

5 Keys to Finishing This Race Strong

Here are five guidelines you can follow that will help you finish your walk with the Lord well.

1. Maintain holy living. There is no greater obstacle to finishing well than sin. It tarnishes the best of records and intentions. You must always allow the Holy Spirit to work in you to ensure that you become more like Jesus.

This involves a commitment to prayer, fellowship and Bible study. And don't ignore issues such as anger, which caused Moses to miss entering the Promised Land. Make every effort to live a holy and obedient life.

2. Know your purpose. Paul could say that he had finished the race because he knew what his race entailed. Jesus finished the work the Father gave Him to do. Both knew their reasons for being here and stayed true to their work. In re-examining the list, it is obvious that the most successful finishers knew their purpose and stayed true to it to the end.

3. Be true to your purpose. Both Solomon and King Saul knew their purposes, but they got sidetracked by selfish ambition and personal pleasure. The Pharisees rejected God's purpose, and that marked the beginning of the end for their movement and way of life (see Luke 7:30). The best finishers, such as Jesus, Paul and Joseph, were productive to the end.

4. Leave some kind of legacy. I don't think you have to construct a building or start a movement named after you to leave a spiritual legacy. Of the characters we studied, some wrote, others had family who carried on their name or work, still others left a body of work that could be emulated.

Finishing well requires that you think through what you will

leave behind that has the potential to bless others after you're gone. There is no guarantee that will happen, for only God can provide that kind of impact. But those who finish well think about what they have the power to produce that can pass on to people the work God has done in their lives.

5. Leave behind a good name. Proverbs 10:7 says, "The memory of the righteous is blessed, but the name of the wicked will rot" (NKJV). That's quite a statement!

What kind of name does King Saul have among Bible readers? What about Solomon? Paul? Samson? The Pharisees?

Not many people are remembered beyond one or two generations after their deaths. So if nothing else, you can finish well by leaving behind a good name that your children and grandchildren can remember.

If you don't have children, then you can leave a good name among those who knew you best, whether friends or associates. For that to happen, you will have to spend some time being a blessing to others, using your time and gifts to serve their needs.

Ultimately, it is most important to finish well in God's eyes. When Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, not many people were happy with the job he was doing. Yet today there aren't too many cities in the United States that don't have some memorial to his work and name.

Perhaps we should remember Nehemiah's prayers as we consider our lives and our desire to finish well. On two separate occasions, Nehemiah prayed that God would remember him for the work he had done: "Remember me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people" (Neh. 5:19); "Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for its services!" (Neh. 13:14).

If you are obedient to God's will for your life and walk in holiness, you will finish well in His eyes. And that is all that is important—to please God. So give some thought to finishing well, and then get back to work, fulfilling the purpose He has assigned for you. If you do that, you will receive an A in His book!

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