

January 31, 2021 Looking for the 'Son' in 2021!

Partners in Prayer: "Everything We Need!"

Dear Partners in Prayer Team,

"But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith..."
2 Peter 1:5 (NKJV)

"Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

2 Peter 1:10-12 (NKJV)

Can you be described as being a "**diligent**" believer? Often we look at our lives and evaluate as to whether we are slacking or keeping diligent in different areas. I've often found that we tend to be very diligent in those things we like or have an invested interest in, and less diligent in those areas we find hard or even unimportant. When I take out the trash, which I unfortunately need



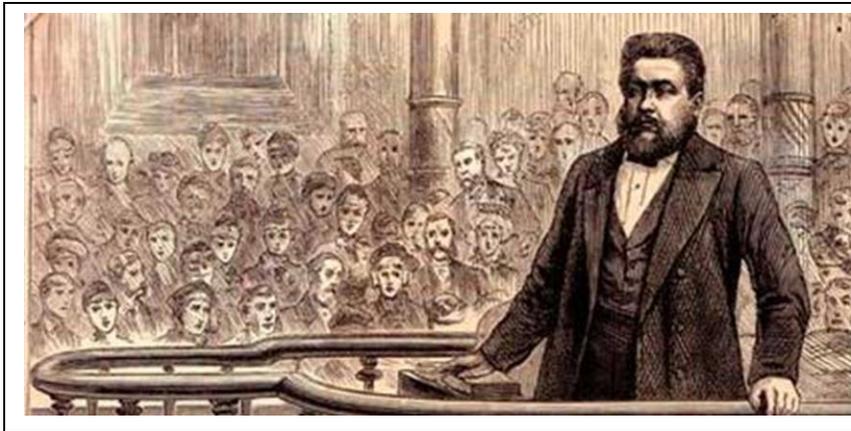
constant reminding, I have to admit, I don't exhibit extreme diligence. I do, however, have abundant diligence when my wonderful wife asks, "Would you like some ice cream? Why don't you go downstairs to the basement freezer and get it out for us?" In that moment, I am absolutely "effervescent in zeal" to get that ice cream. Isn't that also true in our spiritual lives as well? Isn't it true that we are more diligent for things that may give us pleasure, but we are often less than diligent and downright lazy when it comes to reading our Bibles, praying, discipling, or going to worship on a Sunday morning? How do

we, as Peter mentions in 2 Peter 1:5 and 10, become more diligent for the spiritual things in our lives? I want us to understand what it means to have a heart of diligence.

In 2 Peter 1:5, the salty old fisherman used a word frequently found in the Bible- *diligence!* He said, "But also for this very reason, giving all **diligence**, add to your faith" (NKJV). Again Peter mentioned it in verse 10, "Therefore, brethren, be even more **diligent** to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble." Diligence may sound old-fashioned, but it's a quality we keep bumping into. It's especially present in the biographies of productive, effective men and women past and present; some well-known and others who lived under the radar of popularity. What do we mean, then, by the word "diligent"? The term used by Peter here in his letter and other New Testament authors meant "to make every effort; to stretch; to act with urgency, zeal, and earnestness." It pictures the kind of effort a runner makes when she or he approaches the finish line, and finding a new burst of

energy, gives all one has until she or he breaks the tape.

One of my better-known heroes is Charles Haddon Spurgeon. I've probably quoted him in my Prayer Partners and sermons more than any other single figure. ("Yes, Pastor, we've noticed!") In 1850, Spurgeon, in his mid-teens at the time, decided to follow Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. By the time he was nineteen years old and without any seminary training, he surrendered to the calling of God to be a pastor. Can you believe a church actually wanted him? He started to preach at Park Street Chapel in London, and almost instantly no auditorium in London was large enough for the crowds wanting to hear him. With a few or no notes, he stood in the pulpit and eloquently expounded the Word of God.



Stenographers in the audience recorded his sermons in shorthand, and he personally edited each one for publication. It became standard in the secular *London Times* to print his entire Sunday message. That wouldn't happen in today's newspapers or on news media publications! By the

end of his life, the collected volumes of Spurgeon's sermons represented the largest single set of Christian books by one author in the history of Christianity- a feat that stands to this day. His 3,561 sermons are bound in sixty-three volumes filled with twenty million words- the equivalent of the twenty-seven volumes of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. It is a blessing that various Christian societies have preserved his works and writings, and now anyone can access them entirely digitally. Yet, when you read his messages, you can't get the full volume and impression of the power of his voice. There is no recording ever of his preaching, but the descriptions of others say he was a stoutly and barrel-chested man with a deep booming voice that would project without microphones clearly throughout the Metropolitan Tabernacle auditorium in London so well that no one needed "hearing horns".

Spurgeon was not just an entertainer. He didn't just preach with fire on Sundays which gave him the reputation of "The Prince of the Pulpit." He worked hard every week behind the scenes. Spurgeon himself was a ravenous reader. His personal library contained twelve thousand volumes, and if you look at my large library, I only have a tenth of what he had. I'm absolutely sure that when someone entered his office and asked, "Have you read all those books?", he would have responded, "Yes." I constantly have that question, and I

can only respond “No, but I have thumbed the books to know what is in them. But I can’t say I’ve read them all word for word.” That is what I call diligence! Spurgeon devoured commentaries and works by the Puritan giants, as well as newspapers and periodicals. His Bible was always opened and his pen always flowing. He answered every correspondence, much like when we receive hundreds of emails each day, only it was by pen and paper. He started dozens of benevolent agencies such as orphanages, hospitals, and food banks for the poor, published a magazine called *The Sword and the Trowel*, established a college where he lectured, and wrote one book after another on many subjects. He often worked eighteen hours a day and preached ten times a week. Spurgeon had only two speeds: full throttle and sleep. He once said, **“A man cannot be idle and yet have Christ’s sweet company. Christ is a quick walker and when His people would talk with Him they must travel quickly, too, or else they will soon lose His company.”** On another occasion Spurgeon exclaimed, **“The sin of doing nothing is about the biggest of all sins, for it involves most of the others.... Horrible idleness! God save us from it.”** (*The Great Sin of Doing Nothing*, accessed January 24, 2021/[https:// www.spurgeongems.org/ vols 31-33/chas1916.pdf](https://www.spurgeongems.org/vols%2031-33/chas1916.pdf).)

I look at that giftedness, and honestly, I don’t want to be a workaholic. But I admire the “diligence” that God gave him, and I think we all can learn a lesson from that. That is why “diligence” is one of Peter’s favorite words in our gospel we are studying. But I couldn’t help be curious to know where else in the New Testament this Greek word “spouden” occurs. Outside of the occurrences of Peter, there are five other occurrences. A good Bible student compares scripture with scripture to get the better meaning of the word:

1. It occurs twice in 2 Corinthians 7:11-12- *“For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What **diligence** it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of Him who suffered wrong, but that our **earnest care** for you in the sight of God might appear to you.”* Paul wanted to produce a feeling of earnestness and diligence to not let restoration and forgiveness go to the wayside. It was urgent and important to forgive those who erred and were sorry.

2. It occurs once in 2 Corinthians 8:16- *“But thanks be to God who puts the same **earnest care** for you into the heart of Titus.”* Titus was taking a love offering to Jerusalem and Paul was commending them that they gave of need which is called earnest and desiring to express care. It means to have a compulsion to give money when you see the needs of others and act on it quickly, and not just feel sorry and never do anything about it.

3. It occurs in Hebrews 6:11- *“And we desire that each one of you show the same **diligence** to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”* The writer of Hebrews was actually challenging those believers to trust in God’s promises. When God makes a promise, He is never lazy in carrying it out. He never promises, and then forgets about the promise as we often do. He expresses how important it is to fulfill the promise.

4. It occurs in Jude 1:3- *“Beloved, while I was very **diligent** to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”* Jude was writing because of false teachers. He felt the need to be diligent to reply to their inquiries of help because he didn’t want false teachers to win. He wanted believers to contend and defend their faith. His response to their inquiry is much like when you receive a “help” text or phone call; you don’t just sit back and think about helping the person who asked of you to come and help, but you jump up like you are on fire, and run to assist them. That is diligence!

According to the book of 2 Peter, diligence is an essential ingredient in withstanding the pressures of the world and grasping everything we need for godliness. The Lord offers divine resources to help us through His very great and precious promises, but we have to grab on the promises and go with them.

There is a New Testament Scholar named Andreas Kostenberger who reminds us that in these last days, this idea of diligence in spiritual things is often at odds with our culture. *“Diligence is hard. It is tough. It is far easier to slack off, take an easier road, follow shortcuts, or simply give up. Many are finding it easy to just stay in their pajamas and sip coffee while they watch church on YouTube. Diligence is particularly difficult in our fast-food, microwave culture. As Americans, we don’t want to have to wait for results or labor and toil for future gain in the absence of immediate gratification. We want the maximum payoff for the smallest possible amount of labor.”* (Andreas J. Kostenberger, *Excellence: The Character of God and the Pursuit of Scholarly Virtue* pg. 88).

In these last days, we need to build muscular faith with diligence! Peter said, “Give all diligence to your faith.” (1 Peter 1:5). Not just diligence, but “all diligence”. As one scholar noted, *“The words giving all diligence could also be translated ‘with intense effort.’ This suggests the seriousness and importance of our responsibility. We cannot expect to grow and abound in the ‘precious faith’ without zealous endeavor.”* (J. Allen Blair, *Commentary 2 Peter*, pg. 30).

God has given us everything here at Palisades Community Bible Church to live in this year of 2021. But we need to do our part. We need to feel motivated by “diligence!” We need to be like a steaming tea kettle, boiling over and sounding

off with enthusiasm in Christ. We need to be “hot” for the things of Jesus. So prayer team, as we come to this week’s communion service, pray for diligence. Here are some other things to pray diligently for in days ahead:

1. Continue prayer for Steve, Kelly, Joe, and Anna as they work through quarantine and travel to Chiang Rai. Visit this Sunday the 31st with them by Zoom.

2. Continue prayer for Helen and Tim VanSumeren, as they ended their quarantine, and should be traveling to their place of ministry in the area of Chiang Mai. Pray they don’t have to quarantine again.

3. Pastor and Lori will be traveling to America’s Keswick’s Pastor’s conference this week of Feb. 1-4th. Please be in prayer that no problems occur like last year. We could still use

prayer because the insurances companies haven’t settled everything cost-wise from Lori being hospitalized for food poisoning. We are still waiting on God to settle those billings and we have a lawyer involved helping us.

4. Prayer for our special speaker for February 7th- a young Spurgeon in the making. His name is David Rineer. He was recommended by a friend at Bethel Baptist Church in Sellersville. He is in his twenties, and he and his wife are serving the Lord there as they wait on God’s leading for a future ministry.

5. Prayer for February ministry. We’ve had to restart children’s church ministry on Sundays. Lori is recruiting help, and praise for the children attending services at this time.

6. Prayer meeting still meets 9:30 – ask prayer team members to try to attend.

7. Prayer for starting of the building committee. There are numerous people that Tom Schilling (who is chairing that committee) is asking to help. We are planning a meeting with that committee and Jeff Harris.

8. Pastor will be organizing a “ministry leaders” meeting with key individuals and elders to plan, “What do we re-open?” or “Do we start with new ministries?”

9. Pray people “get their spiritual moving buddies” and start to join small groups and discipleship; items that Pastor shared about last week.

10. Pray as we set a date for “new members” to join soon. We have eight candidates and the elders must now meet with them for testimonies. Also, some may need baptism, so pray as we figure out when that will take place in the future.

11. Pastor has returned to planning a “Grief Share” ministry. Pray as I try to figure when that will restart. Is Easter or fall the best time because of the Covid-19 issues? And pray for those in our congregation to help in this



ministry.

12. Lastly, we have a “church mailing” that we have been holding. Do we send it before Easter? Just asking for wisdom of when it will have the best effect.

13. We may even begin to think about “another 24/7 prayer week” as we get closer to Easter.

Let me conclude this update with what Charles Spurgeon said: *“If I have any message to give from my own bed of sickness, it would be this- if you do not wish to be full of regrets when you are obliged to lie still, work while you can. If you desire to make a sick bed as soft as it can be, do not stuff it with the mournful reflections that you wasted time while you were in health and strength. People said to me years ago, ‘You will break your constitution down with preaching ten times a week,’ and the like. Well, if I have done so, I am glad of it. I would do the same again. If I had fifty constitutions I would rejoice to break them down in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. You young men that are strong, overcome the worked one and fight for the Lord while you can! You will never regret having done all that lies in you for our blessed Lord and Master. Crowd as much as you can into every day, and postpone no work till tomorrow. ‘Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God!’”* (For The Sick and Afflicted, Charles Spurgeon, The Spurgeon archive pg. 7). Serve Jesus diligently this week! Enjoy Communion diligently this week! Pray diligently this week! Do something!

Pray with me,

“Oh, precious almighty and powerful Father, forgive us for the way that we have neglected and misused the good gifts that You have given us. We have slept carelessly, when we should have been wide awake. We have shunned opportunities to serve You and find sweet fellowship in Your presence, when we should have faithfully followed Your call. Forgive us our sloth and laziness. Forgive us our careless and listful efforts to not be diligent to grow in our faith. Help us find that way to be as addicted to Jesus, as most often we are to our sinful tendencies. Jesus, thank You for Your good work in our lives and the saving and transforming of our very souls and selves to be more like You. Holy Spirit stir up our hearts to love and good works. To be diligent! Give us a diligence in discipleship, our church attendance, our Bible reading, our confession and repentance, adding to our faith, and to have boiling-hot fervent prayers. Help us fix our eyes on the Son in 2021. Help us to see that Your grace alone speaks pardon to our weary souls. In Jesus’ Name our Author and Finisher of faith we pray, amen.”

Pastor Corvin <><

Quote: “Diligence- Even a mosquito doesn’t get a slap on the back until he starts working!” ...

Anonymous

“Keep your heart with all diligence and God will look after the universe.” ... A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)

