

## DAY 20 –ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

*Who are you, mighty mountain? – Zechariah 4:7,*

On November 7, 2020, Chris Nikic became the first person with Down syndrome to finish the Ironman Triathlon. Nikic swam 2.4 miles (3.86 km), rode his bike for 112 miles (180 km), and ran 26.2 miles (42 km) in sixteen hours and forty-five minutes. “Goal set and achieved,” he said the next day. “It’s time to set a new, bigger goal.” Chris Nikic is a skydiver. “Whatever it is, the strategy is the same: be 1% better every day,” he said.

It’s easy to use our weaknesses as crutches, isn’t it? Surrender to the mistakes we have made or to bad luck. Try to follow Chris Nikic’s lead! He didn’t use his Down syndrome as an excuse: he used it as motivation! Nikic added something else to the mix: **“I did the work, but the angels helped me.”**

**I love that mentality!** It’s a growth mindset coupled with a god mindset. **It is recognizing the role that God plays in our favor, without diminishing personal responsibility.** It is praying as if it depended on God, but working as if it depended on us. It is doing the natural and trusting that He will do the supernatural. It is the place where our determination meets the grace of God.

In the year 536 B.C.”

“In 536 B.C., a man named Zerubbabel led the Jewish remnant back to Jerusalem to rebuild the ruined temple. It was a vision of the measure of God, but Zerubbabel could only see a pile of rubble. That’s when a word from God is needed, and Zoro got it: “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: *‘It will not be by force or by any power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty—*”<sup>2</sup> Can I tell you a little secret? God wants to do things in and through your life that are beyond the reach of your ability, resources, education, or experience. Why? Why”

He is still the God who makes a way in the middle of the sea.”

He is still the God who makes the sun stop.

He is still the God who changes water into wine.

He is still the God who floats an iron axe.<sup>4</sup>

God still moves mountains. As it does? With faith the size of a mustard seed! Don’t despise the day of small beginnings (or 1% improvement every day)

There is a moment in our life when we reach the end of the rope. Lazarus was dead for four days, but nothing is over until God says it's over. **Don't put a point where God puts a comma.**

**At a certain point, enough is enough.** Do you remember yesterday's challenge? You have to stop talking to God about your problems and start talking to your problems about your God. The same goes for the mountains. This is how you change the script and remount the kite. **You declare his goodness:** "good and mercy will follow me all the days of my life."<sup>5</sup>**You declare your fidelity:**"He who began the good work in you will continue it until it is complete" <sup>6</sup>

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I have a work of art in my office. It's the first line of an Emily Dickinson poem. Reportedly, she was a recluse. She lived relatively isolated and hardly ever left her room. The friendships he had were kept by correspondence. His physical world was incredibly small, but his spirit soared when he wrote poetry. This was how he flew his kite. Three words that she wrote are embodied in my office: I inhabit possibility. I admit it, I am an eternal optimist. **How could it not be? I believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ,** and the same Spirit that raised him from the dead dwells in me. **That means anything can happen!**

On December 23, 2011, I was doing a chaplaincy for the Minnesota Vikings when I ran into All-Pro running back Adrian Peterson. I remember that meeting for two reasons: one, Peterson's handshake. The other reason is that Peterson suffered a devastating knee injury the next day. He tore the anterior and lateral cruciate ligaments in his left knee. Those kinds of injuries have ended the careers of many NFL players, but Peterson would come back to win Comeback Player of the Year and MVP the following season. He rushed for 2,097 yards (1,917 m), just nine yards shy of the NFL season record. **As it did? The simple answer is "with a lot of rehabilitation".** He turned the mountain into a plain by running full speed through the hills. Adrian Peterson Instead of using his injury as an excuse, he used it as motivation. They asked his coach, James Cooper, how long before he thought Peterson could play. Cooper told a personal story. A fan of personal training himself, he was competing in the UASTF Masters for athletes over thirty-five. During the 100-meter dash, Cooper felt, in his own words, "that old man right next to me." The old man was Bill Collins who, at forty-six years old, made the race in just 10.58 seconds!

Cooper, who was much younger than Collins, was so impressed by Collins' performance that he changed the script and adjusted the clock at a decisive moment. "It taught me that forty is not the age to give up," said James Cooper. Then he upped the ante: "Fifty is not the age to give up." What did he mean? That age is relative. And that's not just true for athletes like Adrian Peterson or Bill Collins.

If we take Caleb's example, eighty-five is not the age to give up either. *"Here I am this day at my eighty-five years: the Lord has kept me alive!"*, 9 I know that this seems impossible, speaking from a psychological point of view. But I have no reason to doubt Caleb's claim. I think he could reach eighty-five as well as forty.

"The question, of course, is how. There are many factors, but a fraction of our physical strength is a function of mental toughness. Positive thoughts can increase physical strength by 42%. Time takes its toll on all of us. Last time I checked, time was unbeaten. But the havoc time wreaks can vary from person to person, and mindset makes all the difference in the world.

**I've said it before, but let me say it again: whatever you tolerate will eventually dominate you.** You don't have to tolerate anything less than God's good, pleasing, and perfect will.<sup>12</sup> Don't tolerate abuse. Don't tolerate bad attitudes. Do not tolerate a root of bitterness. Not

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HOW DO I MAKE IT A HABIT?

## **Changing your number!**

You do not have to undergo a medical diagnosis. Did you know? I assure you that I love and respect doctors; Medicine has saved my life more than once. But autopsies reveal that doctors misdiagnose their patients 40% of the time. Despite tremendous advances in medical science, the rate of wrong diagnoses has hardly changed in the last hundred years. And even if the diagnosis is correct, you don't have to submit to it either."

"You don't have to submit to bad reviews, bad grades, or bad luck.

You do not have to submit to assumptions or false prophecies.

When Suzanne was in high school, her mother told her how much she had to weigh. In Suzanne's own words, "I never reached that number". Even running cross-country in college, she was twenty pounds over that weight.

The peso number his mother had given him was hers. Here's the thing: Your mother is under five feet (meter and a half) and has a small build. Several decades later Suzanne was able to make friends with this simple fact: "That wasn't the number to hit; It had never been my number." He stopped submitting to impossible expectations and freed himself from them. "Nowadays I exercise, but not to punish myself, nor to reach an impossible goal imposed by someone else." Why do you exercise? "I love strengthening the incredible muscles that 'God gave me'.

Remember: your habits have to be measurable, meaningful and sustainable. When you set a goal in the form of a number, make sure it's your number. Going after someone else's goal is the recipe for disappointment.

Let me add one more ingredient to the mix. When I was training to run my marathon, I had more than one number on my mind. I had a secret number that would require my best run on my best day. But he also had another brand that represented a flexible goal. I knew that would put some pressure on my pace and give me a good chance to finish the race. Set a flexible goal and then aim for 1% daily improvement. Whatever habit you're trying to form or break, **It's time to get going!"**

## **Enough is enough!**

Excerpt From

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