

OW2P Study - Strong to the Finish (Part 12)

Goal

Most memorable classic victories involve a last-second heroic goal, a fourth-quarter interception at the goal line or a game seven, three-point jumper at the buzzer. Is this type of victory exciting? Yes. But certain? Probably not. Those kinds of victories rely on variables of chance in order to record the win. In our Christian experience, Jesus our Champion has already defeated our foe.

Our participation in His victory depends not upon chance, but how fervently we stand at Jesus' side. It is a glorious thing to receive Jesus as Lord and personal Savior. It is a tragedy to forfeit the crown by faltering in the face of opposition. Athletes will learn from this section how to set themselves apart, hold their ground and be strong to the finish.

Key Scriptures

1 Chronicles 28:10; 2 Chronicles 20:15-17; Isaiah 41:10; Galatians 6:9-10

Warm Up

Quickly divide the room into two teams. Select a team representative for the "strong to the finish" challenge. Each team representative will attempt a feat of endurance simultaneously. Both students will stand side by side with their backs against the wall. With their feet approximately 1 foot from the wall, they should slide their backs down the wall until their thighs are parallel to the floor. It will appear as though they are sitting without a chair.

With their hands folded and resting in their laps, have an official timer time who can endure this position the longest. Each team will root for their respective teammate. The student who lasts the longest wins. Others can try to beat the longest time to get a sense of the challenge. Participants should discuss their experience: What obstacles to enduring arose? How soon did you first consider giving up? Why did you? Why did you not? etc.

Watch

Show the Week 12 video "Strong to the Finish"

Workout

Only a simple task of endurance, yet the pain of enduring quickly sets in. We have to ask ourselves, "Is it worth it?" The easy part is beginning the task. Many young athletes "go out for the team."

After the first week of workouts, the crowd invariably diminishes. From the sidelines it's easy to long for the thrill of victory and even presume "I'm better than him/her at that position." When the excitement of the first couple of days of joining the team fades and the tough grind

of preparing to win begins, the once bright lights of being in the limelight dim. The aching muscles, the tiredness, the pain, and frustration force us to consider, "Is it really worth it?"

Joining "Team Jesus" is quite similar. We hear the gospel message. It pricks our hearts. We are compelled to make a change. We repent, pray the sinners prayer, and ask Jesus to be Lord of our lives. Then we set out to discover our purpose and destiny in God and honor Jesus with our lives. That is when the big test comes. This is the test that reveals all of our motives and commitments ... the test of time! What were your motives for joining this team? Is it worth it? What makes it worth it?

Discovering the keys to enduring will help you unlock the strength you need to finish strong. Weariness will come, so too will disappointment and rejection. Our task is to stay strong to the finish. Setbacks, fallouts, doubts and discouragements all participate in preventing you from continuing the race. Be strong! Remember the keys to enduring and you will no doubt witness uncommon strength to stay the course and wear the crown.

Workout Questions

1. *The power of a promise.* Read Isaiah 41:10.
Who is speaking in this verse? What does He promise? Discuss.
2. *Hope to cope.* Now read Galatians 6:9-10.
The question was asked earlier, "Is enduring worth it?" In light of the Galatians passage, is enduring worth it? Why? How does Romans 8:18 affirm the task of being strong to the finish?
3. *Not just a tree, but a forest.*
The mighty sequoia redwood trees of California have mystified onlookers for years. Over 275 feet high and 30 feet in diameter, some of these giants are more than 1,000 years old. Why are they so awesome? One reason. Unlike any other tree, the sequoia's roots attach to each other underground. Most root systems span out. In the sequoia forest, when the wind tries to push a sequoia down, it's not just picking on one tree; it's taking on an entire forest. Read 2 Chronicles 20:15-17. When the giants of peer influence, teenage sexuality, doubt, low self-esteem and drug and alcohol use begin to challenge you, whom are they really taking on? Explain.

Wrap Up

You have joined the team. You have made the pledge. There is only One Way 2 Play ... it's God's way.

Now stick with the program.

Remember the keys: God has promised to uphold and help you. Hope is empowering. Ultimately, the battle is not yours but the Lord's. Jesus did not shun the cross, He endured it. He did not despise the shame, He withstood it. He shed His blood because you were worth it! He did not "wimp" out on you; how dare us "wimp" out on him.

As a group, read Hebrews 12:1-3. Finish strong!

Bible Reference:

Hebrews 12



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