

Sunday July 19, 2020

Finish Strong

We normally make resolutions at the beginning of each year.

Some of us plan to read more books, some to exercise more and others to eat healthier etc.

Sounds familiar? Studies show that it's a small minority that actually end up finishing what they set out to do. And there are many reasons why this is so.

Here are some keys (A to H) that can help us finish strong in everything that God has called us to do.

#1, Aim to finish

It is important to intend to finish what we start...and to finish well.

We have to aim and train to finish well, especially this journey of life which is comparable to a marathon and not a short sprint. In Hebrews 12:1-2, our journey of faith is termed as a race (Greek, *agona*) which is used for conflict or struggle of many kinds.

Paul the apostle patterned his life after the example of Jesus, who completed His mission and exclaimed 'It is finished'.

Paul too wanted to complete his journey of faith and desired to do it well.

Acts 20:24

24 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 didn't want to let anything distract him from his goal of completing his journey and finishing it well.

2 Timothy 4:7-8

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Paul exhorted Timothy to do the same.

To aim to finish well in our faith journey, we must

- Count the cost of completing

Luke 14:28-30

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it— 29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'?

- Value spiritual goals greater in comparison to temporal ones

1 Tim 4:8

8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

- Know that the destination is important, but the journey is also moulding us into the character of our Savior Jesus Christ.

James 1:2-4

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing

#2, Build strength

Completing any race takes time, effort and stamina.

The longer the race, the greater the stamina required.

For a marathon, one does not try to win but trains to win.

Sometimes this training to win can extend over a lifetime. This is the only way to build strength and agility.

E.g., The 2009 world record of completing a 100m sprint in 9.58secs by Usain Bolt.

The challenge is our mind that

- desires immediate results
- cannot bear the pain that comes with stretching oneself

And as a generation, we struggle with this quick-fix mentality where we want to see instant results. It takes time to see the result of our training in any area. Seed takes time to sprout.

Training will involve pushing ourselves to reach the next level and keep taking things a notch higher every time. This is a process. And a sure shot one to yield growth and the desired results. (E.g., exercise and fitness)

Build personal strength:

A: Spiritual goals e.g., study of the Word, prayer, fasting etc.

E.g., Life of Jesus, Daniel

B: Other areas as well

E.g., upskill oneself for work, improve fitness, manage finances better, relationships etc.

Keep up the momentum

#3, Commit to the Vision

God has created each one of us with a purpose and a call. He puts dreams in our hearts that He wants us to fulfil. We can keep running and run to the finish line, if we know what we are running for! Stop running your own race. Get a hold of the vision that God has for you.

Proverbs 29:18

**18 Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint;
But happy is he who keeps the law.**

God gives us a vision that has to do with our

- **Call/Destiny** – e.g., Paul the apostle
- **Assignments** – Solomon to build the temple, Zerubbabel to rebuild the temple (e.g., assignments in the family, ministry, workplace etc in that season of life)
- **Promises of God** – e.g., work, health, future, marriage etc

Embrace it!

Hebrews 11:13

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Run with it!

Set goals, plan ahead and get to work.

(Proverbs 10:4, Proverbs 12:27, Proverbs 26:15 – encouragement to be diligent)

Leave the past behind, look ahead (Isaiah 43:18,19)

Get started with the intention of finishing!

#4, Develop consistency

You become what you do regularly or often.

In all goals, develop consistency (E.g., David killed the lion and the bear before he killed Goliath).

A finisher must develop the ability to work with long obedience in the same direction.

This involves grit, the ability to commit to long term goals.

We need to work hard, stay consistent and even if we are side-tracked along the way, with God's strength realign ourselves (Prov 24:16).

Don't underestimate the power of little (Luke 16:10, Zech 4:10)

Things start small, but gradually grow into incredible projects.

Go as far as you can see, and when you get to a point, you can see so much more.

Till then, keep putting in the effort.

Keep running

Phil 3:14

14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

#5, Endure

Some parts of the journey are easy, we breeze through them.

There are others that are very challenging to the point where we are tempted to give up.

We've been saying that it takes time for most things to come to fruition.

Therefore there is need for endurance.

Quitting on the other hand brings loss!

It is easy to quit, but takes endurance to take the next step.

Success is on the other side of the point of quitting.

When we quit, we forfeit the prize.

Recognize what to endure and what to resist.

A: To not quit, learn from the example of Jesus

Hebrews 12:1-5

1Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, 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, **2** looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. **4** You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. **5** And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

He kept His eyes on the purpose and destiny.

He was obedient to the call of God and looked to the reward (John 4:34).

He assessed what He was going through in the light of eternity (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

He focussed on the reward ahead or joy on the other side of the Cross. (which is our salvation).

This gave Him the ability to withstand or endure the unbearable Cross for you and me.

Endurance (Greek, *hoop-om-en'-o*)

Endurance means to bear up under, to stay under (*behind*), remain, to undergo, bear (trials), have fortitude, persevere, abide, endure, (take) patient (-ly), suffer, tarry behind.

Endurance is the ability to withstand hardship or adversity especially: the ability to sustain a prolonged stressful effort or activity a marathon runner's endurance.

In other words, it refers to being durable under pressure. E.g., Mountaineering

We are in a race to complete our assignment and our faith journey whose author and finisher is the Lord Jesus Christ. He Himself has endured and overcome.

B: Enemies to face as we endure

As we journey with God, we can face spiritual enemies.

Prepare to overcome with the weapons of spiritual warfare.

Internal:

When we feel and think we cannot go on

Battlefield of the mind (Romans 12:1-2)

- sense of inadequacy & intimidation
- anxiety
- ambiguity
- weariness and fatigue (When we are too tired to go on or might be so under pressure that we have become numb, disinterested, intimidated and even bored.)
- fear of failure and memories of past failures can keep us down
- distraction
- unforgiveness
- fleshly weaknesses and lack of discipline (Proverbs 28:13, 1 Corinthians 9:27)

External:

- Trials, tribulations and temptations can be hard. We might feel overwhelmed by hurdles from Satan and the world.

E.g., Nehemiah faced opposition, personal attacks and temptation to compromise

He could've experienced fear, anxiety, discouragement, temptation to quit.

But he chose to work and pray. He taught the people to do the same.

The call to us today is to lay aside every weight (Hebrews 12:2)

We must work toward finishing strong.

Today, we could be facing similar challenges as Nehemiah did.

Overcome and keep moving

Stay on guard always - Pray (1 Corinthians 10:12-13, Matthew 26:41)

Learn from past mistakes and run again (Proverbs 24:16, Proverbs 4:7)

Realign and stay steadfast till the end.

C: Finishing well has rewards

The one who receives the prize is the one who endures (1 Tim 6:12)

He who endures till the end is saved (Mat 24:13)

The seed that remains bears much fruit (Mark 4:17)

When we sow without being weary, we reap (Gal 6:9)
A crown is rewarded to the one who overcomes temptation (James 1:12)
We will hear the Master's voice saying 'Well done, good and faithful servant' (Mat 25:21)

#6, Firm & steadfast

Stand a little longer (Eph 6:14)
It's not over till it's done.

Employ faith and patience (James 1:2-5)

Hebrews 6:12

12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Faith:

God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 1:6)

E.g., Abraham waited 25 years for the promise of God.

Others too have seen victories and triumphs through faith (Hebrews 11:33-39)

Speak faith, E.g., Caleb (Numbers 13:30, Joshua 14:12-13)

Patience:

Romans 8:25

But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

E.g., We sow a seed but reap the harvest at an appointed time (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

It takes time, patience, nurturing and protection to get a harvest.

Endurance of Job (James 5:11)

Remain steadfast in the faith.

1 Cor 15:58

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

#7, God strengthens us

God is the source of our endurance

1 Thessalonians 1:3

We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We cannot endure without intimacy with God.

We increase our strength as we wait upon Him.

Isaiah 40:31

31 But those who wait on the Lord

Shall renew their strength;

They shall mount up with wings like eagles,

They shall run and not be weary,

They shall walk and not faint.

God is faithful. He is the God of our breakthrough and the impossibilities!

2 Samuel 5:20

20 So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, "The Lord has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water." Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim.

Mathew 19:26

26 But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

#8, Hope keeps us afloat

Hope is a choice.

Keep hope alive by

- Knowing who we are running for! Do it unto the Lord. He is our rewarder.

Colossians 3:23-24

23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

- Know that others too are pressing on. Stay inspired by the lives of those who have finished well (Hebrews 11)

1 Peter 5:9

9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

- Never lose sight of the heavenly perspective or the big picture

2 Cor 4:17

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

- Look back at the faithfulness of God

Pause if you must...but get back on track.

A-H of Finishing Well

- 1, Aim to finish
- 2, Build strength
- 3, Commit to the Vision
- 4, Develop consistency
- 5, Endure
- 6, Firm and Steadfast
- 7, God strengthens us
- 8, Hope keeps us afloat

MINISTRY TIME

Don't give up

God reassured Zerubbabel that he would complete what God has started through him.

Zech 4:9

9 "The hands of Zerubbabel

Have laid the foundation of this temple;

His hands shall also finish it.

Then you will know

That the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you.

Because of Jesus, we can do hard things.

We can do all things! And we can finish the race set before us.

Philippians 4:13

13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Phil 1:6

6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

Stay expectant to finish strong

- ✓ Stay in faith
- ✓ Stay in your assignment
- ✓ Run till the finish line
- ✓ Remain faithful
- ✓ Most suddenlys come when we endure
- ✓ God is pouring out the new! Don't quit just yet.
- ✓ Finish Well
- ✓ Finish Strong



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE



Sunday July 19, 2020

Finish Strong

This is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their life on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) or the full length Sunday sermon. You can also review the Sunday Sermon notes. All these are available in the "All Peoples Church Bangalore" mobile App or online at apcwo.org/sermons. Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture passages: *2 Timothy 4:7-8, Proverbs 29:18, Hebrews 12:1-5, Isaiah 40:31*

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Please discuss a few of these together, giving time for people to share their insights. We encourage each one individually to make notes of their personal learning during the Group discussion.

1) What is the Vision and some of the causes that God has laid on your heart? Each one can briefly share with the others.

2) Discuss the eight insights that will help us finish our race strong.

1, Aim to finish

2, Build strength

3, Commit to the Vision

4, Develop consistency

5, Endure

6, Firm and Steadfast

7, God strengthens us

8, Hope keeps us afloat

Is there one key in particular that you would like to focus on? Each one can share briefly.

3) Pray for each other to not give up and finish strong. Welcome the work of the Holy Spirit to cause this to happen.

FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other in the light of what was learnt today. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and pray together for:

1, families to be protected and strengthened

2, a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us as a church and through us to bless many others in our city and nation. Nothing but a mighty work of God's Spirit can change our city and nation.

3, for the BUILD TO IMPACT project - for God's hand to guide us through the land search and acquisition process, and for finances to be more than enough to get this project done.

Close by thanking God together.



USEFUL RESOURCES



Watch our online Sunday Church service live stream every Sunday at 10:30am (Indian Time, GMT+5:30). Spirit filled, anointed worship, Word and ministry for healing, miracles, and deliverance.

YOUTUBE: <https://youtube.com/allpeopleschurchbangalore>

WEBSITE: <https://apcwo.org/live>

Our other websites and free resources:

CHURCH: <https://apcwo.org>

FREE SERMONS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/sermons>

FREE BOOKS: <https://apcwo.org/books/english>

DAILY DEVOTIONALS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

JESUS CHRIST: <https://examiningjesus.com>

BIBLE COLLEGE: <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

E-LEARNING: <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

WEEKEND SCHOOLS: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/weekend-schools>

COUNSELING: <https://chrysalislife.org>

MUSIC: <https://apcmusic.org>

MINISTERS FELLOWSHIP: <https://pamfi.org>

CHURCH APP: <https://apcwo.org/app>

CHURCHES: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/churches>

WORLD MISSIONS: <https://apcworldmissions.org>