



FINISHING WELL

If you have grown up playing sports, or you live in a town that is organized around sports, you will be familiar with the concept of “finishing well.” If you are the starting pitcher of your baseball team, and you’ve pitched 8 scoreless innings, but your bullpen closer gives up a ninth inning homerun, you could still be the loser. If you are the forward for your soccer team, but you cannot put the ball in the net, you don’t “finish well.” And if your football team has a big first half and scores three touchdowns, but your team is scoreless in the second half, you may still lose the game.

“Finishing well” is not just a sports phenomenon. If you work well with your hands, and you start a lot of new projects, but you don’t complete your projects, you may develop a reputation for not completing your jobs. If you are skilled at hanging drywall, but you’re lousy at mudding seams, sanding, and painting, your nicely hung drywall could look terrible when you are “finished.” **Many people are good at starting projects and jobs, but fewer people are skilled at finishing well.** Maybe that’s why people who hang drywall are not usually the ones who are hired to mud and paint.

- Can you identify something you are good at starting, but it’s hard for you to finish?
- Can you identify some of the character qualities of people in your life who have finished their lives well?

People who “finish well” leave the legacy of a positive example for others to follow. Good finishers build into the lives of people they are around, and they also train others to do the job well. Good finishers recognize that jobs and relationships may be seasonal. Having a significant impact on a place or a person does not always mean being there for many years. Good finishers are honest people who talk openly about upcoming changes, and they help others make a smooth transition. Good finishers also pass on positive attitudes and values to those around them. They get close enough to people to make a lasting impact on the people and the place. Good finishers deeply invest much of themselves without needing to see the fruit of their labor. They are intrinsically motivated to do good, to do the right thing, and to work hard.

In contrast, **people who do not finish well have a gradual decline in their relationships and in their performance.** They get excited when things are new, but they don’t have the endurance to work through the conflicts for things to get better. Poor finishers tend to abruptly deal with people and conflict. Poor finishers tend to drop people and drop tasks and move on to a perceived better future. Poor finishers leave a mess and do collateral damage by sabotaging the people and places they leave. They blame others for things not working out, and they tend to burn bridges and make it difficult for them to return.

So let’s talk about it...

- What can we do to help those around us to finish well?
- Do you expect the same people to be around you for a long time, or do you free people to move on when they are ready?
- What kind of influence are you having on the people around you each day?
- What’s one change you can make to help you become a good finisher?

“Health Talks” are designed to help us learn to talk and deal with one another in ways that build understanding and a healthy, growing, supportive, Christian community.