

## The One-Mile Marker. Time to quit!?

Passage: Exodus 9

**Key Verse:** *"I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments." Exodus 6:6*

He left the presence of the Lord, repeating the words God had given him several days before. "I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgements". He hung on to that promise as he got ready to request yet another audience with the King of Egypt.

Between you and me – Moses had to be tired of it. When we get to Exodus chapter 9, Israel's leader had seen God strike Egypt five times with miraculous, awesome wonders, and yet, Pharaoh would not waver. And although God had told him that He himself would harden Pharaoh's heart, there's no doubt that pressing on was a hard thing for Moses to do.

*How much more, Lord? How much will it take for this hard-headed, prideful king to let your people go? How many more wonders do you have to perform until he finally believes? You know exactly what it will take to break him, and yet, you choose this slow, painful path to set us free. Why? Why?*

True - I may be stretching Moses' thoughts a bit, but we know that Israel's leader at the time had serious issues with unbelief. He questioned God's sovereignty over and over again, while presenting his excuses to defuse the task of leading the Jews out of slavery (Exodus 4). Surely it was hard to go again, and plead God's case before Pharaoh, not once, but five, six, ten times!

What made Moses get up the next day, and obey God in spite of his doubts and fears?

The answer can only be one: *Determined obedience.*

I've been trying to get in the swing of things again concerning my exercise routine. It's been...., well, tough to say the least. Even five years ago, when I stopped exercising for a while, it seemed to be pretty easy to get my legs conditioned to running in a matter of days.

Not anymore.

I woke up this morning and chose to take my exercise outside. After a long and dreadful winter, the sun is shining and the rising temperatures were an invitation to jog in the park. The location is perfect, just beside my subdivision, and the track is exactly one-mile long. It beats the treadmill by far.

So I set out with a firm objective: two laps. Two miles.

Every 100 yards, a small marker reminded me of how slow I was going. By the time the first mile marker drew near, I was ready to quit. My legs were burning. My breathing was heavy. *One mile is enough for today*, I reasoned.

That's when determination had to take over.

My body wanted to quit. It screamed that I'm getting older and it's ok to stop at half of my journey. But my mind knows better. I know that, unless I press on from my breaking point, I'll never get past that pitiful one-mile marker.

I smiled at the one-mile marker and was tempted to stick out my tongue at it, like a brat. "I'm not a quitter!" I wanted to shout.

As I sluggishly continued on to the next lap, I gained new resolve while remembering the many times I felt like quitting, but instead made a conscious decision to keep on. I was reminded of the strength that I found... and the rewards that waited on the other side.

The stubborn last pounds that I needed to lose after each baby...

The book that I needed to finish writing...

The relationship that needed work...

The budget that I needed to follow...

The job that I kept on when I wanted to quit...

The bad habit that needed to change.

Each time I approached the "one-mile marker" of each challenge, and my weaknesses and hesitancy called me to give up, I had to make a deliberate decision to remember that God was with me in the pursuit of deliverance, provision, success and restoration... so long as I obeyed. I had to call my mind to remember the miracles that God had performed in the past... And walk in obedience that next mile, knowing that He would show up again.

### **Are you watching the "one-mile marker" approach in your two-mile journey?**

Are your legs ready to give in?

Hey, I don't blame you. I know the feeling. It's hard to press on, feeding on unseen promises, when the results we keep getting are the same today as they were yesterday. That's probably exactly how ol' Moses felt, when that fifth judgement from God did not change Pharaoh's heart.

But what did he do?

He kept remembering the promises... and God's faithful provisions for each need.

Our problem is that we want to see past today. We want to have forward vision, BEFORE we step onto that next mile of obedience.

What God was doing in Egypt over 3,000 years ago, as Moses climbed the steps of Pharaoh's palace once again, was much more than a heavenly display of wonders. He was working on individual lives. He knew what awaited Moses and the people in the wilderness, and therefore, before they left, He needed to strengthen their faith in the God they served.

So they needed to stay a little longer... suffer a bit more... and watch God's mighty hand at work as they waited.

**There's a reason for that second mile, my friend.**

Just as there was a reason for the next five judgements before Israel's deliverance.

Remember, your journey is not just about you. It's about God's glory displayed in and through you. It's about judgment of the wicked. It's about faith muscle conditioning. It's about establishing determined, blind obedience.

It's about sweet victory... but not before you're ready to recognize that it was God who led you there.

Do you want to watch God's glory displayed? Your faith tested and proven?

Do you want to see what God can do in and through you?

Stick your tongue out at the "one-mile" marker. Tell it you're keeping on. God has some more work to do in that second mile of your journey.

And you don't want to miss the reward for keeping on God's track for just a little longer.

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