

Gumption and Motorcycles

We don't hear much about gumption anymore. That's too bad, since we need it more than ever these days. I'm familiar with gumption; my parents used the word often.

Seems a shame that such a grand old word has dropped through the cracks, especially since quitting is now more popular than finishing.

Gumption is defined in various ways: initiative, aggressiveness, resourcefulness. It can also mean courage, spunk or guts, as well as common sense.

Writing on the subject in his book *The Finishing Touch*, Charles R. Swindoll, author, educator, radio preacher and pastor of Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas, said this:

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

"As is true of most character traits, it is woven so subtly into the fabric of one's life that few ever stop and identify it. It is hidden – like the thick steel bars set within concrete columns that support 10-lane freeways. And while gumption may be hidden, it's a most important tool for getting things done."

Gumption, Swindoll added, enables us to save money rather than spend every dime we make. It keeps us at a hard task, like practicing piano or losing weight ... and keeping it lost; or reading the Bible all the way through in a year's time.

Swindoll identified some pointers that will help you keep your gumption well-oiled. Gumption ...

- **Begins with a firm commitment** – start strong and continue to the end.
- **Means being disciplined one day at a time.** Divide any project into its smallest segment and it doesn't seem all that intimidating.
- **Requires being alert to subtle temptations.** Plan ahead, and watch out for associations that weaken us.
- **Requires the encouragement of accountability.** Close friends or those with the gift of encouragement keep our tanks pumped full of enthusiasm.
- **Comes easier when we remember that finishing has its own unique rewards.** A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul.

(more)

Robert Pirsig, in his book, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, sings the praises of all that gumption represents. He writes:

“If you’re going to repair a motorcycle, an adequate supply of gumption is the first and most important tool. If you haven’t got that, you might as well gather up all the other tools and put them away, because they won’t do you any good.



“Gumption is the psychic gasoline that keeps the whole thing going. If you haven’t got it, there’s no way the motorcycle can possibly be fixed. But if you have got it and know how to keep it, there’s absolutely no way in the whole world that motorcycle can keep from getting fixed. It’s bound to happen. Therefore, the thing that must be monitored at all times and preserved before anything else is gumption.”

Yes, gumption may be essential to fixing a motorcycle, but it is also a principal element to success in Life Care and Century Park. How’s your gumption today?

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 (Galatians 6:9 TLB).

– Beecher Hunter

