

finishing

STRONG



*Pastor
Mark Moder*

God's Plan, Your Decision

Pastor Mark's Life Message

“Many years ago, I read a book called *Finishing Strong* by Steve Farrar. It made a great impact on my life and really stirred me to live out these principles. Since then, I have walked with the Lord for over 45 years and I have been a pastor for four decades. ‘Finishing strong’ is my life message!”



Ready, Set, GO!



The Christian life is likened to a spiritual race. God wants us to fulfill our assignment and finish strong. Notice the word “finish” in the following verses:

John 17:4 (GWT) Jesus prayed to His Father and said, “On earth I have given You glory by **finishing the work** You gave Me to do.”

Most scholars believe that 2 Timothy was the last letter the apostle Paul wrote. He was a prisoner in Rome when he wrote it. Not long afterward, according to tradition, the apostle Paul was beheaded.

2 Timothy 4:7 “I have fought the good fight, ***I have finished the race***, I have kept the faith.”

A Metaphorical Marathon

Hebrews 12:1, 2



Vs. 1 “...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us ***run with endurance the race*** that is set before us.”

The Christian life is not a short sprint; it is a long distance race. And to be successful in that race we need endurance.

Eyes Up, Pass the Baton

Vs. 2 “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.”

This verse shows us the key. We must keep our eyes on Jesus.

The Christian life is not a sprint; it is both a long-distance race and a relay race. ***There is no lasting success without a successor!***



Are You In?

Finishing strong in the Christian life is never easy but it is God's plan for your life and, ultimately, it is your decision.

We should strive to finish strong **spiritually**, **emotionally**, **mentally**, **relationally** and **financially**.



The Example of Daniel



The Book of Daniel, 2013

Daniel 1:8, 9 “But Daniel ***purposed in his heart*** that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, ...Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs.”

Three Ways to Decide Like Daniel

1. I have purposed in my heart to serve the Lord all of my days.

Daniel 1:21 “Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.”

Daniel lived in Babylon for seventy-two years, “from the first year of the Jews’ captivity till two years after their return from the captivity” (Halley’s, pg. 340). He was in Babylon from its rise to its fall and then some. He stood the test of time.

Outliving the Kings

Four kings are specifically mentioned in the book of Daniel: Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus.

Daniel lived through the reigns of at least four kings. He likely died in his late 80s or early 90s.

Daniel lived long and finished strong!



Long Lives, Strong Stories



Corrie ten Boom, author and speaker; died at 91



Billy Graham, evangelist; died at 99



Fanny Crosby, writer of 8,000+ hymns; died at 94



Kenneth Hagin, preacher and writer; died at 86

Three Ways to Decide Like Daniel

(2) I have purposed in my heart to be a person of character.

2 Peter 1:2-11

Vs. 10, 11 (NIV) “...For if you do these things (add to your faith these seven qualities), you will never stumble [NLT: ‘fall away’], and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”



You Can Do It!

God has made provision for the believer to start strong and to finish strong.

Vs. 10 “stumble/fall” - (SC 4417: ptaio) to trip; stumble; fall

The word “fall” doesn’t mean that a believer loses their salvation. But their spiritual growth has been put on hold. They aren’t going forward. Instead, they are going in reverse!

Three Ways to Decide Like Daniel

(3) I have purposed in my heart to be in the middle of what God is doing in the earth.

“...I want to be where the blessing of God is being poured out. I want to be where the anointing is on people. I refuse to get stuck in some place or group where the Holy Spirit is not being poured out.”

Lester Sumrall



It's How You Finish That Counts

God's plan is that we not only start strong but that we finish strong as well.

Psalm 92:14 "They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing..."

We see examples in the Old and New Testament of believers finishing strong. ***The good news is that finishing strong doesn't mean finishing perfect.***

No One Got It 100% Right

Noah got drunk after the flood.

Abraham lied about his wife several times.

Jacob deceived his own father to receive his blessing.

Moses killed an Egyptian and later got angry.

Elijah gave in to discouragement and self-pity.

David committed adultery and murder.

Peter denied the Lord three times.

The disciples continually argued...then they deserted Jesus.

The Top 10 Pitfalls

- isolation
- offenses/unforgiveness
- the cares of the world
- discouragement/disappointment
- sexual sin
- pride
- deception
- a lack of character
- covetousness
- worldliness



Two Things to Recognize to Overcome Temptation

1. Recognize your own humanity.

Don't ever say, "I would never do that. I could never fall." We ALL have the sin nature within us. No one is beyond temptation.

1 Corinthians 10:12 (NLT) "If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall."

Two Things to Recognize to Overcome Temptation

2. Recognize your need for the fear of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord is not being afraid of God. It is a reverence for Him. And it is a hatred of evil (Proverbs 8:13; 16:6).

Two Things to Recognize to Overcome Temptation

Nehemiah 5:15 “The...governors who were before me laid burdens on the people, and took from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even their servants bore rule over the people, but I did not do so, because of the fear of God.”

Nehemiah led by example. He did not take advantage of his position as governor (Nehemiah 5:1-19). He walked in integrity because he feared/revered the Lord.

One Out of Ten Is Not Good Enough

“...It has been my observation that just one out of ten who start out in full-time service for the Lord at twenty-one are still on track by the age of sixty-five. They’re shot down morally, they’re shot down with discouragement, they’re shot down with liberal theology, they get obsessed with making money...but for one reason or another nine out of ten fall out.”

But What About Today?

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In 1945 God raised up three powerful evangelists. All in their twenties, they began to pack auditoriums as they ministered to thousands. Their names were Chuck Templeton, Bron Clifford and Billy Graham.

The Prophet's Farewell

1 Samuel 12:1-3 (NLT) “Then Samuel addressed all Israel: ...‘I stand here before you—an old, gray-haired man—and my sons serve you. I have served as your leader from the time I was a boy to this very day. Now testify against me in the presence of the Lord and before His anointed one. Whose ox or donkey have I stolen? Have I ever cheated any of you? Have I ever oppressed you? Have I ever taken a bribe and perverted justice? Tell me and I will make right whatever I have done wrong.’”

The Prophet's Farewell

1 Samuel 12:4-5 (NLT) “No,” they replied, “you have never cheated or oppressed us, and you have never taken even a single bribe.” “The Lord and His anointed one are my witnesses today,” Samuel declared, “that my hands are clean.” “Yes, he is a witness,” they replied.”

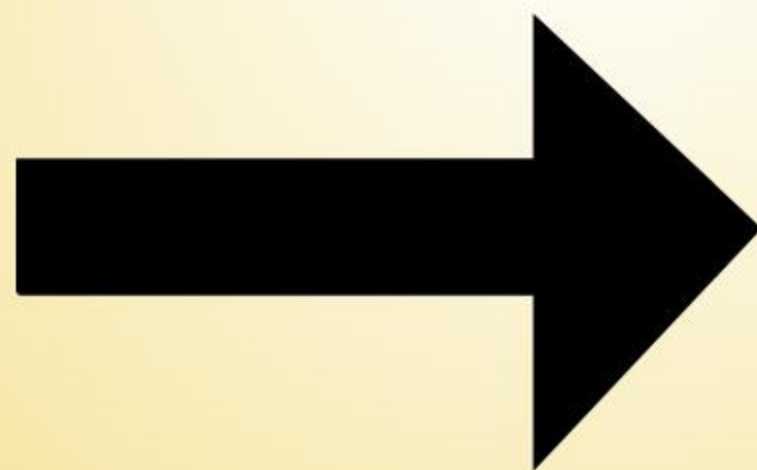


May others recognize the integrity in our lives. And at the end of our lives may we be able to declare, “*My hands are clean. I have finished strong.*”



**An update to Pastor Mark's website:
The *Finishing Strong* Message is now available
in five hour-long segments.**

The QR code below will take you to Part One!



Or, visit FinishingStrongPGH.com!

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WHAT PAUL SAID WAS TRUE. ACTS 17:11**

17:11

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