

Quotation: Max Lucado says, “Fear doesn’t want you to make the journey to the mountain. If he can rattle you enough, fear will persuade you to take your eyes off the peaks and settle for a dull existence in the flatlands.”

Graduation Day

New beginnings. We celebrate our graduates as they turn the page to a new chapter in their life.

Isaiah 43:19 Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

Face Your Failures (Philippians 3:12-14)

Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already attained this—that is, I have not already been perfected [made like Christ in every way]—but I strive to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus also laid hold of me. 3:13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have attained this [level of maturity]. Instead I am single-minded: Forgetting the things that are behind [This is a good thing because Paul made a bunch of mistakes, including persecuting Christians!] and reaching out for the things that are ahead, 3:14 with this goal in mind, I strive toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. [Paul had enrolled in Christlikeness University pursuing a course of study that would prepare him to live like the Savior.]

2 Tim. 4:6 For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Paul makes two implications in this statement. 1. He refuses to allow failures to become destructive in his life. 2. He refuses to allow failures to beset his journey to his goal. The secret? He put his past behind him and determined to have a positive mental attitude in life. There will be failures. None of us are perfect and the only ones who never do anything wrong are the ones who never do anything. It’s not a matter of “if” you fail, but “when.” And when we fail, we must learn from it and then put it behind us. We must never allow failure to make us quit trying

Follow Your Faith (Hebrews 12:1-3)

Exposition: Hebrews 12:1 [The book of Hebrews was written to Christians who were struggling in their faith. They were wavering in their devotion to Christ because they were going through some hard times. The writer encourages the saints to not give up, that others have been victorious and so can we.] Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses [Listen up! Hear their voices.], we must get rid of every weight and the sin that clings so closely, [Lighten up! Clear out the clutter.] and run with endurance the race set out for us, [Following your faith is not a game of hopscotch. Some endurance is required.] 12:2 keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, [Look up! If you’re going to run this race and win, this is your reference point!] the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy set out for him he endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. 12:3 Think of him who endured such opposition against himself by sinners, so that you may not grow weary in your souls and give up.

Scripture reminds us that to finish your life mission successfully, "Fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12:2).

Application: For Christians our reference point is Jesus Christ. You can be flexible on many things in life, and you should be. But when it comes to the True North of the Savior and his teachings as a reference point, don't budge. It's so easy to become distracted, especially that first year away from home. Focus. Remove obstacles. Tie into a local church or campus ministry that will help you navigate life. Remember that there are those who have gone before you and always know that these are a part of that "great cloud of witnesses" that will be rooting for you. Your greatest challenge will be to follow your faith, focused on Jesus all the way.

Face your fears. Forget your failures. Follow your faith. I just can't pass on this opportunity to invite you to make sure everything is where it needs to be between you and the Savior as you move through this important transition in life.