

Galatians 5:7 From Strength to Strength: What Hinders You?

This series of ten messages is collectively titled, “From Strength to Strength” based upon **Psalms 84:7**: “**They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion.**” This eighth message deals with impediments or hinderances to our calling as disciples of Christ.

What a wonderful thing it is when someone is converted! A truly converted person is born again (**1 Peter 1:23**); saved (**Romans 10:9**); justified (**Romans 5:1**); and is made a partaker of the divine nature (**2 Peter 1:4**). But it is inexpressibly sad when one who has been truly converted turns back (**Acts 7:39**); backslides (**Proverbs 14:14**); becomes lukewarm (**Revelation 3:16**); loses his first love (**Revelation 2:4**).

Galatians 5:7: “You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?”

- Grammatical Usage: “**running well**” on the Greek, “trechó” meaning, intensely progressing”; “**hindered**” or “egkoptó” meaning, “cut into”; “**obeying**” or “peithó” meaning, “having confidence.”
- Literal Interpretation: You were intensely progressing. Who cut in, keeping you from confidence in the truth?
- Contextual/Comparison: God keeps His Word, God continually uses His Word. The thought conveyed in our key verse is that the Christian life is a race. Paul used this metaphor in **1 Corinthians 9:24** (compare **Hebrews 12:1-2**). But our key verse tells us that we may be hindered in the race to which God has called us:

1. What hindered you? Was it the inconsistency of professing Christians? Then you need to take heed to **1 Peter 2:21**. Did you look to other Christians and seek to follow their example, and even put them on a pedestal? Then, when you discovered that they were not as perfect as you had thought, were you disappointed and discouraged? There is only One whom we can set up as our example, and that is our Lord Jesus Christ Himself (**Hebrews 12:1-2**). It is most essential to look off, away from oneself, one’s circumstances and from other Christians, to Jesus Himself.

2. What hindered you? Was it persecution, misunderstanding or opposition? Then you need to take heed to **John 16:32**. Many people have accepted Christ and have then had to face the misunderstanding and opposition of loved ones and friends, and the test has been so severe that later they have become discouraged and have given everything up. But it is hard to be a Christian, and our Lord expressly told us that it would be so (**Matthew 5:11-12**). The Lord Jesus was

threatened with stones (**John 8:59**); they put a crown of thorns upon His head (**John 19:1-3**); they mocked Him (**Luke 23:33-37**); then they crucified Him (**John 19:16**). Is it not a privilege to suffer with Him? See **Philippians 1:29** and compare **Acts 5:41** and **2 Corinthians 11:23-30**.

3. What hindered you? Was it some severe trial or sorrow?

Then you need to take heed to **Hebrews 12:6**. The first thing the Lord does when we tell Him that we are willing to be wholly His is to test us out to see if we really mean it, and all the way through our earthly pilgrimage He is chastening us, “child-training” us. He allows tests and trials to beset us so that we may be cast on Him (**Psalms 55:22**); that we may be refined (**Malachi 3:3**); and that our faith may be deepened (**1 Peter 1:7**). Have you ever noticed **Luke 7:23**? Read **vv. 19-22** and compare **1 Peter 2:8**.

4. What hindered you? Was it the pull of the world?

Then you need to take heed to **1 John 2:15**. It is not possible to love the Lord Jesus and to love the world at the same time (**Matthew 6:24**). That was the trouble with Demas (**2 Timothy 4:10**); he was hindered by a love for the world.

5. What hindered you? Was it neglect of fellowship with the Lord?

Then you need to take heed to **John 15:4**. To “**remain**” means to “stay put”, and many Christians instead of remaining in Christ have backslidden because they have neglected private prayer (**Matthew 6:6**), and regular attendance at the house of God (**Hebrews 10:25**), and in consequence they have not grown and progressed spiritually (**2 Corinthians 3:18**).

6. What hindered you? Was it some willful disobedience?

Then you need to take heed to **Jeremiah 26:13**. It is of little use to think, to talk or even to pray about it unless you actually “**reform your ways...and obey the Lord your God**”. In other words, there must be some drastic dealing with anything and everything that is wrong in the life. Is there a wrong friendship (**Amos 3:3**); an unequal yoke (**2 Corinthians 6:14**); a secret sin (**Joshua 7:18-23**); some impurity (**Isaiah 52:11**); an unforgiving spirit (**Matthew 18:21-22**); an unfulfilled vow (**Deuteronomy 23:21**)? Look up **Proverbs 28:13** and compare **Psalms 66:18**. Notice the reference to obedience in our key verse.

7. What hindered you? Was it something else?

Then you need to take heed to **Hebrews 12:25**. If you are willing and honest before the Lord and you long to come back to Him, He will put His finger upon the hindering thing in your life, and when He does so be sure to obey the injunction in **John 2:5**.

➤ Conclusion: What hinders you? Confess it; surrender it; hindered no more.