

## Finishing Well

What “position” are you in now, and what do you need to do to “reposition” yourself for hope to return?

What “shape” are you in now, and what commitments do you need to make to overcome the obstacles in your life in order to see your vision fulfilled?

Have you ever wondered how people will remember you?

- Do people remember the good parts about me, the bad parts about me?
- Do people remember a positive thing or a negative thing?
- What legacy am I leaving everywhere I go?

### How do we finish well?

Not only how to finish well, but also how you make sure at the end of your life, you finish well, even in death.

The reality is we have all been there, RIGHT!

You started something really fun, the job was great, the relationship was really exciting, and then you got to some point where you asked yourself, “What have I got myself into?”

- The job was super fun, then it became a drag and you hated getting up in the morning to go to the job!
- You started dating a girl and she was so fun, then midway through you think, “What am I even doing in this relationship? Where did the fun go? Where did the magic go?”

And, if you are not careful, you will chase that “fun side” of life and not endure the tough times that come. There will always be dry patches where it isn’t fun anymore.

What do the scriptures say about these dry patches, these rough spots?

- Moses was a shepherd who passes a bush that is on fire but doesn’t burn up and the bush begins to speak to him; “You are on holy ground, take off you sandals”, and God says to him, “You will lead all the people in Egypt out of slavery”. “You will go face to face with Pharaoh.” “You and no army, just you.” So Moses obeys and finally Pharaoh let’s all 2,000,000 people go because Moses acted on God’s Word. And after that God parts a sea for them to walk through, and everything looks perfect!

- What a start! Then, suddenly, you get to a place on your way to the Promised Land where you find yourself 40 years in the wilderness!
- Joseph starts getting dreams from God as a boy. He tells these dreams to his brothers and they do what any brothers do when another brother starts getting visions from God, “they beat him half to death, put him in a well, and sell him into slavery.”
- So Joseph, while in slavery, has God tell him the future through more dreams only to sit there in jail for 13 years.
- You look at this and say, “Where is God, now?” If you are sitting in prison, don’t you say to God, “Thanks for the help!”
- David at 12 years old is attacked by a lion and he kills it with his bare hands. A couple of weeks later a bear comes and he kills it with his bare hands. And then a prophet shows up from nowhere and says, “You are the new King of Israel.”
- David goes to visit his brothers on the war front, and he steps onto the battlefield and slays a giant warrior before two huge armies and everyone realizes this will be the next King. Great start!
- Then David, for the next 15 years, is running for his life, going from cave to cave hiding from King Saul. Where is God then?

There are these patterns where God starts someone off on a journey that has so much energy, fun, excitement, and then they hit this space where God is silent.

Whether it is Moses, or Joseph, or David, if they had quit when it became difficult they would have allowed the difficulties to win.

- If Moses had quit when they were in the desert, he would have allowed Pharaoh and Egypt to win even though he had went this far.
- If Joseph had quit while he was in prison for 13 years he would have allowed Potiphar’s wife who falsely accused him, or his brothers’ envy and greed, to win.
- If David had quit when he was in the caves, he would have allowed Saul’s envy and greed to win.

When you quit, whatever brought you there, wins! The men that push are the ones that God made to be mighty men.

Maybe life is not about point “A” to point “B”. Maybe life is about God building men of character and courage, and it is in the desert, the cave, and the prison cell that character and courage are forged inside your soul.

What is incredible is this...When someone comes into relationship with and has a life changing encounter with Jesus, those things we are not so proud of and we do not want to be remembered for are changed.

## **It's Not How You Start, But How You Finish**

The story of Saul in Acts 9 illuminates this best.

- Saul is known for devastation and horror. His legacy to this point is one of a tyrant, he is a warmonger, and the scriptures say in Acts 9...the Legacy of Saul was that he killed Christians.
- Saul would throw Christians in prison and let them rot there.
- Saul may have been one of those guys that threw them into the coliseum in Rome.
- Saul's legacy was well-known and yet when God meets him and he met Jesus it changed the trajectory of his entire life.
- Saul became an instrument of God to change the entire world.

Jesus' job was not come to convert the world any more than my job is to convert you.

Jesus came to heal the world.

- Jesus didn't come to try and change your mind or alter some sort of belief system you have.
- Jesus came to help you heal.
- Jesus has come to step into a moment, just like with Saul, and help you heal, to make you whole.
- Back to whom you were. Back to whom you were meant to be, before the mistakes caught up to you, before the damage that was done to you.
- Jesus said, "I have come that you may have life!"

Listen...Jesus wants to restore you to who you were meant to be!

The stories of the scripture are consistent...When you allow Jesus to move inside you, your legacy changes!

### **So what about FINISHING WELL in death?**

- Do you realize that in 100 years, no one in this building will be alive?
- You and I don't get to decide how we die; we just get to decide who we are when we die.

It doesn't matter how you start in this life, it matters who you are when you leave this earth and what the people around you will say when you are gone.

So, I want to leave you with these questions again...**What "position" are you in now, and what do you need to do to "reposition" yourself for hope to return? What legacy are you going to leave when you are gone?**