

## Finishing Well as a Leader

Whether our area of leadership is in the marketplace, congregation, or family, it is important to begin well and to finish well. To finish well is to come to the end of our time of service with faithfulness in our responsibility, godly character, and wise preparation and transfer of responsibility to the next generation leader(s).

### The Call

When we are given the responsibility to lead others, we usually feel strong emotions. We may feel the seriousness that our influence will shape the direction for others. We may feel like we do not have the ability needed for what God is calling us to do. We may be excited about the promise and vision before us.

Moses and the children of Israel were just outside of the land of promise. Moses had led these people through many difficult situations. His forty-year period of leadership was ending. He concluded his leadership by carefully giving the people instruction from the Lord.<sup>1</sup> Then he publicly transferred leadership to Joshua whom he had prepared well for leadership.<sup>2</sup>

### Warnings

As Moses spoke to the people and wrote a thorough list of instructions, he looked ahead to a time when they may choose a king as their leader. Moses had three warnings for the king (leader): power, sex, wealth.<sup>3</sup>

He warned against self-sufficiency based on the power of military might. Power in that time was associated with the number of stables and horses that one could amass. In short, the king should not depend upon his own resources. King David acted against this warning by taking a census of his soldiers.

The king must not take many wives to himself in that they may turn his heart away from the Lord. To focus on sexual satisfaction or to dominate the other gender becomes as substitute for intimacy and loyalty to the Lord who has called one to leadership. King Solomon did not finish well because he did not listen to this warning.

To accumulate substantial amounts of wealth in silver and gold for himself may in turn become an idol, Moses warned. Whether one is given to greed and seeks more money in unethical ways or finds security in stinginess, the leader is drawn away from stewardship before God to trust in riches instead. Solomon came found this to be true for himself in his observations of life.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 1:1-8

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 31

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 17:14-17

<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastes 5:8-17

The common theme in these warnings is that a leader must not use one's position for selfish reasons and have his heart drawn away from trust and dependency upon God.

## **Challenges**

Moses also presents three challenges for kings regarding scripture, humility, and family. These practices give the leader the capacity to lead wisely and finish well.<sup>5</sup>

First, he outlined that when the king is in office, he must write a copy of the instructions Moses gave the people of God. The king was to do so in the presence of the Levites—his accountability. He must keep a copy with him and read it daily as long as he lives. He was to keep all the instructions and decrees. In this way he would continually be learning and growing.

The practice of this daily discipline promotes a posture of humility instead of becoming proud and acting as if he is above his fellow citizens. Moses challenged kings to stay focused on the obedience to God to avoid the many faces of pride. Pride is evident in acting independently, ignoring spiritual counsel of others God has given us; excepting ourselves from expectations we set for others; displacing a self-righteous and judgmental attitude; staying vested in opinions that need to be repented; refusing to be accountable to those we serve; failing to recognize other's accomplishments. Uzziah was a great king until he acted in pride to do the work of a priest.<sup>6</sup>

Moses challenged kings to prepare the legacy of leadership for their descendants by fulfilling the challenges above. It was important for them to be attentive to the needs of their family. King David prepared resources for buildings but not his sons for leadership.

## **Counsel**

The qualifications to be appointed as a leader in the church are qualities of character that have been proven in responsibilities in the home and marketplace. It is interesting to note that recognition one has finished well is also based upon character.

To finish well,

- Keep in mind that the source of your leadership is God
- Stay dependent and attentive to direction in and from the presence of Christ
- Keep the big picture view, making choices with a long-term, lifetime perspective
- Honor the mission and vision to which you are called
- Keep your skills sharp
- Exercise the spiritual disciplines actively and creatively
- Maintain a learning posture--read widely, seek feedback
- Keep relationships authentic through mentoring for oneself and with others
- Protect the priority of family commitments and relationships

What a joy to finish well as Paul, the Apostle, testified, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful."<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 17:18-20

<sup>6</sup> II Chronicles 26

<sup>7</sup> II Timothy 4:7

## Finishing Well Personalized What Does it Mean to Finish Well?

### Paul, the Apostle

There is a sense of fulfillment in Paul, the apostle, as he reflects upon his ministry with the Timothy, his protégé. He writes from prison in Rome as his execution is imminent, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7). To expand our consideration of Paul’s example, we see three dimensions of a good finish.

First, Paul acknowledges a lifetime of challenges that he engaged. While he may not have won every matter in contention, he notes that he invested himself well in the cause. His frame of reference was upon what he could control—his effort. He gave his best.

Second, the apostle is aware of the purpose God had for him; he also knows that he completed that purpose. Like a race, he gave his efforts to finish; he was tenacious in pursuing his purpose.

Third, Paul remained committed to honor and defend the simplicity of the gospel of the Kingdom of God. He upheld the truth that was revealed to him. His doctrine was sound. He did not fall into error.

In short, for Paul, to finish well means: excellence in effort; tenacity in purpose, rooted in truth. Or quality, endurance, integrity.

Ten years earlier in his ministry Paul had written to the church in Rome that he longed to see them, “that I may impart to you some spiritual gift so that you may be established” (Romans 1:12). Impartation takes place while one is alive and actively pouring life into others.

### Jesus, the Son of God

Jesus finished well. We observe this from his remarks in relation to His Father who sent him to carry out the mission before them—redeeming the world! “Before the Feast of Passover meal, Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end” (John 13:1). The “end” is equivalent to “the fullest extent.” In Swahili, the word picture is, “He loved them to the horizon.”

In His High Priestly prayer, noted in John 17:4, Jesus declares that He has glorified His Father on the earth. His testimony is that “I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”

From His example we see that to finish well is to live in the new commandment He gave His disciples, to love as He loved (John 15:12), the persons God has entrusted to our sphere of influence. It is to bring glory to God by, and as we do, the work into which God has placed us.

Keith Yoder

Using the referent qualities from Paul and Jesus above, for me to finish well will be seen in these ways.

Quality of work; endurance in purpose; integrity in representing the scriptures

Impartation of what and how I can bless and enrich the capacity of leaders whom I mentor

Love thoroughly those I serve; lifestyle of ongoing attentiveness to whatever the Lord prompts

Show and/or speak of the nature of God in and through the work I do

Reproduce personal strengths in others: wisdom, listening, advocacy for synergetic leadership of men and women

**In summary, I will have finished well through integrity: in character, in representing the scriptures, and in presence-based discernment and leadership. There will be integrity of a fulfilled purpose because I have imparted wisdom, anchored in Trinitarian oneness, such that there are more men and women leading well together.**

*Keith Yoder Musings – August 2020*

---

Howard Hendricks, respected professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, noted, "Of the 2,930 individuals mentioned in the Bible, we only know significant details of 100. Of those 100, only about one-third finished well. Of the two-thirds that did not finish well, most failed in the second half of their lives. Finishing well for those who are wealthy is especially challenging because of the options money can buy. Many of these can distract us from serving Christ."

Biblical Financial Study, p. 166. Crown Financial Ministries, 2005

*Teaching the Word Ministries, [www.ttwm.org](http://www.ttwm.org)*

## Finishing Well

### A Biblical Search for Wisdom to Aid Leaders to Finish Well

“My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work.” Jn 4:34

“I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.” John 17:4

“. . . And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects [finishes] our faith.” Hebrews 12:1b-2

**To finish well** is to arrive at the conclusion of a season of service as a leader characterized by godly character, a good reputation, an active faith, healthy relationships, and enduring fruitfulness. Additionally, the person has been transformed redemptively from failures in life and leadership.

We may use the posture and example of Christ as a template of finishing well as observed in Jesus’ reflection upon His leadership in John 17:1-26; 20:19-23 and Acts 1:4-11.

**Study Template** - What were the indicators Jesus cited that contributed to His finishing well?

- **Intimacy & Identity**

- Healthy identity as to what he did 17:6
- Made the name (reality) of God known 17:11
- Identity established by God—given His name 17:11
- Communal discernment about his work 17:11-12
  - With God
  - In view of people he led
- Revealed God’s nature to those he led 17:6, 26
- Recognized the end of a season 17:1, 11

- **Servanthood Stewardship**

- Served as steward with responsibility to God 17:6
- Recognized authority from God 17:2
- Acknowledged fruit was God’s 17:6
- Did not try to construct own timeline Acts 1:7

- **Self-giving & empowering leadership**

- Guarded and protected them 17:12, 15
- Sacrificed for them 17:19
- Sent disciples into God’s work as he was sent 17:19
- Consecrated himself so that others may be 17:19
- Gave honor to them instead of holding for self 17:22
- Imparted Spirit he had to them 20:22, Acts 1:4

- **Preparation of next generation leadership**

- Modeled what he sent others to do, “AS I” 17:14, 18, 21
- Commissioned them to message others 20:21; Acts 1:8
- Dedicated to prayer through transition 17:20
- Prayed for fruit in generations to come 17:20
- Empowered others; next generation 20:22; Acts 1:4, 8
- Cultivated followers into unity among diversity 17:11, 21-23

## Our Mission

Teaching the Word Ministries cultivates healthy leaders who transform their world and finish well.

### Observations of Leaders in the Bible

1. In what manner did this leader finish well?
2. In what aspect did this leader not finish well?
3. What wisdom from Christ, regarding the example of this leader, can we share with the leaders we serve in our ministry?
4. What counsel from Christ can we apply to our own commitment to finish well?

### Leadership Studies

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Joseph   | Gen 37; 39; 40; 41:16, 37-46; 42:6-21; 43:26-31; 45:1-8; 47:13-21; 50:14-26; Ex 13:19   |
| Moses    | Ex 2:11-15; Heb 11:23-28; Ex 3; 4:1-17; 6:10-13, 28-30; 7:1-6; 17:1-6; 18:24; 19:7-9, 25; 32:9-14, 30-34; 33:7-11, 12-23; Nu 16:22, 28-30; 20:1-13; Dt 4:1-8; 8:1-6; 31:1-3; 34; Lu 9:28-31   |
| Joshua   | Ex 17:10-13; 33:7-11; Nu 14:1-12; Dt 31:7-8, 14-15, 23; 34:9; Josh 1:1-9; 3:7-8; 4:14; 7:16-26; 23; 24:1-30   |
| Saul     | I Sam 9:17-10:26; 11:6-15; 13:7-11; 15:1-2, 9-35; 16:1, 23; 18:5-8, 12, 15, 29; 26:17-25; I Sam. 26:17-25; 28:10-20; 31:1-6; I Ch 10:13-14; 13:3  |
| David    | I Sam 16:1m 13, 21, 23; 17:26, 32, 34, 37, 45, 48, 50; 18:5, 12, 23, 30; 23:4; 25:32, 39; I Sam 30:6, 7, 8; II Sam 2:1-4; 5:1-4, 11-13; 6:1-21; 7 :18-26; 8:14; 9:1-7; 11; 12:9-24; II Sam 13:1-39; 15:1-38; 16:1-23; 20:1-2; 23:1-7; 24:1, 10-17, 18-25; I Ki 1:1-2:24; Ps 78:70-72; Acts 13:32, 36; Heb 11:32 |
| Solomon  | I Ki 2:1-4; I Ch 22:6-9; I Ch 28:20; I Ch 29:22-25; 2 Ki 23:12-14; 2 Ch 8:11-16; Ne 13:26; Eccl 12:8-14   |
| Uzziah   | 2 Ch 26; Is 6:1-8   |
| Daniel   | Da 1-2; 4:19-6:28; 12   |
| Esther   | Es 1-9  |
| Nehemiah | Ne 1-6; 8-11:2; 12:27-13:31   |
| John     | Lu 5:1-11; 6:12-16; Mk 3:13-17; 9:2-10; Mt 20:20-28; Mk 14:32-42; Jo 19:25-27; 1 Jo 1:1-4; 3 Jo 4; Rev 1:1-2; 22:8  |
| Paul     | Acts 9:1-31; 26; 20:20-24; 1 Tim 4:6-8; Ph 2:12-18; 3:3-14; 1 Tim 6:11-12; 1 Cor 9:24-27  |
| Peter    | Mt 4:18; 16:16; 17:1; 19:27; 26:31-35, 69, 73, 75; Jo 21:1, 15-19; Acts 4:1-12, 19; I Peter 5:1-4   |

## Schedule

|          |            |       |
|----------|------------|-------|
| Joseph   | 1/26       | Jay   |
| Moses    | 1/26       | Keith |
| Joshua   | 1/26       | Kathy |
|          |            |       |
| Saul     | 2/Brian    |       |
| David    | 2/Tiffanie |       |
|          |            |       |
| Solomon  | 3/Eugene   |       |
| Uzziah   | 3/Paula    |       |
|          |            |       |
| Daniel   | 11/8       | Brian |
| Esther   | 11/8       | Marti |
| Nehemiah | 11/8       | Gene  |
|          |            |       |
| John     | 4/Keith    |       |
| Paul     | 4/Jay      |       |
| Peter    | 4/Kathy    |       |

## *Person's Name - Finishing Well*

*"And say to Archippus, 'Take heed to the ministry that you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.'" Colossians 4:17 NASB*

To finish well is to fulfill the calling and values that the Lord has shaped in me over the past decades of ministry. To that end, I note the following personal traits and ways to serve people as unto the Lord.

### Traits

- Always has time for others
- Thinking of others and how to bless them
- Ready to help persons do things of lasting value
- Helps people do things well, with excellence
- Invests in people for long term impact
- Gives little gifts in personalized ways
- Loves and believes in individuals

### Services

- Speak
  - Minister through teaching filled with love and vitality
  - Present talks that lead people into the arms of Jesus so they know who they are in Christ
  - Encourage individuals by imparting truth in an anointed manner
  - Call people to be what God has called them to be above human expectations
  - Give people things of lasting significance such as "words" through which God speaks
  - Create materials and transpose talks into creative written expression
- Refer
  - Impart the strengths of years of experience into the current generation of ministries
  - Recommend resources that benefit the national movement
  - Channel gifts in the movement (like a clearinghouse) by shepherding them into the hands and hearts of others in the pregnancy resource movement
- Counsel
  - Respond to phone calls to assist persons with their personal and ministry needs
  - Personal care for individuals through community service organizations such as Water Street Ministries
  - Restore areas of brokenness in individual lives and organizations
  - Tailor recommendations leading to life change for people
- Enrich
  - Participate in decision making by contributing creatively in design of materials, facilities
  - Minister at book tables through prayer and books that edify
  - Pass on capacity to others to engage in book table ministry
  - Contribute in creative group settings that seek Christ's will together
  - Avoid conflict of interest in ministry engagements