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Keep going on

"And it came to pass when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with Jehovah his God, as the heart of David his father."

1 Kings 11:4

Our late brother Frank Wallace used to regularly encourage us to go on and keep going on. It is good to have a good and positive start in our Christian journey, but to continue with the same zeal is a challenge. The 'first love' of our conversion, when we understand something of the love of God for us and what He has done through the work of the cross, spurs us on to a response of devotion and service. The words of the Lord become our food and because of our fresh love for Him we seek to understand and obey them. However, to keep going on and to increase in our faithfulness to the Lord is not so easy. There are influences from those around us and demands from our secular employment that can take the edge from the freshness we once knew. We can also grow weary and drop our guard.

Solomon had a problem because of his wives and his wealth turning his heart away from the LORD. King Joash, after being saved from death, had a good start but relied on the faith of Jehoiada the high priest. When he died, Joash turned from the LORD and even killed Zechariah, Jehoiada's son.

Hezekiah was another godly king and he had many victories but was tempted by the flattery of the ambassadors from Babylon into showing them all his wealth. Josiah was a marvelous king who followed the Lord faithfully almost to the end, but he got involved in a war that was nothing to do with him.

On the other hand Paul could say, "I have fought a good fight, ... I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7). He questions the Galatians, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" (Gal. 5:7). In contrast Jacob, who had struggled all his life to get advantage for himself, "worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff" at its close (Heb. 11:21). He had learned that he could no longer trust in his own strength and became a worshipper.

In Revelation chapters 2 and 3 we have encouragements to the overcomer. In every situation in the Christian testimony there is the opportunity to overcome and to keep our first love to the end. Thankfully it is not down to us to just keep trying to go on in our own strength. The Lord is able to give us the strength we need if we live in dependence upon Him. "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

