

Gumption

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We don't hear much about *gumption* anymore. Too bad, since we need it more than ever these days. I was raised on gumption (my parents also called it "spizzerinctum")—as were my own children, especially when I was trying to motivate them.

Can't you just see it as a new academic field—"Gumptionology 101"—in some college catalog? That will never happen, however, since gumption is better caught than taught.

Most folks get a little gumption in their initial birth packet, but it's a tool that rusts rather quickly. Here are some pointers that will help you keep it well oiled:

- ***Gumption begins with a firm commitment.*** Daniel "made up his mind" long before he was dumped in a Babylonian boot camp (Dan. 1:8). Joshua didn't hesitate to declare his commitment in his famous "as for me and my house" speech (Josh. 24:15). You want gumption to continue to the end? Start strong!
- ***Gumption means being disciplined one day at a time.*** Rather than focusing on the whole enchilada, take it in bite-sized chunks. The whole of any objective can overwhelm even the most courageous.
- ***Gumption requires being alert to subtle temptations.*** Gumption plans ahead, watching out for associations that weaken us (Prov. 13:20), procrastination that steals from us (24:30-34), and rationalizations that lie to us (23:4; 25:28). People who achieve their goals stay alert.
- ***Gumption requires the encouragement of accountability.*** At David's low-water mark, his friend Jonathan stepped in. When Elijah was ready to cash in everything, along came Elisha. With Paul it was Timothy...or Silas or Barnabas or Dr. Luke. People need people, which is why Solomon came on so strong about iron sharpening iron (Prov. 27:17).
- ***Gumption comes easier when we remember that finishing has its own unique rewards.*** Jesus told the Father He had "accomplished" His assignment (John 17:4). On more than one occasion, Paul referred to "finishing the course" (Acts 20:24; 2 Tim. 4:7). Desire accomplished is sweet to the soul.

If the journey seems extra-long today, enjoy a gust of wind at your back from these words out of The Living Bible. It's one of those spizzerinctum Scriptures: *"Let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up"* (Gal. 6:9).

Gumption may be hidden, but it always shows.