

So the other night I lay down for bed and turn on the TV and there it is, probably my favorite movie of all time, or at least top 3. How do you know your favorite movie? No matter how many times, or dozens of times you've seen it, when it comes on, you watch it all the way through. So there it was, the 1985 classic.. Rocky IV. Yes I now, it's not the greatest movie ever, and not even the best rated Rocky movie, but I love it! You know the one, where this massive, doped up Russian, Ivan Drago, fights and kills Rocky's friend Apollo Creed. So Rocky flies to Russia to train. Finally, as he's walking through the tunnel to face this massive foe, Rocky's brother in law, Paulie says, "now bust this guy's teeth out." To which Rocky simply says, "I'll Try."

It was a powerful moment in the movie. He knew he was fighting a massive foe, like 7 inches taller, and stronger than him. His own wife told him early in the movie "you can't win" (Job's wife anyone). But he'd trained hard and he was all heart and was going to give it everything he had. He might lose, but he would die trying. He did try, hard. And though his face got beat to a pulp (like usual), Rocky defeated the Russian.

*Well, the next day I had a phone conversation with a Christian on the challenging topic of GRACE and WORKS. How do those two things work together? Do our works matter right reference to salvation? And what about our failures? Or does God's powerful grace make all the difference? This has been the big question for people since the beginning of the church. I think the answer might be quite simple. **TRY***

If we TRY to do all of what the Bible teaches us to do and we succeed, God is pleased. If we fail... when we fail... so long as we keep TRYING, God's grace will always cover our sins and keep us in God!

So, I used a search engine looking for the words "**TRY**" in the New Testament. There were only a few occurrences there, and mostly it had to do with TESTING, like "try the spirits."

So I thought maybe if I defined the word, I would find some other words to pursue:

Try: "make an attempt or an effort to do something" – Ooh, I like that! It connotes action and expectation of success, graded based on the amount of EFFORT.

Then I wondered if "**EFFORT**" was used in the New Testament:

II Timothy 4:9,21; Titus 3:12 – Okay, this adds some dimension to our study. Paul is acknowledging that obstacles could persist and it wasn't certain, but so far as it lied within his power, he would "make every effort" to be there. He was all in and working for that outcome.

Well then I got to wondering if these are all 3 the same Greek word and what that I could learn about it

"SPUDAZO" – "to make haste; to exert oneself... give diligence." Okay, it's official, I love it.

"I'll Try" and "Make Every Effort" is the personal act of acting NOW instead of waiting, EXERTING ONESELF, instead of being passive, and, the words that sealed it for me GIVE DILIGENCE.

Salvation is not about being perfect, otherwise we would not need God's matchless grace.

And it is not about letting God handle everything, otherwise there'd be no proof of our faith.

It is about TRYING, MAKING EVERY EFFORT, ACTING NOW, PUTTING FORTH EFFORT:

In a phrase: GIVE DILIGENCE! In fact, that word is most often translated diligence in the NASB.

What a great word! One more definition: **DILIGENCE** "Constant in effort to accomplish something: attentive and persistent in doing anything. Done or pursued with persevering attention; painstaking."

Finally, I wanted to know where else Spudazo was used in the New Testament, and could it be my birthday, and actually some of the translations used the word "Diligence"? YES!

Here is the first passage I came across: **Hebrews 4:11** – "Be diligent to enter that rest, so that none of you will fall." So, apply all of the definitions above into getting to heaven! If we do so, God guarantees we will not fall (be lost). **Hebrews 4:16** – In fact, because we are giving it all we have, even though the enemy may knock us down at times, by faith in Christ and His Grace we can have confidence! However, **Hebrews 10: 26** – If we decide not to try. If we rely on grace and do not strive for diligence, grace disappears and is replaced with this.

Okay, what I really needed was ONE TEXT that ties all of this together: Grace, Works and Diligence! And then... I found it! Not a typical passage used for this topic, but Spudazo is in it twice and connections everything beautifully: **II PETER 1:1-11**

First, let's talk about Grace! **II Peter 1:1-2** – We have faith, but all of that is built on the grace of God! It is built on our knowledge of God and the peace that comes in Jesus!

V.3-4 – We can look at this later but I don't believe "US" is "us" in this text. God did not give us everything pertaining to life and godliness. God gave it to Apostles and prophets and they have revealed it to us. We are the "you" in the text to whom it has been shared through these letters.

But it is still Grace! That we have this book from God through prophets!

V11 – And the ultimate fulfillment of Grace is a Relationship with Jesus that is seen in its most real and incredible way: in His Kingdom NOW and FOREVER!

HOWEVER, lest it look like Grace alone, let's read the 6 verses in between: **1:5-10**

- 1) The text makes a list of the **FAITH** that we **MUST HAVE** – our works: an active faith
- 2) 7 things are listed: **moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.**
- 3) If these things are **LACKING**, then we cannot enjoy the Grace of God.
- 4) If these things are practiced, then we have Christ now and forever in His kingdom.

But we don't always practice them do we? So what's the situation, we must do them or not?

Did you see the word? Twice?

V.5 – **"applying all diligence"**

V.8 – **"your and are increasing"**

V.10 – **"be all the more diligent"**

It's simple – **FAITH** is broken down into 7 categories. If we are **DILIGENT** in **INCREASING** them in our lives, then we will be enshrouded with the Grace of God.

Though we will not always possess them like we should, and though there could always be more shown... **DILIGENCE** is the **KEY!**

So, a challenge for you – First, believe in God's grace – believe that if you are making an effort, giving haste and energy to growing in your faith, He will forgive, lift up and save you!

Second, actually be diligent in increasing your faith! Sounds good, but how?

7 DAY CHALLENGE!!! Don't you love these? Let's make sure we are pursuing works of faith rightly.

Monday: **MORAL EXCELLENCE** – (**VIRTUE NKJV**) – **UPSTANDING** – **RESPECTABLE**

- Tomorrow make morally pure thought and word and deed a passion for your day.

Tuesday: **KNOWLEDGE** – Understanding – Wisdom

- Tuesday consider your relationship with the Word – give all you have to time for study.

Wednesday: **SELF-CONTROL** – (**TEMPERANCE KJV**) – Master of desire and appetite.

- Make this day an entire day of every ounce of effort in your soul to control all things.

Thursday: **PERSEVERANCE** (**PATIENCE NKJV**) – Steadfastness, Sustaining an Effort

- It's Thursday, you are tiring of this project, today do your best to hold on, (3 first three)

Friday: **GODLINESS** – Reverence to God – giving yourself to His cause – living for Him

- Okay, today is about worship. Going above and beyond to pray and sing and live for Him!

Saturday: **BROTHERLY KINDNESS** – Cherishing each other as Brethren

- Love that this fell on Saturday (Group Meeting) but also a great day to do for a Christian!

Sunday: **LOVE** – Love is love – affection, attitude, heart, compassion, care

- How awesome that this falls on Sunday – walk through those doors a week from today overflowing with your best effort, the most intensely committed level of love.

II Peter 1:8-11 – The Grace and Protection of Jesus overflows for the **DILIGENT IN FAITH!**