



# FINISH STRONG

There is a universal truth, that is a fact of life whether you like it or not — and it's that everyone will fail or experience setbacks.

- » This statement may not seem particularly uplifting, but whether you like it or not it's still true.

## **BETTER TO BE CONFRONTED WITH TRUTH, THAN PAMPERED WITH LIES**

- » When you're pampered with lies, it feels good in the moment — but it leaves you unprepared for the challenges ahead.
- » When you are confronted with the truth, it might not always feel good in the moment — but it will prepare you for the realities of life.

*Being pampered with lies may feel good in the moment, but it leaves you unprepared for the challenges ahead. Being confronted with the truth might not always feel good at first, but it prepares and empowers you for the realities of life.*

- » Jesus spoke the truth because he would rather have people prepared than disillusioned by false expectations.

*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*

— Matthew 16:24

*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

— John 16:33

## **GOD NEVER PROMIS US A PROBLEM FREE LIFE**

Some preaching make it sound like we can surf through life without problems or challenges, but God never promises us that. Rather God warns us that there will be trouble, but at the same time He lets us know that if we choose to have the right attitude, He can turn these challenges into something that will strengthen and develop us.

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

— Romans 8:28

## **THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON**

The most important thing in life is learning how to handle failures, because if you don't you will get stuck in disappointment and bitterness — no matter how talented you are.

Learning to handle your failures and setbacks is one of the most valuable skills you can acquire. It will transform your failures into stepping stones instead of stumbling blocks.

- » The question is not whether you will experience setbacks or not, but rather what attitude you will have when facing them.
- » People who thrive in life do not necessarily do so because they are more talented or gifted...  
~ ...but they were better at handling their setbacks, than those who got bitter and gave up.
- » There are many extremely talented people who never get anywhere in life—because talent alone is not enough—the ones you have heard of are those who did not let their setbacks stop them.

Great achievements aren't always the result of raw talent - because talent alone isn't enough. The people who succeed are those who refuse to let setbacks hold them back.

### **1. Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865)**

Lincoln faced numerous personal and political setbacks, including multiple election losses, business failures, and personal tragedies (such as the death of his children). Despite these challenges, he persevered. He became the 16th President of the United States and is remembered for leading the country through its Civil War and for his role in abolishing slavery.

### **2. Thomas Edison (1847–1931)**

Edison is famously known for his quote, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." His early education was cut short as his teachers thought he was "too slow" to learn, and he faced many failures in his inventions. Yet he became one of the greatest inventors in history, with over 1,000 patents to his name.

### **3. Walt Disney (1901–1966)**

Disney faced several setbacks, including being fired from a newspaper job because he "lacked imagination,". But later he went on to create the Disney empire, which includes some of the most famous animated films.

### **4. Helen Keller (1880–1968)**

Keller became blind and deaf due to an illness at 19 months old, which could have severely limited her opportunities. Yet she became an author, political activist, and lecturer. She was the first deaf-blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree and became a powerful advocate for people with disabilities.

- » In personal development they often focus only on success and how to get rich, but if you don't learn to fail you will quickly get discouraged and give up.

No matter how fast you run you will never win the race if you don't finish it.

» There are many who start of running faster than everyone else, but after a few years you find them in a ditch somewhere burned out and bitter — and it's not because they lacked gifting.

## **RUN YOUR RACE AND FINISH STRONG**

God has a race He want's you to run and there are things He wants you to do — you are not a coincidence.

» But the fact that He has called you does not mean that things will come easy for you.

### **1. Joseph (Genesis 37-50)**

Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, falsely accused of a crime, and imprisoned. Despite his suffering, Joseph remained faithful to God. He rose to power in Egypt and ultimately saved his family and the nation from famine.

### **2. Moses (Exodus 2-14)**

Moses faced rejection, exile, and the enormous task of leading the Israelites out of Egypt. He also dealt with the constant grumbling and disobedience of the people he was leading. Despite these challenges, Moses obeyed God's call to confront Pharaoh and lead the Israelites to freedom.

### **3. David (1 Samuel 16-31; 2 Samuel)**

David was anointed as king while still a young shepherd, but he faced years of persecution from King Saul, who sought to kill him. Despite the hardships and temptations to take matters into his own hands, David remained faithful to God.

### **4. Jeremiah (Book of Jeremiah)**

Jeremiah, often called the "weeping prophet," faced severe opposition, persecution, and imprisonment for delivering God's messages to Judah. Despite the constant rejection and suffering, Jeremiah faithfully proclaimed God's word, warning of the coming judgment and calling the people to repentance.

### **5. Paul (Acts; Epistles)**

The Apostle Paul endured numerous hardships, including beatings, imprisonment, shipwrecks, and constant persecution. He was often rejected by his own people and faced many trials as he spread the gospel. Despite all these challenges, Paul continued his missionary work, planting churches, and writing letters that make up much of the New Testament.

God's plan and purpose for you are clear, but fulfilling them requires more than just His guidance. He has granted you free will, leaving the choice to walk that path in your hands.

- » He will prepare the way — but you have to walk it.
- » He will show you the way — but He will not walk it for you.

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

— Ephesians 2:10

*You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. [...] You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.*

— Psalm 139:13-14 (NLT)

- » God had prepared a race for you to run, but you have to run it.
- ~ He will give you strength when you are weak, and guide you when you are lost — but are the one who have to act on the things He is showing you.

*Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.*

— 1. Corinthians 9:24-27

- » The attitude God wants you to have in this race is “RUN TO WIN!” — not “run to survive”.

*God has a race set before you, and He wants you to run it with the mindset of 'Run to win!' - not just 'run to survive.'*

- » If your attitude is just to “survive”, you might survive, but you will not win
- ~ When the race we are running goes through a world the Bible says are in the sway of the evil one, we need to run to win if we want to get the “... eternal prize ...” God has for us.
- » God wants you to win the race set before you, but if you don't learn to handle setbacks you will not achieve the things God has written down for you in His book.

## **HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR SETBACKS?**

How you VIEW the setbacks in your life will greatly influence how you REACT to them, and how you react to them will determine whether they become “steppingstones” or “stumbling-stones”.

- » TRAFFIC JAM — Frustration or opportunity to listen to music/podcast
- » FAILURE — Some look at it as bad, others as an opportunity to grow
- » LOST YOUR JOB — An opportunity for a better job present itself.

*Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.*

— James 1:2-4 (NLT)

- » The storms in life are God's tool to make you stronger, and He will allow them, because He wants you to be "... perfect and complete, needing nothing ..."
- ~ Yet, He know exactly how much you can handle, and will not allow you to be tested beyond what you can handle.

*... God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.*

— 1. Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

- » In reality the challenges you go through is Gods way of showing you how much He trust you, because the fact that He allows is, means that He knows you are able to get through it.
- » HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR CHALLENGES:
  - ~ A God punishing you...
  - ~ ... or as God developing you

*Whether you see your challenges as 'God punishing you' or 'God developing you' will greatly influence how you handle them.*

## **GROWING STRONG DURING THE STORM**

God will use even the storms in your life to develop both your gifting and your character. But in order for to stand firm while the storm is raging, you need to build your life on a solid foundation.

*Even the storms in your life are tools God uses to refine your gifts and character. Yet, to truly benefit from them, you must align your actions with His word.*

- » Jesus talks about this in Matthew 7:24-27

*Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.*

*“But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.*

— Matthew 7:24-27

## IT'S NOT ENOUGH JUST TO LISTEN

Many think they are growing spiritually because they are learning more and more about God, Jesus and the Bible. While theoretical knowledge might get you through school, it will not get you through life.

- » Jesus is showing us here a secret to spiritual growth that is often overlooked.
- » The word of God will only help you THROUGH the storm, if you BEFORE the storm have been living it.
  - ~ The word of God only becomes a “rock-solid-foundation” when we act on it.
  - ~ James say that if we just listen to God's word we are fooling ourselves.

*But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.*

— James 1:22

- » When you face challenges you need more than theoretical knowledge to get you through.
  - ~ Many don't put the word of God into action until they are in the middle of the storm.
- » You don't start to build your house after the rain has started — it's better to have it finished before the rain begins.

*Don't begin building your house when the storm is already upon you. Establish a strong foundation and build beforehand, and then you can have peace of mind even when the storm is raging outside.*

## HOW THE WORD DEVELOPS ROOTS

In Jesus' parable of the sower and the seed in Mark chapter four Jesus is talking about 4 different people and what kind of effect The Word of God has on their lives.

- » The first got symbolised by the “**wayside**” — they were the once who did not understand it.
- » The second got symbolised by “**stony ground**” — they happily received it, but the word could not develop roots
- » The third got symbolised by seed sown “**among thorns**” — there the seed developed roots, but there was no fruits.
- » The fourth got symbolised as “**good soil**” — they heard the word, accept it, and bore fruits
- » The effect The Word of God had on these peoples lives was not determined by the seed, but by the soil — and the soil is you and me.
- » The good soil was the people who not only listened to the word but acted on it.

*The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word.*

— **Mark 4:16-17**

*And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!*

— **Mark 4:20**

*The Word of God is powerful, but its fruitfulness in your life greatly depends on the condition of your heart.*

