

Finish

"Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit" (Ecclesiastes 7:8).

As you seek to get back into the routine of work, school, and everything in between after the holidays, or perhaps you are trying to set forth a new routine in your life with some fresh goals and resolutions. I want to remind you of the importance of the finish line. Yes, the starting blocks are nice and shiny, but the ribbon and prize at the end of the race are so much nicer!

Solomon lays out this truth for us in Ecclesiastes 7, where he says, "Better is the end of a thing than its beginning." This widely agreed upon principle can be observed in many different ways... Doesn't the grass look so much better after it is mowed? Doesn't that home project always seem worth it when it is finally completed? Doesn't that sense of accomplishment and satisfaction hit the best when all those "to-dos" are checked off and finished? Most certainly, and the same can be said about our spiritual walks with the Lord Jesus.

There are many examples of men and women in the Bible who regressed in their walk with the Lord instead of pressing on to greater growth. King Asa and his son King Jehoshaphat, unfortunately were an illustration of this... Both King Asa and Jehoshaphat were good kings for the most part in the sense that they relied upon the One True God in their kingly reigns. They made holy reforms for the people of Judah that ultimately pointed them back to the Lord. We could conclude that their good years certainly outweighed their bad years... However, at the end of each of their reigns as king, we read that they turned away from their devotion and reliance upon the One True God (2 Chronicles 16:7; 20:35-37). They had started in the right and godly direction and continued in that for most of their time as king, but towards the end they didn't finish...

You see, may we learn a lesson here from this royal father and son and not look past the necessity to finish well. With spiritual goals before us in this new year, may we not just become contented with a good start, but may we press on towards the finish line. May we seek to have the heart of the Apostle Paul, where he wrote at the end of his life: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Keep your eyes on Jesus, the ultimate finisher of the faith (Hebrews 12:2). Run with endurance the race that is before you. Remind your soul in the tough days that the Christian life is a marathon and not a sprint. Give yourself grace when you trip and fall because the God of all grace already has. And Finish!!! Yes, don't be satisfied until Christ has fully finished what He has started in you (Philippians 1:6). See you at the finish line, my friend.

Respect the Blood,
Dalton Mathis