

NONE OF THESE THINGS MOVE ME

By Jerry L. Henderson

The truly great men have been those who have had a great goal in life. Abraham is called "the father of all them that believe" Rom 4:11. His goal in life was that he "looked for a city not made with hands." Heb 11:8-10. Moses also took the long view on life. He "had respect unto the recompense of reward" and "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Heb 11:24-27.

If greatness may be found in men whose goal in life was great, then the apostle Paul must be found with this number. His goal is stated in Phil 3:13,14, where he said: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul did not consider this earth to be his home, he was looking toward heaven as his goal Phil 3:20,21. When he was on his way to Jerusalem and spoke with the Ephesian elders, Paul talked about things that would befall him; but he said, "none of these things move me." Acts 20:17-24. Paul had his mind set on his goal and would allow nothing on earth to move him from it. Let's look briefly now at some things that Paul would not allow to move him away from his goal.

Paul would not allow physical afflictions to hinder him. In 2Cor 11:24-27 he lists a number of physical abuses which he underwent such as: beatings, stoning, shipwreck, etc. so that his very life was in danger at almost every turn. Yet, he would not allow these things to move him away from his goal. Many of us today should take a lesson from the apostle Paul because many times we allow such things as our aches and pains; ridicule and pressure from the world to keep us from serving the Lord both on the Lord's day and in our daily lives.

Paul would not allow fleshly appetites to move him from his goal. He said in 1Cor 9:27 "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection...." Are we as determined as Paul was to keep the desires of the flesh from moving us away from our goal? Does our desire for material wealth cause us to do things we shouldn't or leave undone the things that we should? Does our desire for "fun" sometimes entice us to participate in questionable activities or to miss the assemblies of the Lord's people? The desires of the flesh (eating, drinking, socializing, even sexual desires) are good and right in their proper place. However, we must control them instead of them controlling us.

Paul would not allow worldly position or honor to keep him from his goal. In Phil 3:4-11 he gives an impressive set of credentials for himself, yet he gave it all up for Christ. Are we as conscientious today as was Paul? I fear that many times we allow worldly honors, scholastic achievement, sports involvement or our desire for high positions to hinder us in our service to God. This is especially a problem for our young people. The pressure is put on them to achieve and many times that which is right is not considered. There is nothing inherently wrong with achieving in most cases. However, if we sacrifice truth and right or our service to God to achieve worldly position or honor then it becomes sin.

Paul would not even allow family relationships or friends to deter him from reaching his goal. He had to forsake the teaching of his parents as well as the instructor which they provided for him Acts 22:3. When he heard the truth he realized that he had to

forsake all who did not or would not stand for it. Note what Jesus said in Matt 10:34-38 in regard to physical relationships and their importance when it comes to serving the Lord. Paul realized that he had to serve the Lord even if it meant standing alone 2Tim 4:16,17. It is easy to stand up and be counted when we are in the majority, but rather difficult when one must stand alone. Some will just quit serving rather than "go along" with error and seem to fail to understand that the ultimate consequences are the same. Others are willing to just conform to the thinking of the crowd, but Paul did neither.

We must consider whether we are allowing ourselves to be moved away from our goal. No one ever said standing for the Lord was easy!