

Principles For A Fulfilled Life

Fulfilled. Simple words yet so elusive for our frazzled and restless hearts. Who among us hasn't yearned for something even faintly resembling fulfillment in our frantic, demanding, "what-have-you-done-for-me-lately" world? The truth is that a fulfilled life is well within the reach of anyone hungry enough to live simple principles.

Accept Forgiveness. While Jesus was climbing up the hill of Calvary, Judas was climbing another hill—the hill of regret. He walked it alone. Its trail was filled with remorse, shame and hurt and his soul was barren. Many of us spend hours on the hill of regret because we haven't found a way to forgive ourselves. Our hearts are weary and wounded as we wrestle with unresolved mistakes. Sighs of anxiety. Tears of frustration. Words of rationalization. Moans of doubt. For some the pain is on the surface. For other the hurt is submerged, buried in a rarely touched place of bad memories.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and will purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John1)

Those of us who have disappointed or betrayed Jesus know better than to be too hard on Judas for choosing the path he did. To think that Jesus would really unburden our shoulders and unshackle our legs after all we've done to him is not easy to believe. In fact, it takes just as much faith to believe that Jesus can look past my betrayals and failings as it does to believe that he rose from the dead. Both are just as miraculous. God's goodness is within reach of our dark hearts.

Finish the Race. Our human tendency is to stop before we cross the finish line. Our inability to finish what we start is seen in the smallest of things: A partly mowed lawn. A half-read book. A cluttered kitchen. Letters begun but never completed. An abandoned diet. Or, it shows up in life's most painful areas: An abandoned child. A cold faith. A wrecked marriage.

Are you considering giving up? Remain and remember Jesus' determination on the cross. Jesus didn't quit even though he was tempted to. He heard mockery

and unbelief even though he had poured out his life and healing and blessing for his friends and the crowds. Now they insulted him, beat him, abandoned him, and crucified him. Did he ever want to quit? You bet. That's why his words are so splendid. "It is finished." What was finished? The work that had been given to Jesus to do was done. The message was spoken. The healing had been revealed. His blood had been poured out. The sacrifice had been made. It was over. Thank God that he endured.

Are you close to quitting? Don't do it. Are you discouraged as a parent? Hang in there. Are you weary with doing good? Do just a little more. Are you pessimistic about your job? Roll up your sleeves and go at it again. No communication in your marriage? Give it one more shot. Can't resist temptation? Accept God's forgiveness and go one more round. Is your day framed with sorrow and disappointment? Are your tomorrows turning into "nevers"? Is hope a forgotten word? Remember, a finisher is not one with no wounds or weariness just one who completes the task. Mother Teresa is credited with saying, "God didn't call us to be successful, just faithful."

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

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