

Food for Thought

For the week of December 15, 2013

(Questions and Scriptures for further personal study)

1. One of the most challenging parts of “finishing well” is being consistent in our daily walk with God. Like Uzziah, most of us don’t fall away from God in one day but through a slow progression over time. How could the following verses help someone who’s tired or has trouble being consistent in their faith?

Galatians 6:7-8

Isaiah 40:31

1 Corinthians 15:58

Looking back on this past year, what sort of progression do you see in your daily walk with God?

2. Often our greatest barriers to God are our successes, not failures. Many of us get in the habit of taking credit for our own success and only turning to God when crisis hits. What do the following verses teach us about having a more balanced perspective of our successes?

Philippians 3:3-11

Jeremiah 9:23-24

1 Timothy 6:17

3. Larry pointed out “a late start is better than no start” and “a good start is no guarantee of a happy ending.” How does Matthew 21:28-32 help support these statements?

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Galatians 6:7-8

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. [NIV]

Isaiah 40:31

31 but those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint. [NIV]

1 Corinthians 15:58

58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. [NIV]

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Philippians 3:3-11

3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. 7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. 10 I want to know Christ—yes,

to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. [NIV]

Jeremiah 9:23-24

23 This is what the Lord says:

“Let not the wise boast of their wisdom
or the strong boast of their strength
or the rich boast of their riches,

24 but let the one who boasts boast about this:
that they have the understanding to know me,
that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness,
justice and righteousness on earth,
for in these I delight,”
declares the Lord. [NIV]

1 Timothy 6:17

17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. [NIV]

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Matthew 21:28-32

The Parable of the Two Sons

28 “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’

29 “I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

30 “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.

31 “Which of the two did what his father wanted?”

“The first,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him. [NIV]