrews 3:14)

If we endure, we will also reign with him (1 Timothy 2:12).

### **Keep on keeping on**

Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised... But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. (Hebrews 10:35-39)

### **God preserves. We persevere.**

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness... Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. (2 Peter 1:3,10)

Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13)