

## **Don't Define the Finish Line**

### **Ready:**

“This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go...We will do whatever you command us, and we will go wherever you send us.”

– Joshua 1:9, 16

### **Set**

In many ways, moving to Colorado has been twenty years in the making. We have vacationed here as a family when the kids were growing up and we all loved the adventure of the mountains. And as a Spartan racer and cyclist, the outdoors present a constant physical and mental challenge that I crave. I feel like I am home. So when I went out to ride the Rist Canyon Road loop, I knew I was in for a long day. Others had warned me of the relentless climbs and challenging descents. Oh, and don't forget the altitude. I was truly looking forward to it with a mix of go-for-it and dread. I reviewed the course map, got geared up, and jumped on the bike.

It was a perfect day. I handled Bingham Hill easily and took the turn onto Rist Canyon. At about 16 miles in, I began to grow weary of all the climbing, some at 14% grade and I wondered how far I was from the summit. I knew once I reached the top, most of the ride would be rolling hills and descending. But I had no idea how much further I had to go. My legs were heavy and I started to fatigue a bit. I played mental games counting my pedal strokes and even prayed the Lord's Prayer a few times. But the climbing just kept coming. Finally, with a long road stretched out in front of me heading toward the sky, I decided to get off the bike and take a break. I would do this 2 more times before reaching the top, at one point even walking my bike upwards for about one hundred yards. I thought I had reached the breaking point. When I finally rode to the top, I was mad at myself for stopping because I think I could have made it if I knew how far I had to go. The rest of the ride was grueling as I ran out of water, food, and gas. I was beat. This challenge did two things for me:

1. **REVEAL** - It revealed to me that I have a long way to go to create the warrior mindset and grit that I desire. Challenges like this where there is no defined finish line are necessary to show you what you are made of. They give you the facts you need to become the person you want to be.
2. **REMIND** – It reminded me that I need the power and presence of God, especially in the hardest moments. Just when you are ready to give up, God can help you overcome, if you let Him

In the Bible, Joshua learned these same lessons as he took over leadership of God's people – the nation of Israel. He was facing challenges that he didn't think he could handle. After all,

leading millions as part of a giant relocation would be daunting enough. Add to that the fact that he would have to displace others (probably in battle) and you have a really big obstacle ahead! He didn't know what he was capable of yet, but he knew he would have to rely on the power and presence of God. He had to trust and step into the fray.

Ultimately, God would reveal what he was made of and remind him of His power. All Joshua had to do was commit to wherever and whatever. He didn't need to know where the finish line was or all the details of the journey. Forging mental toughness and grit requires that we take on challenges that push our outer limits. Comfort and convenience don't produce a warrior mindset.

We will never expand our capabilities until we are pushed to and brought face-to-face with our breaking point. And we may never truly experience the full power of God until we step way out of our comfort zone and can't see the finish line. When you know you only have 1 mile to go or 30 more pushups, it's easy to endure. But true toughness and the warrior spirit is found when you push on when the end is nowhere in sight.

## **Go**

1. In what areas are you taking the easy road?
2. What is one thing you will challenge yourself with that is likely to reveal and remind?

## **Workout**

Joshua 1

## **Overtime**

"God, thank you for not always showing me the finish line. Help me step way out of my comfort zone so I can push myself and see what I am truly made of. Grow in me a mental, physical, and spiritual toughness that I need for the road ahead."

## **Bible Reference:**

Joshua 1



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