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Here's Hope
By Rev. Jerry Rea

You Need Hope

Achieving victory is not easy. We all fall prey to the idea that if I'm just staying in church, or if my heart is sincere, or if I'm focused on following God, it will all come together. I think that's all true... within reason.

Sometimes we have to push through our frustrations. Success or reaching our goals doesn't just fall from heaven, even if the ideas (or vision) came straight from God. We have the idea that everything will be smooth. More often than not, getting where we're going requires we push through a whole lot of frustrations. How do we expect to get any victory without setbacks? Where did we get that expectation? Do you have frustrations? Push through them.

Sometimes we have to climb over obstacles. We can see where we're going. That is not the hard part. I have been schooled in the idea that if you have a vision, that's all that matters. Sometimes the things God is leading toward are beyond obvious obstacles. You can pray them out of the way; after all, sincere prayer removes mountains. Or, you can put on your climbing shoes and move up that mountain. The woods are full of people who can see the end. The people are few and far between who put on their shoes, roll up their sleeves, and get involved in climbing the mountain.

Sometimes reaching our desired end means we have to change our view of reality. Have you ever come to grips with the reality that not all people (even church people) are motivated by the right thing? Have you ever slammed up against the truth that many really don't care, no matter how much they claim to? Perhaps, God will give you eyes to see the truth that accomplishing a good thing sometimes requires you deal with some bad things. Very often we live in a fantasy world. We think our little corner of life is controllable. Then the idea dawns on us that there are so many, many things that are beyond our control.

Sometimes we have to wait. The thing you pray for and strive for is not going to happen today. You may have to wait in faith. I know that's a four-letter word: wait. An athlete does not expect to be an Olympian in his/her first year. In universities, we all come to realize that programs have to be built. Our children need to grow up a bit before we start expecting mature behavior. Here's an example. I have grandchildren who are just now learning to walk. They cannot read a book, no matter how many I put before them. At least, they can't read... yet. Learning to read is a process. Growing mature believers also takes time and is a process. In the New Testament there are passages that talk about "renewing our minds." That sounds like a process. Jesus compared preaching the gospel to sowing seed. All seed needs time to sprout, grow, and produce fruit.

Sometimes you have to find your keys. The key to success is often not lying near the door you'd like to open. It's almost funny. We put keys under a mat and expect crooks not to find them. In times past you'd hang a key on a nail above the door. Wow, that's clever. I'm sure no thief ever thought of that. In life there are definitely keys to success, to understanding, to progress, or to happiness. They are usually not just "under the mat." We have to find them, or be taught them, or "pray through" until we get them.

All along we need hope. While you're climbing that mountain you need hope to press up. Sometimes you need hope to press through the multitudes of frustrations. When reality hits you,

you often have to grasp a new reality. You might have to come to see things in a way you've never seen them before. In that process, you need hope. As you wait, you do best when you have hope.

I Pray for You Today

I Hope for You Today

Jerry Rea