

Finishing Strong

Life with God is an exciting journey, and every believer is expected to **finish strong**. Finishing strong is finishing successfully. Finishing strong is accomplishing every assignment that God has given you. Finishing strong is completing your course. Finishing strong is continuing until the end and fulfilling your God-given purposes. Finishing strong is going against all opposition and pushing ahead until you achieve your goals.

God's desire when He called you is that you **finish strong**. He never planned that you stop half way. That's why Jesus Christ advised the believer who puts his hand to the plough not to look back. Finishing strong implies that there will be troubles on the way. It implies that there will be challenges. It implies that the devil will do everything within his power to stop you, so you don't complete your assignment. Finishing strong speaks of you continuing until you end up at the feet of Jesus.

Finishing strong is going against all odds and overcoming them. As the challenges come, you stand against them in the strength and power of the Holy Spirit. Apostle Paul, said, **"...having done all to stand"** (Ephesians 6:13). That is to say, at the end of the battle, you are still standing. But even if you fall, you will get back up again and continue. Just as in boxing, when a man is knocked down, and gets up before the count of ten and ends up knocking out his opponent. You will stand against the enemy and refuse to give in to all the challenges he brings your way, holding on till the very end. Finishing strong means that if you are knocked down by the enemy, you refuse to be counted out. You just get back up and knock the devil out! So, there might be times when you hit the canvas along the way, but as long as you refuse to remain down you are going to finish strong. However, if you allow a setback to discourage you, and you refuse to get up, then you are disqualified from the race. Yet, that is not the plan of God for you. Many of you have experienced some trials in your personal lives this year (in the course of your assignments for God). But you must look beyond the circumstances of your past and move on to finish your race with joy and great zeal. Finish strong means, *"in spite of any opposition, I will continue and I will reach the finishing line."*

CHALLENGES TO FINISHING STRONG

I have broken the challenges we face from the enemy in the race of life into five "personal" categories:

(1) **Personal attack**

- Discouragement – weakening of our zeal in an attempt to slow us down or stop us completely. Any time you discover you are losing steam, pray that it will return because you are probably under attack by the enemy.
- Apathy. Spiritual indifference - in praying, studying, meditating on the word, attending services and working for God. Sometimes it is very difficult, and takes great effort to read a chapter of the Bible, pray and even go to church. This is a sign of spiritual apathy. If you ever find yourself in such a circumstance, give yourself a shake. For if you don't you are heading for disaster.

Discouragement and indifference are enemies of your faith.

(2) **Personal troubles**

- Finances – business struggles; difficulty in meeting financial obligations both at home and at work; difficulty in paying bills; difficulty in paying school fees. All these things can be discouraging especially when you are fervently following and serving the Lord. This is one of the challenges we have to deal with as Christians. Nevertheless, we must keep our faith and continue to practice the covenant laws of prosperity and abundance, and God will provide the victory. Paul suffered the same thing, making many rich and yet hungry for lack of food. But the work never stopped. You can't stop!
- Marriage – marital challenges come in various forms. Prolonged single life, crisis in marriage, childlessness, unfaithfulness from spouse, and conflicts from spouse's family. None of these must stop you.
- Academics – problem with a particular course, failure of exams, conflict with a lecturer and financing of your education.
- Career – problem with your job, promotion, conflict with superior or colleagues.

(3) **Personal opposition**

- Persecution from family members, in-laws, colleagues at the office, boss, employers, neighbours, friends and associates because of your righteous stand on issues or your witness for Jesus Christ.
- Envy from those who are not happy that God is favouring you more than them, so they come up with some stories about you that are not correct to run you down and create problems for you.
- False accusations on things you never said or did because of your faith in the Lord and commitment to Him.

All these are intended to stop you so you must not allow yourself to be tripped up by the enemy - no matter how hard he tries.

(4) **Personal ignorance**

- Lack of knowledge of relevant truth that you need to make it in life and in ministry. Pray for the ability to discern the truth as you read and study what others have written or taught. You need to invest time to study to gain knowledge and wisdom. Many have made mistakes because they lack relevant knowledge. There is no substitute for information. Work hard to get relevant knowledge.

(5) **Personal distraction**

- Refuse to be distracted from your calling, assignment and church. Identify what you are called to do and stay focused. Don't allow the enemy to make you lose focus for that is the reason why many fail.

REQUIREMENTS TO FINISHING STRONG

1 Strong faith in God. Confidence in the God (the Caller) and your calling. Know your calling and believe in it. Stay on your course.

2 Determination to finish strong and win the prize. Make up your mind to succeed. Success starts with a firm decision. If you decide, then run like one who wants to win the race. Phil 3:14 14; ***"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."***

3 Intimate relationship with God. Study God's word. Give time to study the word daily. Have a study plan of the Bible. Be familiar with the whole Bible. Don't just be familiar with certain portions of the Bible, but the whole Bible. Make notes of what you learn. Memorise scriptures as you study. Fellowship with the Holy Spirit through praise, prayer and meditation helps in deepening your intimacy with the Holy Spirit. Give attention to building your relationship with the Holy Spirit.

4 Vibrant prayer life. Pray regularly in Spirit to edify yourself. Pray not only for yourself but for others. Pray regularly to remain strong, vibrant, and full of the Holy Spirit. When you notice you are becoming weak, fast and pray about it for personal revival.

Remember, God wants you to complete your journey, and God wants you to **finish strong**. Do not allow the devil to stop you. In Christ, you are born to be a **winner**. Therefore, you must **finish strong** – in Jesus name!