

Finishing Strong: The Dungeon of Hardship

2 Timothy 4 Survey

Finishing strong requires an outlook of _____.

Perspectives of faith:

1. Listen to _____, not the _____. **1-5**

...wanting to have their ears tickled...but you...

- God call is _____ – not _____ and _____.
- God's call starts with _____ and continues in _____ the Word.

Checkpoint 1: Whose _____ spur us on & whose _____ stops us?
The shouts from the crowd seldom reflect God's view!

2. Look _____, not _____. **6-8**

...in the _____ ... (8) contrasted to "...loved the _____ ... (10)

Live every day with our eyes fixed on the _____.

- Weigh momentary _____ in light of eternal _____.
- Measure temporary _____ in light of ultimate _____.
- Transform disagreeable _____ in light of intimate _____.

Checkpoint 2: What do I _____ enough to _____...
...and is that what I _____?

3. Look for the _____ – rather than going it _____. **9-22**

Demas deserted...Crescens gone...none supported ...all deserted...

Team mottoes:

- **Be _____!**
"Make every effort to come!"
- **Bring _____!**
"When you come, bring the cloak...the books!"
SSEFC POM: Start with _____. Show it by _____.
Share _____.
- **Get _____!**
 - ♥ **Do not be afraid to say: "I _____ you!"**
 - ♥ **Do not be hesitant to say: "I have _____!"**
 - ♥ **Do not be ashamed to say: "I _____ you!"**
Opening: *"My beloved son..."* 1:2
Closing: *"All you alls – greetings and grace!"* 4:22

Checkpoint 3: Do I have a team?

Challenge: What needs to change to finish strong?

- Listening: Who or how?
- Looking: Forward, back, around?
- Loneliness: Am I going it alone or with a team?

Discussion Guide: Finishing Strong

Opening: Share a time in your life when you sensed you were in a “pivotal moment.” These pivotal moments are seasons of life which presents a crisis and opportunity.

It may be a severe crisis or a great opportunity, depending upon how we respond and use it. It’s one of those defining moments in life that begins a process that can shape or change everything. Often we come to those times thinking: “Something’s got to change!”

After sharing: Assess whether most of the times shared were perceived as positive or negative. Often these *pivotal moments* are in the “pits of life:” the death of a loved one; the failure of a marriage or business; discovery of a disease. Why do you think that is? What does that have to do with our willingness to change? What does that have to do with God’s eternal purposes?

2 Timothy 4 concludes Paul’s challenge to Timothy on “**Living a Legacy.**” His letter is interwoven with references to his team and the team strategy anchored in the handoff zone of 2:2: “*you...me...many witnesses...faithful men...others also.*” Let’s look at this very personal section for practical steps on what it takes to finish strong and pass on our living legacy to our disciples.

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1. Our **Big Idea** was **Finishing strong requires an outlook of faith.**

What is challenging to you about **finishing strong**?

- Issues of aging?
- Challenges of *getting started* or *starting over*?

2. Faith Perspective 1 is: **Listen to God, not the crowd.**

...wanting to have their ears tickled...but you...

- What’s the big take away, for you, from verses 1-5 regarding who you’re willing to listen to?
- Which do you find more difficult when you’re in *the pits*: Listening to or speaking the truth?

3. Faith Perspective 2 is: **Look forward, not around!**

Note contrasting perspectives of Paul and Demas: “...in the future...” (8) “...loved the now...” (10)

Our challenge is to live every day with our eyes fixed on the finish line.

- What are some settings that you’re tempted with *circumstantial myopia*: Getting too focused on the up-close minutia rather than the long-term priorities? *Family matters? Work issues? Time pressures?*
- What do vs. 6-8 tell us about Paul’s view of death and his attitude/spirit as he faced it? Do you hear a tone of despair or of victory? What do you think gave him that view and attitude?

4. Faith Perspective 3 is: **Look for the team assist – rather than going it alone.**

- What stands out to you from verses 9-22? Many times these verses are glossed over in a study much like we read the genealogies in the Old Testament. What do these verses tell us about Paul’s ministry: what was important, how he did it, what he needed?
- **Which of the team mottoes is more important/encouraging to you? Which is more difficult for you to do? *Be there. Bring help. Get real.***

Prayer Target: Pray for our vision of life-sharing groups – small groups, ministry teams...

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Perspectives of faith:

1. Listen to God, not the crowd. 1-5

...wanting to have their ears tickled...but you...

- God call is serve – not sit and soak.
- God's call starts with listening and continues in speaking the Word.

Checkpoint 1: Whose cheers spur us on & whose warning stops us?

The shouts from the crowd seldom reflect God's view!

2. Look forward, not around. 6-8

...in the future... (8) contrasted to "...loved the now..." (10)

Live every day with our eyes fixed on the finish line.

- Weigh momentary pain in light of eternal reward.
- Measure temporary setbacks in light of ultimate victory.
- Transform disagreeable tasks in light of intimate relationship.

Checkpoint 2: What do I love enough to die for...

...and is that what I live for?

3. Look for the team assist – rather than going it alone. 9-22

Demas deserted...Crescens gone...none supported ...all deserted...

Team mottoes:

- **Be there!**

"Make every effort to come!"

- **Bring help!**

"When you come, bring the cloak...the books!"

SSEFC POM: Start with love. Show it by serving. Share good news.

- **Get real!**

♥ **Do not be afraid to say: "I need you!"**

♥ **Do not be hesitant to say: "I have needs!"**

♥ **Do not be ashamed to say: "I love you!"**

Opening: *"My beloved son..."* 1:2

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