

Take Ground Finish

TAKE ground and FINISH

3 different parts of the book of Joshua

Joshua 1-5 is God Preparing the Israelites....conquering their hearts

Joshua 6-12 God is Conquering the Enemy....battles in the promised land

Joshua 13-24 God is Dividing up the inheritance

We are past the first several chapters and now are at the Finish
Conquering the Enemy and Dividing it up

This was Joshua's task...to lead the Israelites to the promised land.
-All the preparation leads to this moment...the fight....

There were 7 enemies that were in the promised land
They were the ITES,
-Hittities, Amorites, Canaanites.....

They needed to defeat in order to occupy the land promised to them
Seems a little scary....daunting.

Deuteronomy 7:21-23 Do not be terrified by them, for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a great and awesome God. **22** The LORD your God will drive out those nations before you, **little by little**. You will not be allowed to eliminate them all at once, or the wild animals will multiply around you.

LITTLE BY LITTLE

It is interesting here that God says he will help them drive out the nation's Little by Little
I don't like the sound of that.....I would want to happen all at once. This is the first thing we can learn from God when facing a huge challenge. -Little By Little

Why would God say “you will not be allowed to eliminate them all at once”

Why not...God has the power...the authority

Same God that delivered them from Egypt, Part the Red Sea,

He had to have said this for a reason....Principle Here.

Sometimes God’s work in our lives is Instantaneous.

But most often it follows a process.

That is actually what salvation is.....you are instantly made right with God

But what follows is the process of sanctification.

The Little by Little changes that make us more like Christ.

Small Changes make a BIG DIFFERENCE

Little by Little can change our lives

If you want to take ground.....finish....you need to do it one step at a time.

This is true for us spiritually as well.

We move ahead little by little

Battle in our mind...day after day we choose to win

I wish it were just one victory over Satan and we were good for life.

No it is little by little, day by day

Bible Speaks of Crucifying our Flesh Daily.

Everyday winning the battle.

We win one small battle and then move onto the next one.

A few may happen all at once or fast but most...

TAKE A LITTLE GROUND EVERYDAY

It is easy to compare to others and think....we will never get there.

Doesn't happen overnight...Take GROUND TODAY.

This Process is for our own good!

1 Philippians 1:3-11 (NIV) Paul writing to the leaders in Philippi

3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel **from the first day until now**, 6 being confident of this, that **he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion** until the day of Christ Jesus.

7 It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8 God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

9 And this is my prayer: that your love may abound **more and more** in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Can you see the process

The diligence that leads to growth

“From the first day until now”

The effort it takes to FINISH

No matter what you feel today, God's promise is to carry out the work he has started in you until Completion; Until the finish!!

What is your role?

-Stay Faithful...don't quit....everyday TAKE GROUND

-If you fall....Get up...take ground!

SAME GOES THE OTHER WAY TOO....IT ONLY TAKES A LITTLE TO DRIFT

Drift and keep you from finishing

Get you off course

Keep you from the promises that God has for you.

When we get off track and consistently Day by Day live that out.

It slowly, little by little destroys us.

Scripture warns us about this.

Hebrews 2:1 (NIV)

We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we

do not drift away.

3

In the same way that being faithful day by day, little by little, will get us to our goal...
Being unfaithful day by day will consistently remove us from our Goal. Finishing the
race becomes more difficult.

Samson and Delilah...Famous bible story...He was a powerful warrior and judge
His power came from God.....symbolized in his uncut hair
He was a man of God until he drifted

Little by little Deliahlah got him off course, she kept him from finishing the race.
-He didn't even notice that God's power had left him!
-Just a little gets you a long way from the finish line.

Illustration of 1 in 60 Rule.

For every 1 degree you are off course, you will end up being 1 mile off course
After traveling 60 miles.

Think about that....Its just 1 degree.....

It shouldn't matter

It does matter...make a huge difference!

Keeps us from our destination, from the finish line

Lets get practical.

Think of your health....

Everyday we make decisions on our health.

If we get off course by just a few degrees it can keep us from our goals.

If I eat healthy all day...but then at night I pound a casey's pizza

If I do that consistently I'll be off course!

Think of your relationships....

If from the start you are off with just one unhealthy expectation

like believing pornograhpy is ok....not hurting anyone

Your moral compass goes off by a couple degrees

As a result, over time, it seriously sabotages the intimacy in your
relationship

-Creating distance, feeling of loneliness, isolation, and frustration

The 1 Degree Matters

The good news is that you can have victory!

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We must keep our focus on him who gives us the victory

1 Corinthians 15:57 (NIV)

But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus

Christ. So how did the Israelites FINISH?

After Chapter 13 the major battles have been won

The big armies defeated

The big cities in the region conquered

But not all of the enemy was driven out

-There were still Canaanites in every area.

But they had instruction from God to push them all out....

Joshua's plan was to not to do this himself as God had instructed him to divide the land.

The Land is divided up.

NOW it is up to each tribe to drive out the remaining enemies

Now is a big Shift....

Instead of Joshua being the only leader

-Each area is led by a different Israelite Tribe

He divided the land/ inheritance but also divided the responsibility

-Smart leadership

SOOOO.. each tribe pushed out all the remaining ITES and lived happily ever after! -Actually that is not what happened

The book of Joshua actually recounts a story of contradictions

On one hand God gave the land that had promised to the nation

On the other hand the people failed to possess the land completely

They allowed some inhabitants to remain

God fulfilled his side of the bargain but the israelites did not finish the job
-The Canaanite people became a damaging influence on Israel
-Just a little off course with big results!

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THEY DID NOT FINISH WELL!!!

There was ONE man that did....one leader....CALEB

Joshua 14:11-12 (NIV)

11 I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. 12 Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the Lord helping me, I will drive them out just as he said."

Caleb was the only one to drive out the enemy.....

Only one that actually finished

And it wasn't not because it was easy....

He actually asked for a difficult place

-more battles to fight

Caleb represented the TRIBE OF JUDAH

He was sent in as one of the spies in the beginning

He told the other spies....we got this!

Numbers 13:30 (NIV)

30 Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."

Caleb took his stand because he followed god wholeheartedly

Joshua 14:8-9 (NIV)

8 but my fellow Israelites who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt in fear. I, however, followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly. 9 So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly.'

Caleb knew the promises of God

Despite the evidence that he could see right in front of him....

He had faith that God would give them the victory

40 when he spied.....85 when he received the promise

6

After all the battles...and the years that passed

-He remained faithful and wholeheartedly followed GOD

-And because of this HE crossed the FINISH line.

-He received his inheritance!!

At the End of the day it really doesn't matter how you start...it how you end/finish -Your past may be riddled with failure

-You may be so ashamed

It doesn't matter how you started!!

Or you may be pitching a perfect game....

You are serving God wholeheartedly.....

Surrendered to him....

It still doesn't matter how you start....

Don't Drift.....Finish Well....Finish Strong!!

Paul as he was facing death by execution wrote these words to his friend and partner in ministry.

2 Timothy 4:7 (NIV)

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 7