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## Finishing Your Course

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We are in a marathon spiritually speaking, running hard and our course has been charted or laid out for us, Paul speaks of this in the following.

2 Tim 4:6-7 "You take over. I'm about to die, my life an offering on God's altar. This is the only race worth running. I've run hard right to the finish, believed all the way." MESSAGE

Paul has received a prophecy regarding what the future for him was and what was waiting for him in Jerusalem, he is speaking to the believers and letting them know how he feels about his future, he is ready to finish his course with joy, having a great attitude because of what God has called him to do.

There are many believers who have a purpose or a course of what God has called them to do in their life. It has been foreordained, predestined for them because God has prepared it ahead of time. When we find that purpose or what we are called to do in life, we will find there is much enjoyment in it. We also find that when we are a long way from fulfilling that purpose our adversary is not worried about what we are doing, but as we continue to pursue that purpose and get closer to the finish line, his plan is to discourage us, causing our focus to be dim, telling us that we will never make it, trying to get our eyes off of the finish and causing us to fail in what God has for us. Don't become discouraged, be a winner, continue to fight, get up again and don't stop but become unstoppable because of the greater one that is on the inside of you.

Acts 20:24 "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." KJV

Eph 2:10 "For we are God's [own] handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [taking paths which He prepared ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live]." AMP

A word had been given many years ago by a lady in the congregation that said "on the plains of hesitation, lie the bones of thousand of bodies that on the threshold of victory just laid down and quit". Powerful words were spoken, but we are not going to lay down and quit, we are going to finish to the goal line, like Paul said we are not going to be phased by bad news.

Psa 112:7 "Unfazed by rumor and gossip, heart ready, trusting in God, Spirit firm, unperturbed," MESSAGE

Psa 112:7 "Bad news won't bother them they have decided to trust the Lord" CEV

These scriptures are about a man who is established in God, trusting Him.

The news that Paul had gotten was bad news, but it did not effect him because his focus was on finishing his course, looking to the finish line and this is what all believers should be doing, not letting the adversary or outside people effect and try to discourage them in their race to the finish.

Three times this scripture mentions finishing or completing what has been set before him and what the cost of becoming a disciple involves, but God sees us now through what Jesus has accomplished and we are seen faithful, running our course, working out our salvation and we have our eye on the goal. We are not looking or hearing the negative around us. What are we saying? what is our confession? who are we in Jesus, are we confessing that we are "Christ followers"? Jesus must be first in our priorities in everything we do.

Luke 14:28-30 "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish." KJV

There are many who are lukewarm and are not having any input into the work of the church but waiting for the church to fail, however, there are many who are going to finish the race and reach their goal.

Acts 13:36 "For David, after he had served God's will and purpose and counsel in his own generation, fell asleep [in death] and was buried among his forefathers, and he did see corruption and undergo putrefaction and dissolution [of the grave]." AMP

David was not buried until he had finished the purpose that God had for him. That is

the plan that God has for each of us to finish what is before us.

The following scriptures are going to explain what the words passionate and focus mean regarding the term finishing the race and reaching the goal set before us. Our attitude will reflect what our true feelings are and how it will be accomplished. There may be a missing ingredient in the passion that we have because of having lost sight of the goal line and now have no reason to run, but we can have passion and focus because of what Jesus has done for us.

Paul is in prison during the time these scriptures were written not for doing wrong but because he had been preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. He was rejoicing in the Lord. Paul had his focus, nothing was fuzzy or cloudy for him to see the goal, it was very clear. If we are still hanging on to our past not forgiving ourselves, we will be missing the mark and not truly focused on the goal set before us. We all have missed the mark and not been focused, but we do not have to stay that way, we have all had challenges to overcome. God has forgiven our past and it is all blotted out and we are the righteousness of God, we have no future as long as we are still tied to the past. We can't be looking back but only to the future, Jesus has paid the price for us and in time we will have spiritual maturity as our passion grows.

Phil 3: 9-16 "My \*passion is to be consumed with him and not clinging to my own "righteousness" based in keeping the written Law. My "righteousness" will be his, based on the faithfulness of Jesus Christ—the very righteousness that comes from God. 10 And I continually long to know the wonders of Jesus more fully and to experience the overflowing power of his resurrection working in me. I will be one with him in his sufferings and I will be one with him in his death. 11 Only then will I be able to experience complete oneness with him in his resurrection from the realm of death. 12 I admit that I haven't yet acquired the absolute fullness that I'm pursuing, but I run with \*passion into his abundance so that I may reach the purpose that Jesus Christ has called me to fulfill and wants me to discover. 13 I don't depend on my own strength to accomplish this; however I do have one compelling \*\*focus: I forget all of the past as I fasten my heart to the future instead. 14 I run straight for the divine invitation of reaching the heavenly goal and gaining the victory-prize through the anointing of Jesus. 15 So let all who are fully mature have this same passion, and if anyone is not yet gripped by these desires, God will reveal it to them. 16 And let us all advance together to reach this victory-prize, following one path with one passion." TPT

\*passion means - we are intense, not just flippant but that our intention for being there is to win, we have strong feelings to what our beliefs are that we are winners,

\*\* focus means - being able to see clearly, lining up our scopes to seeing clearly, getting rid of

cloudy or fuzzy sight, the definition becomes clear

Are we consumed with Jesus? where is our passion? is resurrection life working in us? are we pursuing the absolute fullness of Him? are we running with passion to win? For us to reach the purpose that Jesus has for us we have to run our race with patience and passion. The closer we get to the finish line, we may have to change our focus to see it clearly. We are going to advance making spiritual progress not setting down and quitting.

An example was given of a long distance swimmer who in attempting to swim the bay at San Francisco, she had been in the water for 15 hours but stopped short of the destination by about one-half mile, because of the heavy fog that was hanging over the bay, she was unable to see the shore. However, trying again at a later date with the same type of heavy fog, she was able to accomplish the feat because she was able to focus in her mind the shoreline and what she was wanting to accomplish, regardless of the natural circumstances that were there and she also set a new time record for her swim. How was she able to do this? She was more focused and passionate, she could see the shoreline and did not become discouraged, she was a winner.

Phil 3:13-19 "Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back. 15-16 So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it yet! Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it. 17-19 Stick with me, friends. Keep track of those you see running this same course, headed for this same goal. There are many out there taking other paths, choosing other goals, and trying to get you to go along with them. I've warned you of them many times; sadly, I'm having to do it again. All they want is easy street. They hate Christ's Cross. But easy street is a dead-end street. Those who live there make their bellies their gods; belches are their praise; all they can think of is their appetites." MESSAGE

Keeping our eyes on the goal will enable us to reach that goal and finish the race. We all need encouragement sometimes from others, but God is there beckoning us onward, like those mentioned in Hebrews, those who have died and gone on ahead and are watching us from heaven. Total commitment from us is what is required, not taking the easy street it is a dead-end. No turning back. Jesus has begun a good work in us and He will complete it.

Heb 12:1-2 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience 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 is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." KJV

We see how we are being encouraged by those in heaven regardless of what has happened to us in the past.

Heb 12:1-3 "As for us, we have all of these great witnesses who encircle us like clouds. So we must let go of every wound that has pierced us and the sin we so easily fall into. Then we will be able to run life's marathon race with passion and determination, for the path has been already marked out before us. 2 We look away from the natural realm and we fasten our gaze onto Jesus who birthed faith within us and who leads us forward into faith's perfection. His example is this: Because his heart was focused on the joy of knowing that you would be his, he endured the agony of the cross and conquered its humiliation, and now sits exalted at the right hand of the throne of God! 3 So consider carefully how Jesus faced such intense opposition from sinners who opposed their own souls, so that you won't become worn down and cave in under life's pressures" TPT

Eph 2:10 "For we are God's [own] handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [taking paths which He prepared ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live]." AMP

Our path has already been marked before we start to run, our path is the good life. Jesus is the one who we fix our gaze on, He is the one who leads us into faith's perfection. He endured the cross in order for us to have the good life and is now seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. If we lose sight of Jesus we will cave in under life's pressure, don't quit, don't give up, complete your race, pursue the goal and finish triumphantly.

Heb 12:3 "**When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!**" MESSAGE

The soulish part of us is our feelings and our imaginations, it is where the battles are waged in our minds and by keeping our eyes on Jesus, we won't cave in to life's hostilities.