

Let's Do Difficult Run with the Horses

If you could kick the person in the pants responsible for most of your trouble, you wouldn't sit for a month.
—[Theodore Roosevelt](#)

John 4:24 (NIV®)

God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

I. Let's Do Difficult

Jeremiah 12:5 (NIV®)

"If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?

A. Remember *The Lord of Hosts*

Psalms 46:7 (NASB®)

The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Isaiah 2:12 (NASB®)

For the LORD of hosts will have a day *of reckoning*. Against everyone who is proud and lofty And against everyone who is lifted up, That he may be abased.

Revelation 5:11–14 (NIV®)

¹¹Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, **numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand**. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹²In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" ¹³Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" ¹⁴The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

B. Accept or Reject God's Purposes

Luke 7:29–30 (NIV®)

²⁹(All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. ³⁰But the Pharisees and experts in the law **rejected God's purpose for themselves**, because they had not been baptized by John.)

Luke 18:9–14 (NIV®)

⁹To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' ¹³"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' ¹⁴"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

C. Catalysts for Embracing Difficult

1. Humility
2. Committed to honor the Lord
3. Repentant attitude
4. Listening heart
5. Bias towards action (servant)

D. Enemies of Doing the Difficult

1. Entitlement vs Requirement
2. Indulgence & Trying
3. Failure & Fatigue
4. Self-righteousness & Criticism
5. Tyranny of comfort & convenience

II. The Road Less Traveled

Acts 16:9–10 (NIV®)

⁹During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” ¹⁰After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, **concluding** that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Acts 16:13–15 (NIV®)

¹³On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. ¹⁵When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.

Acts 16:16–28 (NIV®)

¹⁶Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. ¹⁷This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” ¹⁸She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

¹⁹When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. ²⁰They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar ²¹by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

²²The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. ²³After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. ²⁴Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody’s chains came loose. ²⁷The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!”

Proclamation

I praise the Most High; I honor and glorify Him who lives forever.

His dominion is an eternal dominion; His kingdom endures from generation to generation.

All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing.

He does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth.

No one can hold back His hand or say to Him: “What have you done?” (adapted from Daniel 4:34–35 (NIV))