



Wanna Finish Well!

But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. ~Paul, Acts 20:24

Not enough is said these days about cultivating Christian character, about knowing the Lord intimately during times of suffering (not that we should seek or desire suffering), about Hell, about finishing, and how to avoid it, about future judgment of the wicked ..(that we could help today if they became willing), about our battle against the fleshly nature and temptation.. about full no-compromise commitment and inner purity, about true love, about the beautiful Person and personality of Jesus Christ and about FINISHING WELL in Him. I love to be in the Lord and talk about getting things in order with Him! I love to discuss topics like these that are neglected by the Church and even unpopular ..that even get me in vigorous debate or in hot water with angry people at times. It keeps life fresh and stimulating for us to obey and meditate on what God says about such shoved-out-of-the-way things. Tozer once said ***"To be right with God has often meant to be in trouble with men."*** But it's very healthy to prayerfully muse over the Word regarding these things early. Yes, before life gets real hairy ..before the silver cord is loosed, or the bowl is broken or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain or the wheel broken at the well or the dust (you) returns to the earth (See [Eccl. 12:6](#)). I SO want to finish well. How 'bout you?

You know, I remember how I had to run in relay races as a small boy when I was attending Dunsmore Elementary School in California. I enjoyed running in different races, but my brother Kevin was always faster.

In any race the start was real important.. pace and endurance were also important factors, but so was how you finished your particular part of the race. The other runners were depending upon you to do your best, so you just had to come through for the whole team and for the team captain. As a Christian, we also have a Captain to serve doing our best.

We want to run keeping the rules and start in the will of God. If you start in Jesus, please finish right by His grace. Don't rely upon your own abilities, talent, savvy or whatever you've been gifted with.

When we talk about "finishing" (and this light e-musing here won't be exhaustive by any means..) we must remember that this is not merely a message for the elderly. It's also not merely a message for semi-graying ministers who perhaps are about to trade the spotlight season of their lives for a twilight season. It indeed for young people as well. Young people need to start praying now about how they will walk, serve and eventually end up. We've all got to make for the finish line in a spiritual manner.

Remember how aging Paul urged and encouraged young Tim, his original hearer back in the day when he penned Second Timothy, to, ***"...continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"*** (2 Tim. 3:14-17). It's so important to continue on to the finish line right!

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ~Paul, 2 Timothy 4:7

We too can end the Christian race well, even if we began late, started slow, or faltered along the way. The secret is to stay true to Christ to the last moment. ~Haddon Robinson

Are you thoroughly equipped or currently getting yourself built up for every good work? Those words of Paul are good for you and me today huh. We Christians need to hold fast to what we've been taught. We need to hold to the good convictions that we've been given.. hold to our first Love (Christ) and His great evangelistic mandate for the Church. We need to hold together in unity for the benefit of all. Moffat used to speak a lot about this kinda stuff.

Paul went the distance praying to and worshipping the Lord with fresh passion. He fished for souls using the Word (vv. 2 & 5) his whole life through as a natural outgrowth of his devotion to Jesus and Paul wanted his son in the faith, Tim, to also do the same. And that's what I want for you and me!

These words of Paul make me kinda wanna ponder how Abe, the father of faith, finished his life real strong...

and how Joshua the conqueror of the land finished...

and how faithful Samuel the prophet finished...

and how Jesus our precious Lord finished...

and how James, the half brother of Christ finished...

and even how Billy Graham is finishing his race well.

Will you? The Apostle Paul basically told Tim to *hang in there babe* (he wasn't really a babe in Christ—it's just my figure of speech). He challenged Tim and subsequently us to...

Continue in what you have learned (2 Tim. 3:14).

Become convinced of what you already know (v.15).

Place value on what God values and has revealed (v.16).

Allow the Truth of the Word [which is alive, active and sharp] to radically change you (v.17 ..that's my free translation if you will).

Yeah, you've got to believe that the Word ..as we find it in the Bible was transmitted to man supernaturally, with high accuracy!!! The Scriptures have supernatural origin, not natural and you've gotta know this *in your knower*. This is a watershed issue of every generation—it will effect how we each make our decisions!

The Bible wasn't written to you, but for you. We've first got to ask what it would have meant to the original hearers back in the day, and then ask what the eternal truth is for us in our day, to properly apply. The Scriptures came from God through human authors supernaturally ..who recorded it without error. Yes, even the order of the words were recorded without error! God overshadowed all this, cuz He is big enough to handle all that for us. He is sovereign. Pretty cool huh! That's what we need today..

* **Revelation** (this is not some unclear message for a privileged few in some priesthood, or a message logged in some unclear Latin that I can't ever grasp.. or in some unknown written language that none of us can understand. God wants us to understand His will and Word).

* **Inspiration** (this speaks of the receiving of what was recorded by the writers for the Church [the accepted Canon]).

* **Illumination** (That's the work of the Holy Spirit to ignite and make clear God's Message, for the purpose of helping us understand and apply it. It's a personal spiritual thing so that you and I can be equipped, encouraged, and fully motivated to go do God's will out in the world).

Revelation, Inspiration, Illumination – all three were given supernaturally! The Bible is God's Revelation to man—it's profitable for your family and mine! And it doesn't have to be confusing at all. Many Christians speak of how they are having an experience where they're receiving "revelation knowledge" but after I hear them explain what is happening, we can tell that as they prayerfully study their Bibles, they are simply receiving illumination as the Holy Spirit applies it to their hearts personally. How exciting!

"Those who make a lasting difference.. finish well. They don't merely start well, they finish well. They stay in the race all the way to the finish line. They endure. They persevere to the end. As one man put it, they sustain 'long obedience in the same direction.' This was Paul's great hope for Timothy, who had received a solid foundation that set him on his way—he started well. He had proved himself a faithful traveling companion and a loyal disciple of Paul for years—he maintained well. Both of these aspects were certainly commendable, but neither was enough; Timothy needed to finish well! How? The answer has everything to do with how greatly he values, how diligently he studies, how strongly he defends, and how personally he embraces and applies the God-breathed truth of Holy Scripture. What was true for Timothy is equally true for us: we will finish only as well as we stand for the Truth." -Chuck Swindoll

You too can experience God's illumination for your life after you get in Christ. I know, that might kind of sound like religious gibberishness, but it simply means that you too, through repentance, faith and Jesus the Son of God, can become a real Christian who hears from the Lord. You see, God has no grandchildren, just children. You can't get into God's holy heaven one day just because you have Christian parents.

Have you been born again? You must be! Don't get mad at me for saying that. Those aren't my words—God's Word tells us this. Why? It's because none of us were born right the first time (See [Jn. 3:3](#)). Have ya gotten honest with the Lord about all this before—you know, gotten right with God through his sinless Son? This is way important above all else!

Listen up; it's true! You and I can finish our race well.. but not outside of having this vital [relationship with Jesus Christ](#). You and I need intimacy with Him.. we need cooperation with the Holy Spirit, and a hunger for the Bible to finish well! May the Lord revive, restore, renew and help us to put first things first as we look to Christ the ultimate Finisher. He said "it is finished" when He hung there on that cross for us.

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