

FAMILY FAITH BUILDER

Character Lessons for Practical Application of Faith Determination v. Faint-heartedness



Overcoming obstacles to reach my goal

Since the opposite of Determination is Faintheartedness, then Stoutheartedness would be a good synonym of Determination. The image of a stouthearted person conjures up someone hunkered down, prepared for battle, ready to do whatever it takes for what they believe in. A Determined person of faith will harness that brute force strength with God's wisdom to act with purpose and within appropriate boundaries. As people of faith, we can look deeper and see obstacles as opportunities to ask for God's help. It's an opportunity to look at the talents and skills He has given us so that we can use them to overcome the obstacle. Perhaps His intervention requires learning a new skill or applying something we already know in a new way. One way the Hebrews translated the word determined is *amar* which means "to say in one's heart". Determination deals with a mind-set or, as Christians, having your heart-set on a goal before you begin it. Determination requires lion-hearted courage when obstacles get in the way. There's nothing half-hearted about Determination!

To Practice Determination I Will:

- **Set goals.**
- **Make sure my goals are right.**
- **Ignore distractions.**
- **Not be discouraged by others.**
- **Face problems head on.**

Any others appropriate to your family?

This month let Determination motivate you to achieve something you have your heart-set on.

Moses Teaches Us about Determination

Moses was Determined to lead the Israelite slaves out of Egypt and into the promised land but Pharaoh was a difficult man to convince. When Moses needed help, he used the Pharaoh's stubbornness as an opportunity to call upon God for assistance. God responded by sending the plagues. Moses had to repeatedly call upon God for help and each time God sent help in the form of another plague - 10 times! Even after Pharaoh let the people go the Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his chariots and charioteers after them. What did Moses do? He called upon God and the Red Sea was parted. While in the dessert the Israelites grew restless and hungry. Again, what did Moses do? He called upon God and He sent manna to the dessert and water from rocks. In all of these cases, Moses had to have faith that God would answer his call. He had to have faith that the goal he had set was a Godly goal, worthy of his time and effort. Moses last lesson for us on Determination is you can't lose the faith. Moses' disobedience kept him from the ultimate fulfillment of his goal of seeing the Promised Land.



God's Word on Determination

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

Philippians 4:13

"Blessed are they that keep his testimonies and that seek him with the whole heart."

Psalms 119:2

"You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised."

Hebrews 10:36

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

James 1:8

"Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'"

Luke 9:62

The Heart of Moses Moses had his heart set on getting the Israelites out of Egypt. It is important that your goals be aligned with what God had put in your heart. In order for God to be in our hearts we must not harden our hearts. To demonstrate this, you will use 2 eggs. Hard boil one egg. Mark the raw egg with a cross. If we have hardened our heart to God's will, then the devil will be able to manipulate us to do his work. Spin the hard-boiled egg. The devil can spin us however he chooses. If we have kept our hearts open to doing God's will, then the devil can't make us do his work. Try to spin the raw egg. No matter how hard you try, the raw egg will not spin.

*"If only you would listen to him today; do not harden your hearts."
Hebrews 3:15*

POSTER IDEA:

Determination

Purposing to accomplish the right goals at the right time regardless of the opposition



**"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."
Philippians 4:13**

Do you see value in hardships?

Dear Jesus,

We praise you for your goodness and mercy and thank you for the example of Determination in your life. You drug that heavy cross all the way to Calvary. You got up after every fall even through you knew it would end in your death. Give us the strength to face our problems with the same courage and conviction. Guide us in the selection of our goals so that we are mindful of the ultimate goal of eternal life. Help us to avoid distractions and to not be discouraged if others do not have faith in us. Help us to act in all things in harmony with the will of the Father. Amen.

Other ways to teach character in the home:

- Display the character quality and definition in a prominent place such as on the refrigerator or let each child decorate it for their bedroom door.
- At the dinner table ask if anyone noticed anyone (not just family members) demonstrating the character quality (or not demonstrating it).
- Point out news stories where character was or was not involved.
- During car trips, challenge the kids by describing scenarios and having them identify if it describes being the quality or being the opposite.
- Praise with character by recognizing the character quality involved rather than the achievement.

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For more activities that can be adapted for family use, visit
www.charactercincinnati.org/quality_resource.php?q=determination