

## Heavenly Determination

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Pastor Mike Yakawich is among the many active alumni of UTS. He is married to Yukiko and they have five children. Besides guiding his own congregation in Billings, MT, Pastor Yakawich is actively engaged in multiple community organizations in Montana. He has also taught an Intensive course on "The Dynamics of Church Leadership" here at UTS. The following is a recent sermon Pastor Yakawich gave to his congregation.

Matthew 10:39 "He that loses his life for my sake shall find it."

Luke 23:34 "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

*Mike:*

*Just thought I should let you know John is in the hospital. It was finally discovered that the bone cancer had gotten to his hip and he had hip surgery yesterday morning. They found a tumor and much dead and diseased bone which was all removed and replaced. Now we can pray for good recovery and physical therapy response. He has had a time of it, to say the least. It really breaks my heart!*

*Thanks for the prayers!*

*VIVA LA MUSICA!*

This week, the topic of determination has been on my mind. The e-mail above is from a long time music teacher, Mrs. Glenda Newman, speaking of her husband. Mrs. Newman was our youth's music teacher for years. Mr. Newman had counseled me on many occasions, over coffee, at his home, at restaurants, at his workplace. Lately, I have been visiting him at his home garnishing insights and wisdom. Mr. Newman was a Reuter's reporter for years traveling all over the world. He was the managing editor of a number of newspapers from the East Coast to Wyoming and Montana. He was at one time part of the Queens Guard in England. John Newman has been battling cancer for a number of years. His determination to beat cancer has been remarkable but also his determination to keep a good and positive attitude has been exemplary.

Newmans's example prompts me to share more on the topic of Heavenly Determination. What I want to explore is:

What does determination mean to you/me?

What are you/I determined to do?

How do you/I achieve this determination?

How to maintain this determination?

What else?

First a definition. de·ter·mi·na·tion

Firmness of purpose; resoluteness.

"he advanced with an unflinching determination"

*synonyms:* resolution, resolve, willpower, strength of character, single-mindedness, purposefulness,

intentness;

I would add that in heavenly determination we live for the greater good, in our endeavors we think of others.

My determination to be a public servant, perform community service, and do outreach in my work requires great effort and investment. To excel and bring my work to a new level of success requires my determination. My determination to be a better father and husband remains on the frontlines of my heart. Having tools in one's tool belt to deepen, improve, and enhance determination is very important. From prayer, study, and conversation with others to application in daily life is all part of building Heavenly Determination.

We recently lost a city employee to suicide. It has been very sad. He was a young man, with a young child and wife. Perhaps suicide is when we give up on our determination to live. Do we give up or lose the motivation to keep going on a particular path? It is sad and tragic. Determination in life is vital.

Today I shoveled the sidewalks around my home. Sure, I could have just done my own home, but, I was determined to shovel my next door neighbor's sidewalk. As I gained more determination, I covered the entire street of neighbors' sidewalks, then across the street and then around the street. It is a simple example of a gradual increment of determination.

At times my wife and I faced insurmountable odds, like when we moved to Montana to do ministry. We inherited a \$30,000 debt, properties with mortgages, others' medical bills left behind, leased cars, many other bills, and little support. Some missionaries were here and then had to travel back to their home country as directed by national HQ. My wife and I had to find our determination. By the Grace of God and His love and support we went forward. We had to "Muster Up."

Muster-up, defined as: 1) To assemble (troops, a ship's crew, etc.), for battle, display, inspection, orders, or discharge. 2. To gather, summon, rouse (often followed by **up**): He **mustered** all his courage. Verb (used without object)

Sure, good leaders and good parents help us develop our determination. Life experiences develop our determination. Also, in prayer we can muster up spiritual power and confidence. By reading inspirational words and viewing inspirational videos we can gain insight. Finally, through action that we achieve it. Not one mountain at a time, but for me one step at a time, one act of kindness at a time, one effort to stretch myself at a time. That is how I have increased my determination.

We need: Hope, Commitment, knowing God's heart, having great dreams, a love for God and others. We need each other. What else is it that gives you determination? Some say the WHY keeps one determined: We watched this on YouTube. Maybe in sports we can see determination more clearly. Yet, in any area of work or play, we can also discover heavenly determination.

Once I was leading a group of fundraisers. I was not a great leader. We were struggling with results. They were seminary students who were independent thinkers; good people willing to share their opinion and struggles. I was at a loss and almost gave up. I had to find deeper determination. I left the motel where we were to sleep that night with a determination to give up and fly back to my hometown. My prayers were desperate and sincere. Thank God I prayed, because in that walking prayer Jesus touched my heart. I heard: "**If not you, who?**" I was able to feel, welling up inside me, God's love for all those whom I was working with and His hope that I could lead. It was one of those times where I had to go deep inside myself, without giving up or giving in.

Jesus shared many times how he was determined to do his Heavenly Father's will. He was persecuted in many ways, disappointed by people, and rejected by others. Yet, he was determined even at the cost of his life. Luke 23:34 "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

True Father (Sun Myung Moon) shared: "**Don't change your attitude of loyal heart towards God's Will even if your environment changes.**" And "**Whenever you feel your life is difficult, visit the place where disabled people are.**" And "**Master a good chance by patiently overcoming much difficulty.**"

There are many quotes you can find which can inspire and encourage:

*"The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand."* - Vince Lombardi

*"A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work."* - Colin Powell

So we go forward. Many movies feature determination. In *Star Wars* there is the determination to defeat evil. In the movie *Legion* Michael the Archangel is determined to do NOT what God wants but what God needs. Jeep asked Michael “How come you still have faith?” Michael goes says, “When God chose your kind as an object of His love, I was the first in all of heaven to bow down before you. My love, my hope for mankind was no less than His. But I have watched you trample that gift...and yet in the midst of all this darkness I see some people who will not be bowed. I see some people who will not give up. Even when they know all hope is lost...And some people who realize that being lost is so close to being found.”

Such determination inspires the angels!

May you this week find your heavenly determination that will be the fuel that guides you, inspires you and helps you persevere and find great success and heavenly fortune for yourself, others and Heavenly Father.