

FINISH WHAT YOU START

Christian Character in Action Series: Lesson 8

15 April 2022

Christians often begin various endeavors (getting married, joining a church, going to the mission field, attending bible school) with the best of intentions and with great enthusiasm and proper expectations, but it is a rare thing to see someone never give up and finish what they started. It's not enough to simply say you're going to do something. The proof of good Christian character comes in the end when you actually complete the task.

Mat 21:28-32 The Lord Jesus teaches that it is more important to end properly than it is to begin properly.

Luke 14:25-30 The Lord shows us the importance of counting the cost before we begin. We need to make sure we'll be able and willing to finish.

- Many people began to **follow** Jesus in the beginning of His ministry when He was preaching the coming kingdom, healing people, cleansing lepers, and casting out devils.
 - Many of those same people **forsook** the Lord when they saw Him tortured and crucified.
 - Are you prepared to follow Jesus, not only in the good times, but also when things become difficult or unpleasant?
 - You need to count the costs of serving Jesus before you start—and decide that you will continue to serve Him even if things get difficult. Resolve to finish what you start.
 - Count the costs of maintaining a happy marriage for better or for worse.
 - Count the costs of raising children. Be willing to face all the challenges of their growing years, accounting for the difficult teen behavior to come.
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THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

John 4:34 It was Jesus' will to finish the work that His Father sent Him to accomplish.

John 5:36 The Father gave Jesus some works to finish.

John 19:30 Jesus completed all the works He came to do and said, "**It is finished.**"

- Because He finished, you can be saved today. If He had started, but didn't finish what He came to do, we would not have a Savior. We would be in our sins today.
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THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL

Acts 20:17-24 Paul had a good **start** in Asia from the "**first day**" (vs 18). He faced many challenges that could have caused him to want to quit (vs 19). He was determined to finish his course and finish his ministry with joy, not letting anything move him from that end (vs 24).

Php 3:13-14 Paul had a lot of disappointments, betrayals, and hurts along the way in his ministry. He said he decided not to dwell on those things which are behind, but to reach forward and press on to the finish line.

- Don't let the actions of other people who may have hurt you stop you from doing what the Lord told you to do.
 - Don't let other people knock you out of your race. Put it in the past and press on, doing the work that the Lord has for you to do.
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Heb 11:14-16 Because the faithful saints of Old Testament days desired a better country, that mindset helped them to not return to their old way and their old lives.

- If you can't get your heart and your thoughts off the things that you left behind when you decided to follow Jesus Christ, you may end up returning to your old life.
 - If you keep your thoughts on the blessings that God has for you from now to eternity, it will help you to keep going in that direction. Keep your mind on what awaits you.
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1 Cor 7:20 To the husband/wife who has been betrayed/abandoned, the Lord says, "**Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.**"

- Such great pain and disappointment might cause you to want to quit, but the Holy Spirit says, "Keep going."
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2 Tim 4:5-7 Right before his execution, Paul proclaimed that he finished his course. He didn't let the tears, troubles, and betrayals of the past knock him off course.

Jesus finished, Paul finished, and because of that, we can be encouraged to finish our course.

People are watching you run your course. You may want them to come to Jesus for salvation, but if they see you quit and return to your old ways, they may never do it because they watched you quit. The message you convey to them is that the Christian life is not so great after all.

But when they see you still loving and serving the Lord Jesus Christ year after year, it will prove to lost people that you've got something worth getting.

Gal 5:7-8 "*You were doing good! Why did you quit?*" Those are words you don't want to hear the Lord ask you at the Judgment Seat.

- Jesus Christ is worth any trouble you may face in your life as you serve Him. There is nothing better than serving Him.
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