

## **Finish**

Text: John 4:34; John 5:36; John 17:4; John 19:30  
Acts 20: 24; II Timothy 4:7

Thomas Edison said, "Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up." If we knew this before we quit a great undertaking, fewer people would quit. Emerson said, "A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is braver five minutes longer." Winston Churchill said, "Success is never final. Failure is never fatal." The most famous World War I flying ace and founder of Eastern Airlines who set the standard for world-wide air travel said, "Quitters never win and winners never quit" (Eddie Rickenbacker). Dr. V. Edmund Raymond, the late president of Wheaton College often told his students, "It's always too soon to quit."

### **1. A FINISHER DOES NOT BUY INTO "THE GRASS IS GREENER SYNDROME."**

The old saying, "the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence" is speaking to the wanderlust temptation to always see things brighter or better somewhere other than where you are. This type of person lives in constant frustration, always blaming their unhappiness on their environment. In this case the cure will never be geography; it will be the inner attitude of the heart. Let me give you a tweaked version of that old saying, "The grass is always greener over the septic tank." Everything that glitters is not gold.

The Bible says, "...let us be therewith content" (I Timothy 6:8). "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content"(Philippians 4:11). "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

### **2. A FINISHER IS NOT IMMERSSED IN UNFULFILLED EXPECTATION.**

It is easy to live for the longings of our base nature. On the other hand, the Psalmist said, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him"(Psalm 62:5). In essence, when we make

this our prayer, we are saying, God, Your will is my will and I will accept the darkness with the light; I wait only for Thee, for You alone are my expectation. The word expectation is the Hebrew word "*tiqvah*" which means: hope, live, thing that I long for. We are saying, I love You, Lord; I am not living for things or other people. You alone are my life (Colossians 3:4). Therefore, although disappointments come, we carry on.

Do not be dissuaded by the storms of life. Sailors will tell you, "You don't change ships in the middle of a storm." Ride it out! Psalm 107: 28-30 says, "Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven."

### 3. A FINISHER DOES NOT TRY TO ASSUME A ROLE FOR WHICH HE OR SHE IS NOT CALLED OR NOT READY.

When Absalom was coveting the throne of Israel, he said, "...Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!" (II Samuel 15:4). Misery awaits anyone who goes contrary to God's plan for his or her life. No matter how hard you try, life will not be sweet, rewards will not forthcoming and coming years will hold for you what Lord Byron said his future held for him: "My life is in the yellow leaf..." Eventually the life of one who misapplies their gifts will become so unhappy that they will feel like quitting. Be what God has called you to be. Do what God has called you to do, where and when He calls you.

### 4. A FINISHER IS NOT BITTER.

It has been rightly said, "Bitterness is the only chemical that destroys the container than holds it." The Bible says, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Hebrews 12:15). Bitterness defiles. The poisoned quitter is unhappy and often tends to make everybody's world (with whom he associates) an unhappy place also. Bitter people are no fun to be around. Who wants to hang out with grouchy, discontented people?

### 5. A FINISHER LISTENS TO WISE COUNSEL

Proverbs 13:20: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Jeremiah 5:5a: "I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God...."

After the death of King Solomon, young King Rehoboam made a drastic mistake. It is spoken of in I Kings 12:8, "But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him." Due to this foolish mistake of seeking the vitality of youth, Rehoboam forsook the wisdom of aged counselors and split the kingdom. Psalm 26:4 gives us this warning: "I have not sat with vain persons [people who have useless, purposeless and evil goals], neither will I go in with dissemblers [imposters]."

## 6. FINISHERS DON'T ATTEMPT TO TAKE SHORTCUTS TO SUCCESS.

Our Lord shows us in nature that success is a process. Jesus said, "For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark 4:28). A great harvest is the result of patiently waiting on God until He makes all things beautiful in His time (Ecclesiastes 3:11). A well-meaning little boy observing a potential butterfly struggling to be free of its chrysalis wanted to help. He took a sharp little stick and aided the butterfly by breaking the chrysalis binding it. The butterfly soon burst forth. Immediately the boy noticed the normal gorgeous coloration absent and it was not taking to the air and soon died. His observing father walked over to his son and said with instructive compassion, "Son, your attempt to help the butterfly actually hurt him and cost him his life. The struggle is what adds the gorgeous color to his wings and power in those wings to give him flight." The youngster learned a valuable lesson that day. Let us all remember that the trials God brings into our life are to develop beauty and power.

## 7. FINISHERS RECEIVE THE POWER TO SEE IT THROUGH.

In Philemon, verse 24 Paul describes Demas as one of his fellow laborers along with Luke. In Colossians 4: 14 Demas is mentioned again with Dr. Luke. The final mention of Demas almost brings tears to my eyes as Paul, who is about to die, says, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world..." (II Timothy 4:10). Demas is a tragic commentary of one who did not

seize the power to see it through. The power was available; he just did not take it. He went from being a fellow laborer to teamwork and then, in the crucible of trials, he quit. In the four Gospels, only Luke writes these words: "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" (Luke 14:28). One cannot help but wonder, was Luke thinking of his old team member when he penned these words? The winner doesn't get bitter, he gets better! This a statement that Lockhart made concerning his father-in-law, Sir Walter Scott in *The Life of Scott* that goes like this: "He was making himself all the time, but he did not know maybe what he was about till years had passed." Lockhart was pointing out that everything in Scott's life that was happening to him was part of his experience so that he became what he was by all of those things, but nevertheless he did not know what was really happening to him until the years had passed. The maturing Christian believes that all things are working together for his own good and ultimately for God's glory (Romans 8:28) and therefore develops the power to see it through.

#### 8. WINNERS ADOPT THE ETHIC OF HARD WORK.

"And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you" (I Thessalonians 4:11). "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (II Thessalonians 3:10). The Bible clearly lays down the principle of hard work as necessary for advancement. Many are accused of being where they are and doing what they do as the result of "luck." I love what Gary Player, the great golfer, said when told by a friend after making a great shot. "Gary Player, you are the luckiest golfer I have ever seen." Gary responded with, "The harder I work, the luckier I get." Nothing can substitute for hard work. The quitter often looks for the easy path of least resistance. The finisher is not afraid to blaze the trail with his hard work and make a difference.

#### 9. FINISHERS ARE INSPIRED BY JESUS.

"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). Jesus said in John 17:4, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Our Lord gives us insight into His Divine strength, reminding us that we, too, as we rely

on Him, will have the no-quit spirit. Peter said, “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (I Peter 2:21). Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). This is the nature of God!

#### 10. FINISHERS DISCOVER THE SUPERNATURAL IS ACTIVATED WHEN HUMAN RESOURCES ARE ELIMINATED.

It is only when we come to the end of ourselves, our provision, and our answers that God responds with the miraculous. Remember that the archangel Gabriel told Mary, “For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:37). God has designed us to succeed in His will by total trust and reliance on Him. Our Lord said in John 15:5, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” George MacDonald said, ““In whatever man does without God, he must fail miserably—or succeed more miserably.”

So if your situation looks impossible and you have come to the end of your proverbial rope--just tie a knot and hang on. Don't quit; this state of affairs is the very atmosphere of miracles!

-Pastor Pope-