



### 3. Finishing Well – Don't Quit or be Disqualified

***“The reason why people give up so fast is because they tend to look at how far they still have to go, instead of how far they have come.” (Nicky Gumbel)***

This is the third study on the series “Finishing Well.” Below are notes from the script and some discussion questions to guide you to a deeper understanding of this reflection.

#### NOTES & QUOTES FROM PODCAST

Finishing Well, has two essential dimensions.

The first one is quite obvious - to finish well we must **“finish”** the race. We must not quit midway. In the past few months, many of us witnessed the erosion of the capital that was built over many years. Have you asked yourself “what’s the point in going on?” Did quitting and leaving the race before completing cross your mind?

The second essential dimension is we must run the race with “integrity.” If we don’t, we will indeed finish the race, but we will find ourselves disqualified, and even possibly disgraced.

Let me explain this with a familiar example.

Do you remember the 100 meters race of the 1988 Seoul Olympics? It was the race where Ben Johnson finished first, but where Carl Lewis got the gold medal. Why? Because though Ben Johnson finished the race first, he was disqualified for cheating.

As Paul says *“Like an athlete I punish my body, training it to do what it should, not what it wants to. For I fear that after I enlist others for the race, I myself might be disqualified for the prize.”* (1 Corinthians 9:27)

The idea of quitting the race is not unique. As we glance through the pages of the Bible we find several stalwarts who were tempted to quit. Of course, we also find people who never gave quitting a second thought.

Let’s look at and learn from the example of three Bible characters.

Perhaps no human being had a better reason to follow his spouse’s advice, as Job did. He lost almost everything he possessed. His property, his children and his health. I wonder whether I would have responded as Job did, when his wife said to him, *“Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!”* (Job 2:9)

To his eternal credit, Job held on to his integrity and lost everything except his hope in God and stayed the course. Not once did he utter a word against God. In the end, God rewarded him with a double portion of all he had lost. Today some of us maybe feeling dismayed and helpless like Job and his wife felt as we get news of family and friends becoming victims of this pandemic. Let’s stay firm and overcome the feeling of anguish, helplessness

and bitterness by keeping our faith in God like Job did.

Jeremiah the prophet and his message were rejected for 40 years by the Israelites. Jeremiah gets frustrated and complains to God about this situation. God responds with a question and asks *"If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses?"* We see God acknowledging Jeremiah's situation. But, instead of easing his troubles, God encourages Jeremiah to consider his present challenges as a preparation for greater challenges to come. In other words, God tells Jeremiah don't give up but get ready for more rejection! Jeremiah listens to God and stays the course without quitting. Though rejected by people during his time, Jeremiah ends up being one of the most revered prophets in the Old Testament. In fact, once when Jesus asked His disciples, *"who do people say I am?"* They replied, *"Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."* (Matthew 16:13-14). There is no doubt that Jeremiah finished really well, because some remembered him when they encountered Jesus.

Finally let us look at Moses who finished well after leading the Israelites for 40 years in the wilderness, but due to one misstep he is denied entry into the promised land. Imagine after spending 40 years leading and telling people he would take them into the promised land, he is told he won't be able to get in. How would we react if we received such a decision? Would we continue working diligently for the remaining days left in our contract? But Moses stayed steadfast in his commitment to both God and to the people he was leading. In Deuteronomy 33 we see that even on the last day of his life, he completes his responsibility of blessing all the twelve tribes in. Continuing to work wholeheartedly even after knowing his situation, places Moses in a truly special category. He remained selfless and stayed true to his values without quitting the race. Truth be told, Moses actually did not really lose anything by not entering the earthly promised land. We realize this when we read Deuteronomy 34:10 which says, *"Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face."* The fact is Moses experienced heaven on earth because it is only in heaven that one can be face to face with God and still live. May God give us all the strength, encouragement and stamina to finish our race well and with honor! Amen

## 1. KEYPOINT

We must finish our race well to finish well and we must do it with steadfastness, patience, integrity and without quitting in between.

## 2. KEYPOINT

We must learn from people that don't choose to quit but rather work harder. The 3 people from the Bible that are mentioned in the Guide are Job, Jeremiah and Moses.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What must we do to finish well? What are some things that we can do to keep going?
2. What things did Job, Jeremiah and Moses do that we can look and learn from?
3. What are some things you can do or say to prevent yourself from quitting?

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