

## TENACIOUS!

### INTRODUCTION

As you already know, I am an avid cyclist. I surprise myself often as I look at what I am able to achieve on my bicycle. Of course, even when it comes to physical activity, anything I am able to do is a gift from God. I am unable to take one breath without His help.

Cycling is great fun, you learn to appreciate nature, and God's amazing creation as you ride through the countryside. You smell the smells, feel the wind on your face and enjoy the company of your riding companions. Some parts of cycling though are very difficult... the most difficult for me are the hills.

When cycling up a relatively steep 5km long hill, you learn a lot about yourself! Much goes on in your mind like...

- How long is this hill really? Is it never going to end? It's so hot?
- I'm not sure I can do this without stopping!
- I actually wouldn't mind a puncture right now!

But when we persevere, there's a great reward, we learn that we can actually do it, we can get to the top without stopping and resting or stopping and pushing, and yes, our heart won't just jump out of our chest!

The bible contains a number of scriptures regarding, persevering, completing the race, pushing through for the victory and the rewards of perseverance, and today I want to speak about some of these so that we can learn:

- The meaning of tenacity.
- Who needs to be tenacious?
- Perseverance is important to Jesus.
- Some things are worth fighting for.

### MESSAGE

#### THE MEANING OF TENACITY

What does it mean to be tenacious?

- Tending to keep a firm hold of something; clinging or adhering closely.
- Firm, tight, fast, clinging; more strong, forceful, powerful, **immovable**, persevering, persistent, determined, dogged, strong-willed, tireless, resolute, patient, unflagging, staunch, steadfast, untiring, unwavering, unswerving, unshakable, unyielding, insistent;

Sometimes when we deal with street vendors, or even beggars at traffic intersections, we see that they are tenacious, they stare at you, they try and put their wares through the window of the car, they hang around at your door

until you look away or pull away. They make you feel uncomfortable, and while we may not like it, they are willing to do what it takes to make a living

### **Jesus taught tenacity and perseverance.**

**Luke 11:5-11**(NLT) Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this story: "Suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, 6 'A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.' 7 And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, 'Don't bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can't help you.' 8 But I tell you this—though he won't do it for friendship's sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence.

- Are we willing to be this persistent?
- Have we stopped knocking?
- Are we receiving what we need? Or are we going without?

Are we willing to be tenacious about what we need? Are we willing to continue asking with shameless persistence?

### **What should we do when we feel like God is not listening to our prayers?**

**Luke 18:1-8a** (NLT) One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up. 2 "There was a judge in a certain city," he said, "who neither feared God nor cared about people. 3 A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, 'Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.' 4 The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, 'I don't fear God or care about people, 5 but this woman is driving me crazy. I'm going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!'" 6 Then the Lord said, "Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. 7 Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don't you think God will surely give justice to his chosen people who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly!

- We must always pray and NEVER give up!
- If even unjust judges react to persistence, how much more will God, who is a just judge respond to us when we are persistent?

**Luke 18:8b** (NLT) But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?"

Jesus links persistence to faith! If He were to come back today, would He find persistent faith in us?

### **PERSEVERANCE IS IMPORTANT TO JESUS**

**Luke 11:9-10** (NLT) "And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.

There are areas in each of our lives where perseverance is necessary. Whether I cycle to the top of a hill is neither here nor there, but it does teach me perseverance, however, there are many more important areas where we should persevere, for example:

- We should never give up when facing sickness and infirmity.
- We should never give up when facing financial pressures.
- We should never give up on loved ones when they face struggles or even when they cause us hurt.

**1 Corinthians 13:7** (NLT) Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

Jesus set the greatest example. In Gethsemane, He prayed: "Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

- But He never gave up!
- His love held Him there!
- His Father's will needed to be done.

Does our love hold us there? Are we chasing our Father's will?

## **WORTH FIGHTING FOR**

Florence Chadwick was the first woman to swim the English Channel in both directions. On the Fourth of July in 1951, she attempted to swim from Catalina Island to the California coast. The challenge was not so much the distance, but the bone-chilling waters of the Pacific. To complicate matters, a dense fog lay over the entire area, making it impossible for her to see land. After about 15 hours in the water, and within a half mile of her goal, Chadwick gave up. Later she told a reporter, "Look, I'm not excusing myself. But if I could have seen land, I might have made it." Not long afterward she attempted the feat again.

Once more a misty veil obscured the coastline and she couldn't see the shore. But this time she made it because she kept reminding herself that land was there. With that confidence she bravely swam on and achieved her goal. In fact, she broke the men's record by 2 hours!

How many times do we come so close to a breakthrough and then give up? **We must keep in mind God's great promises to us even when we can't see the end. He will NEVER fail us!**

**Some things are worth fighting for**

**Luke 19:1-9** (NLT) Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. 2 There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. 3 He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way. 5 When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today." 6 Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. 7 But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled. 8 Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!" 9 Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector, a despised man. He was too short to see Jesus,

- but despite the crowd who didn't like him and despite his height disadvantage, **he was willing to fight to see Jesus,**
- He was resourceful and found a way to overcome his height limitation
- He climbed a tree.
- **When Jesus came past, He changed Zacchaeus life forever!**

Jesus acknowledged Zacchaeus because **Zacchaeus decided that seeing Jesus was worth fighting for!**

- Despite the crowds all around, Jesus saw Zacchaeus in the tree.
- He spoke to him by name.
- Jesus told Zacchaeus that He wanted to be a guest in his home.
- Zacchaeus came down quickly, filled with great excitement and joy.
- **Salvation came to his house that day!**

**Is our relationship with Jesus worth fighting for? Are we willing to do what it takes to get a meeting with Jesus? Jesus knows each one of us by name, He wants to come and live in us. He wants to bring His salvation to us. Let us invite Him in.**

- What is there in our lives that are we at risk of losing? Our marriages, our finances, our relationships?
- Is it worth fighting for?

Let us be like Zacchaeus and even be resourceful in our tenacity, finding one way or another to get what we need!

## **CONCLUSION**

Just like I need to push hard on my bicycle, endure pain and fatigue and keep pedaling, there are many far more important areas in our lives where we need to keep praying keep prying and keep trusting God.

- The meaning of tenacity is to doggedly and resolutely carry on with endurance.
- We all need to be tenacious.
- We must keep knocking, asking and seeking.
- Some things are worth fighting for.