

## LIFE CHANGING STORIES FROM THE BIBLE

### “COMPLETING THE WORK”

In Colossians 4:17 we read, “Tell Archippus ; “See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord.” It is obvious that Archippus had a work to do that God had given him among the Colossian Christians. Paul in his letter to the Colossian church was reminding Archippus not to settle down and take things easy but to keep on doing the work God had given him to do. That it is, one thing, to start serving God and another thing to continue serving God and completing the work He gives us.

Jesus is always our great example, as he drew near to his death he was able to say, “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.” John 17:4. In the same way, Archippus, you and me will bring glory to God if we complete the work God has given us to do.

The Apostle Paul as he neared the end of his life was able to say. “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” 2Timothy 4:7. He likened his Christian life and service as a race, race that he finished. He didn’t give up half way because of difficulties and problems that he faced and he faced many.

I want you to imagine yourself running in the Christian race. The Christian race is different from the usual race where the person who comes first is the winner. In the Christian race it’s not winning the race that counts, but finishing the race that makes you a winner as far as God is concerned. We all have different abilities, some can run faster than others so they reach the finish quicker, you could say, but that does not make them better than the slower runner who also finishes the race.

A fast runner might zoom off but give up half way because someone criticises them and they get discouraged and stop running, whereas the slow runner is also criticised, and it hurts, but they refuse to give into their hurt feelings and continue and finish the race. So you can see it is not how gifted you are that matters, but if you finish the race.

For our inspiration I want look at some of the things Paul experienced before he could say, “I have finished the race.” It is obvious that Paul had a resolve, a goal, a purpose in his life, nothing was going to stop him and it was all motivated by his love to Christ. Listen to what he says in his farewell speech to the Ephesians elders, Acts 20:22-24. “And now compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

However I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--- the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace."

He knew what his ministry or work for God was, testifying to the gospel of God's grace, in other words, sharing the gospel message, bringing people to Christ. He knew in advance there would be obstacles to face but together with God he was determined to finish the race. If Paul could do it facing obstacles that probably none of us will ever face, so should we, with much less obstacles, together with God finish our race.

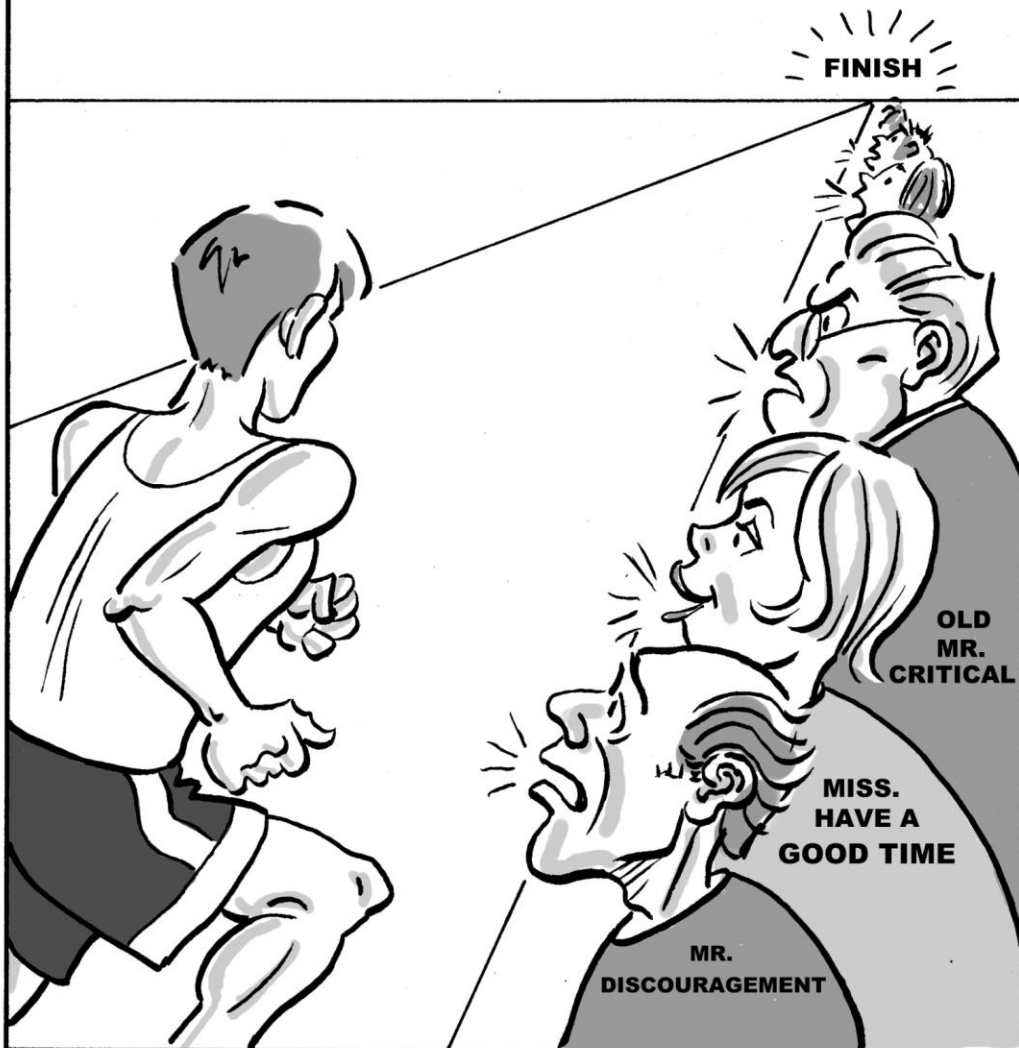
Let's look at some of Paul's obstacles as recorded in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27. Some false apostles had infiltrated the Corinthian church, saying they were superior to Paul. Listen to Paul defending himself. "Are they servants of Christ? I am more. I worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again."

"Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers."

"I have laboured and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked." This is the man who after all that was able to say before he died, "I have finished the race!"

But then what about the greatest example of all, the Lord Jesus himself? Listen to what it says about him and how he it is who inspires us to run and finish the race God has set out for us. Hebrews 12:1-3. "-----let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

**THE RACE OF CHRISTIAN LIFE AND SERVICE**  
**DON'T GIVE UP ! KEEP RUNNING**  
**KEEPING YOUR EYE ON THE GOAL**



**THERE ARE PLENTY OF PEOPLE**  
**ON THE SIDE LINE TRYING TO**  
**STOP YOU FROM FINISHING**

FRANK HUTCHINSON

