

# MESSAGE MINDER

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But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank.

Daniel 1:8



## Resolve

By Jonathan Stone

Some things come to us in life as a surprising gift. We never saw them coming and we never could have conjured them up. Other things come easy for us because of the God-given talents that we have, which are necessary in attaining them. However, there are some things that will only come to us with one thing--*resolve*. Resolve is an earnest decision. It's what we more commonly identify as determination.

That is NOT to say that you can resolve anything you want into your life. Some would like to believe that anything can be achieved with a strong will. However, this is not true. For example, spiritual transformation cannot be brought about by human will power. It can only be brought about by the power of the Holy Spirit. While the endless

selection of self-help books available today would make one suspect that spiritual change can be brought about with a little bit of "old fashion determination," this is simply not the case. Nonetheless, personal resolve is encouraged in Scripture by the examples of the heroes of the faith.

David, while being less than perfect, was known for the purity of his heart. Yet, in becoming that person he first resolved that he would not sin with his mouth (see Psalm 17:3). Job, also regarded as a man of godly character, made a covenant with his eyes not to gaze at a young lady (Job 31:1). Ezra showed remarkable leadership in restoring the priesthood after the exile, but at some point he had to "set his heart to study the Law of the Lord" (Ezra

7:10). Daniel was famous for his personal integrity, but he first resolved not to defile himself (Daniel 1:8). Solomon was famous for his wisdom, and while it was a gift from God, at some point he resolved "to know and to search out and to seek wisdom" (Ecc. 7:25). The Apostle Paul was known for the powerful gospel that he preached, but he first resolved "to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2). Ruth became the great grandmother of King David through her determination to stay with Naomi (Ruth 1:18). And Jesus wrought about salvation for all of humanity through his resolve to go to Jerusalem and die (Luke 9:51). Sometimes great things happen through chance and/or talent. But more times than not they happen when someone resolves to push forward.

**But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.**

**Joshua 24:15**

## Stand Firm in Your Heart

In the seventh chapter of 1 Corinthians the Apostle Paul addresses questions that the Corinthians had asked concerning whether or not it was better to give or not give one's daughter in marriage. He prefaces his answer by stating that he had no clear instruction from the Lord, but would give his opinion on the matter (1 Cor. 7:25). We wrestle to understand how to apply the passage that follows, as we do not know what "present distress" (7:26) brought the question. Nor does the social construction of "giving one's virgin" exist in our society today. Nonetheless, one thing we can see from the passage is Paul lifting up the importance of resolve in making tough decisions. Read 1 Cor. 7:37. Next time you have struggled through to a tough decision encourage yourself and build your resolve by taking out the words "keep his own virgin daughter" and inserting the appropriate words. "But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to \_\_\_\_\_, he will do well."

## Building Resolve in Your Children

We often make the mistake of rescuing our children too early when they encounter a task that seems too difficult for them. Perhaps they are getting frustrated and we are busy with something else. So, we fix the uncooperative toy or tie the shoe or write the word for them. An unintentional idea that we may be passing along to the child in those moments is that s/he is incapable of accomplishing the task, and it's time to give up, move out of the way, and let someone else do it for them. Yet, there is a better lesson that can be taught here. That is, slow down, calm down, refocus, you can do this, now try again. The latter approach builds courage, confidence, and resolve. A similar dynamic takes place when children come to us with problems that they are facing in school and/or with friends. It is tempting to simply give them the solution, and there are times to do that. But there are also times when our children are best served with a response along the lines of, "That's a tough situation. What do you think you can do about it?" Often our children know the best solution, they just don't know that they have it in them. Finally, be deliberate in exposing your children to role models of resolve. Look for them in books, movies, TV shows, family members, friends, and acquaintances.

**Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."**

**Acts 19:21**



Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.  
Romans 12:2

