

Determined Not to Miss Out

By Gary Henry

"Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it" (Hebrews 4:1).

Reaching the goal of heaven requires a healthy measure of old-fashioned determination. When we're choosing what kind of inner character we're going to have, we must choose to have traits like single-mindedness and stick-to-itiveness. We must be tenacious. When it comes down to it, we must be so determined not to miss out on heaven that we refuse to be deterred.

Our assurance of heaven should rest primarily on our confidence in God. There is no doubt as to His faithfulness. But since heaven is only for those who choose to receive it from Him on His terms, there is the question of who will make that choice and who will not. Satan is in the business of persuading as many people as possible to accept his offer rather than God's, and even after we make our choice to go God's direction, Satan continues to discourage us, in the hope that we'll change our mind. Unfortunately, many do change their minds, and the Hebrew writer was right to warn his readers: "Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it."

Not only do we have an adversary who's intent on discouraging us, the world we live in presents its own share of discouragement. Our environment is a sad one, seriously damaged by sin; there is no shortage of circumstances that tend to dishearten us and dash our hopes. This world is a far cry from what it would have been had sin not entered the picture, and it's a far cry from what we'll enjoy later, when God has fully restored our created nature and removed the effects of our sin. Are we willing to wait for what's ahead? There's more than a little truth to the old Latin maxim: "Endure, and save yourself for happier times" (Virgil).

Only those will enjoy heaven who have enough character to be patient, and patience comes down to what the old-timers used to call "grit." But mark it well: grit is not something some people are born with and others are not. It's a matter of choice on the part of every person. Furthermore, it's not a choice that can be made once and then forgotten. While the world still stands, each new day will ask us for another decision. Are we determined to see God?

"He that can't endure the bad, will not live to see the good" (Jewish Proverb).