

Open: Starting something is easy, but finishing is difficult. We often start with blind ambition and then realize what we expected did not come to pass. To finish what we start we will have to realize the purpose of life more perfectly and gain the correct perspective that is required to go the distance to the finish line.

Key Verse:

Luke 14:25-33 25Now large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and He turned and said to them, 26“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be My disciple. 27And whoever does not carry his cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple. 28Which of you, wishing to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost to see if he has the resources to complete it? 29Otherwise, if he lays the foundation and is unable to finish the work, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, 30saying, ‘This man could not finish what he started to build.’ 31Or what king on his way to war with another king will not first sit down and consider whether he can engage with ten thousand men the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32And if he is unable, he will send a delegation while the other king is still far off, to ask for terms of peace. 33In the same way, any one of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be My disciple.

1. Knowing what to start and what not to start is important

a. What is your responsibility?

- i. You have obligations to God, your Covenants of marriage, to your children, to your church, and to your employer or place of business. Responsibilities are previously agreed upon obligations and outside of God closing some of those assignments you will still be responsible to fulfill these duties.
- ii. If you become irresponsible and unreliable to what you are supposed to be faithful to you will lose integrity with God and with Man. You want to be found faithful even in the little things because then God will appoint you to even greater tasks.

b. What is your calling?

- i. Like everything God has made you have a spiritual DNA like a key that was made to unlock a purpose.
- ii. God truly did make you to complete very specific tasks. Your calling is unique to you. It may have similarities to others, but it will wholly your greatest purpose and legacy to discover and fulfill your calling from God.

c. What do you desire/want?

- i. We all have wants and desires that are from God and others that are not. Learning to discern between a carnal desire and a spiritual desire is important.
- ii. Not all carnal desires are bad or out of place all the time, some are fine in measure and profitable, but some are disastrous to your spiritual growth and development.
- iii. Our wants stem from a deep desire within our soul. Is that part of our soul that those desires are coming from whole or damaged? Only you can truly determine the source of your desires.

d. What will bring a good return on your time?

- i. Knowing what to start and what not to start is also being completely honest with your strengths and weaknesses.
- ii. Is God calling you to do something you are not that good in so that you can develop that gift, talent or spiritual discipline. Just because you are not good at something doesn't mean God isn't calling you to develop yourself for that purpose.
- iii. Some things you will never be good at, you may become average, but it may never be a strength.
- iv. Instead of taking 10 hours to fix something, you could have paid someone \$20.00 to fix it 5 minutes. What is a better investment of your time?
- v. **A peculiar reality is found in the Pareto principle:** The Pareto Principle, or the 80/20 rule, states that roughly 80% of effects come from 20% of causes, highlighting an imbalance where a few inputs drive most results, applicable in business (20% clients yield 80% revenue) and life (20% tasks yield 80% results)

e. We have all heard of having too many irons in the fire. This is because we are great at starting things but for the wrong reasons.

- i. **Life Lesson: What God calls us to start He will sustain us to finish.**

- f. We live in God's purpose and fulfill our mission in this life by the grace of God. The grace of God is His divine empowerment, unmerited favor and anointing to complete His will in the earth.

2. What if God's will and my will are not the same?

- a. Before you start anything, or commit to anything, you must first discern if it is from God. Here are some important considerations when discerning God's will.
 - i. Not everything God calls you to do is for your benefit or even looks beneficial. God calls His people to do hard things for the glory of His name by His power and strength.
 - ii. Not everything God calls you to do will make sense, or line up with your plan or agenda for life.
 - iii. Starting an endeavor with God can be scary at first but the step that is the hardest is the beginning.
 - iv. Your ambition can lead you to do things you were never called to accomplish. You must approach God with a sincere heart completely willing for Him to shut down what you are doing.
 - 1. If we don't empty ourselves when we are seeking God's will and direction for things we are to accomplish we can easily manipulate what we hear to go along with what we want over what God really wants.

3. The pitfall of Peoples false expectations

- a. Peer pressure can be a difficult thing to overcome.
 - i. In every culture that is established we can see a tendency to go with the status quo. What if the status quo is broken or wrong?
 - ii. In Jesus day, the Pharisees were the established religious majority. The problem was they were corrupt leaders and they led people away from God instead of to Him.
- b. The balance of being culturally relevant while being Biblically true to God's heart and mission.
 - i. If you try to appease everyone around you, then you will have a hard time pleasing God.
 - ii. Man can be incredibly fickle, unruly, short sited and unthankful. What is trending on social media changes every day, that is why it is called trending. It changes like a roller coaster ride.
 - iii. The mission of God supersedes all cultural norms and boundaries, it works in all cultures but it is never bound by any human established ordinance.
- c. King David wanted to take out goliath but the culture, his family and even the King hindered him from His mission. David was anointed to take down goliath by God.
 - i. Davids Father sent Him for a different mission to supply His brothers instead of be the hero.
 - ii. Davids brothers accused him of seeking vain glory and berated his passion to vindicate the name of God from that "uncircumcised philistine".
 - iii. King Saul gave David His burdensome, limited armor and expected Him to take down the giant the way that He would do it.
 - iv. What did David do? He took of his staff, sling and 5 smooth stones, but more importantly He took up His faith and charged the enemy without the stuff of man.

4. Faith is required to work for God

- a. Luke 14:28 28Which of you, wishing to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost to see if he has the resources to complete it? 29Otherwise, if he lays the foundation and is unable to finish the work,
 - i. The most important resource to finish what you start with God is Faith. Without it you will give up way to early.
 - ii. Without faith you will see every set back as a confirmation of your lack of ability, or a sure sign you were misled in beginning the endeavor in the first place.
 - iii. Without faith you will blame God for even asking you to begin the task in the first place.
 - iv. Sit down and ask yourself "Is my faith up to the task of the mission that is set before me"
 - v. **Life Lesson: Nothing that is done for God is to be done without God. You can't walk in God's power if you don't have faith that He will be the one sustaining you.**
- b. I think our adversary can tell when someone has misguided ambition and genuine faith rooted in godly conviction.
 - i. The first type of person is easily overcome and often encouraged to begin the task.
 - ii. The second is threat to His Kingdom and is fought against at all costs.
 - iii. Do you know how to discern between misguided ambition and genuine faith?

5. Expect trials and opposition when doing what God told you to do

- a. If you are rebuilding anything of value that God has promised you will have opposition. If it is your family after tragedy, remember that God wants you to be restored and Satan wants you discouraged.
- b. In the battlefield of life just like in any military theater the high ground is always prized as it provides strategic advantages and protections.
- c. When Satan takes things of value from your life he intends to keep them. Remember however that He is powerless to stop Christ. God wants you to be recover and to be restored to His perfect picture for your life.
- d. God and you are partnered together **Exodus 23:22** “But if you carefully obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.
 - i. In times of opposition when building never forget your greatest support, help, protector and encourager is your commander and chief. Jesus will give you the upper hand when finishing under oppression.
- e. Some people think that opposition is evidence that you are not doing something right, but is that biblical?
 - i. **Luke 6:26-27** 26Woe (sorrow) to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers treated the false prophets in the same way. 27But to those of you who will listen, I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
 - ii. **Jesus warns his followers and the religious of His day that if you live by the approval of others you will fall into a trap of your adversary.**
 - iii. Satan will puff you up to corrupt your heart and then burst your bubble when you least expect it.
- f. The opposition and trials for the finisher are not always the same every time. Your adversary has many ways to tempt you to give up.
 - i. Discouragement/hopelessness
 - ii. Financial loss
 - iii. Physical illnesses
 - iv. Rejection/Loneliness/abandonment
 - v. Factions/Divisions rooted in gossip built on deception and lies
 - vi. Violence and threats of physical harm
 - vii. Confusion/Delirium
 - viii. Secret hidden sin will destroy the faith connection to God that is required to overcome!

6. Finishing requires Patience and Perseverance

- a. **Hebrews 6:11-12** 11We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. 12Then you will not be sluggish, but will imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.
- b. Perseverance is moving forward under opposition; it is faith overriding how you feel and choosing to see what others cannot. Perseverance is taking the Joy of your future victory and placing it in your present struggles.
- c. **Life Lesson: The cultivated fruit of the Holy Spirit in our life is Patience. Your adversary does not possess the ability to be patient like the born-again Christian does. You can outlast the trials and opposer on your way to finishing what you started.**
- d. **A recent University of Scranton study on people who achieve their goals found that 92% – 98% of people quit before they achieve the goals they were hoping to reach.**
 - i. **Why do they give up?** Often due to lack of realistic plans, slow progress, or impatience with the initial "terrible" phase of learning, they highlighted the need for persistence and consistency as key differentiators for the small minority who do succeed.
 - ii. **Consistency is being stable while the boat is sloshing around in the waves of change.**
 - 1. What does the Bible say? **Galatians 6:8-9** 8The one who sows to please his flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; but the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.