

# Northeast Church of Christ

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## From the Pen of Paul: “*Try Running Again*” by Gus Nichols

PERHAPS SOME READER HAS TRIED to be a Christian, but failed. If so, why not try again? Great success does not always come from a single effort. Worthwhile things are always worth trying and striving for, even if we must try again and again. In the year 1917 a tornado destroyed our home, blew it away and ruined our crops out on the farm before it tore up Carbon Hill, Alabama, and left the dead and homeless in its wake. But we did not give up and quit. The next spring we found ourselves planting again, and soon we were growing crops.

Life is like that. Wars are not usually won by a single battle. But battle after battle must be fought before the victory is won. In a way some of the battles are lost, but victory belongs to those who win the last one.

One young man started to fight the cigarette habit but soon felt that the weed had conquered him. However, he decided that no man is licked who will keep on trying, again and again. So he summoned all the forces and marshaled them against his dangerous habit. A day at a time he vowed to his friends and to God that he would not smoke that day, regardless of what happened. Soon he had conquered a habit that is master to millions in our land.

Very few spend a long life in the service of Christ without ever getting discouraged, and for the moment, giving up in despair. But those who overcome the world are they who (if need be) try again and again, and who

refuse to surrender to the evil one. If they fail, they go down fighting, soon to rise again.

The Christian life is like running a race (Heb. 12:1-2): “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” I Corinthians 9:25-27: “And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” If one fails he should get up and try again. The New Birth is a sort of Land of Beginning Again (John 3:5: Jesus answered, “Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”) So is restoration of an erring child of God (Galations 6:1: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” James 5:19-20: “Brethren, if

***“Does the Bible support the church in raising funds by pie suppers, cake walks, car washes, and the like?”***

PEOPLE HAVE GOTTEN SO FAR FROM GOD and His Word that they do not seem to care what God wants or thinks. There seems to be a growing disrespect for God and the Bible.

I hear the statement: “God said it, I believe it, and that settles it.” This is not the way the Lord would have it. It should and must be: God said it and that settles it! Of course, all who would go to heaven when life is over must believe God (Heb. 11:6).

We must have Bible authority for everything we do in religion if we would please God (Col. 3:16-17). The reason there are so many different faiths today is due to people not following God's will; they do not have divine authority.

The only way we can show God that we genuinely love Him is by respecting His will and obeying His Word (John 14:15; 21, 22, 24). Often people will testify about how much they love the Lord and then turn right around and disobey His Word. This is merely to talk the talk but it is certainly not walking the walk! Ten thousand testimonies are not nearly as good as obeying the voice of God. Whatever we do in word or deed should have God's divine approval (Col. 3:17).

The only way that the church of the Bible is authorized to raise funds for the Lord's work is by free will offerings (I Cor. 16:1-2; II Cor. 9:6-7). The church has no right to go into the service station business, the automobile business, the gasoline business, or any other secular business. The church is in the soul saving business and the

money it takes to support this work must be given through free will offerings.

Often people want to justify the means (the way money is raised) by the end results (what is made possible by the money raised). For an example, some churches have distilleries and they make and sell whiskey. They say that all the money made by their distilleries goes into good works. This is unbiblical reasoning. One could not run a house of prostitution and please Christ even though every dime went into some good work of the Lord. Surely we can see this.

Sometimes people sell beer and whiskey and call themselves Christians. This just cannot be so. No Christian ever sold beer and whiskey. They may have sold it before becoming a Christian but never after they became a child of God. Many good works are supported by unchristian activities and organizations but this does not justify the unchristian institutions involved therein.

The Lord's church should stay in the soul saving business. This is where God would have it (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). I believe when the church gets into the money making business taxes should be levied against her in those profit making affairs.

The church has begun to secularize. The reason for this is that we have people with secular brains instead of spiritual. My advice is, come back to your spiritual work church and stay with it. If the church does otherwise, then she is out of her place.

—*Malcolm L. Hill*

any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins”).

Note: For the past two weeks we have been looking at Paul’s statement and question to the Galatians from Galatians 5:7: “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” There are thousands of those who once were faithful Christians, but have allowed something or someone to *hinder them* into *not obeying the truth*. I have heard it said, “If those in this area

(Putnam, Jackson, White, and Overton counties) could be restored back to faithful service to Christ, the building that we presently meet in would not hold them! I can’t vouch for the truthfulness of that estimate; but I do know that the number would be enormous! The above article was written a lot of years ago by the late and lamented Gus Nichols. It is timeless. Read it again carefully; and then if you have allowed something to *hinder you* and you have fallen out of faithful service, why not determine to ***try again!*** In the day of judgment, you will not regret that you did!

–Paul M. Wilmoth