



WOW: Word Of the Week

Tenacity

April 16, 2025

Welcome! I have recently written about my plans to step back from the ministry and mission work God has graciously given me for almost 60 years. Jan and I are developing a plan for what we are calling “retirement.” God knows! A longtime ministry acquaintance recently sent a brief note: I admire your tenacity. His comment started my mental wheels turning. What was he saying? What is tenacity? Who has it? Who does not?

I credit my friend, Bob Stephens, with increasing my use of the word tenacity. I remember him speaking to our university students more than once about the need to be tenacious! As I learned Spanish, *tenazas* was the first word I learned to mean pliers – a useful tool and useful word when student mission teams were twisting wires together to stabilize rebar. Perhaps the word stuck in my mind because I associated it with tenacity – same root.

Definitions of tenacity include (1) the quality or fact of being able to grip something firmly; grip; (2) the quality of being very determined; determination; and (3) continuing to exist, persistence. Take hold of something important and valuable, throw in some determination, and be persistent. Perhaps that describes my pursuit of ministry and missions. I hope so!

Another application of our word comes to my mind—even more important. The message of Scripture concerns our tenacious God who is persistent, unwavering, and steadfast in his love, promises, and actions. That suggests to me that tenacity is a part of my becoming like God.

Here is truth that should rock us. Our tenacious God wants to bless us. God’s desire to bless you is as great as He is, and is therefore unfathomable. “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!” (Rom. 11:33)

Tenacity. A final application. More personal. Is it not the case that the call to discipleship is God’s call to tenacity? Is there any other kind of disciple? Jesus follower? Christian? All or none. All in or out. You either hold on or you let go. You persist or you do not. Tenacity—a reminder that there is no middle ground! No half-hearted discipleship. No part-time Christianity. Echoing my friend, Bob: God calls us to be tenacious!