



Weekly Newsletter: 7th May 2024

Reflection: How to not finish well

By Lorna Ferguson

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7)

I am a starter rather than a finisher. I love having an idea and getting going on it, but often lose motivation part way through and struggle to finish well. In fact, if left to myself, I might not finish at all! Looking online, I can see lots of books on this topic, many probably containing things like "6 ways to finish well" – positive tips on how to improve. However, I have been reading through 1 Kings and noticing that it rather warns us about how to not finish well. I would like to look at three kings we find in chapters 11-13, all of whom had a good start, or at least one full of potential, but did not finish well.

King Solomon had the best possible start. When God asked what he should give him, Solomon said he wanted an understanding mind to govern the people, and that he may discern between good and evil (1 Kings 3:9). This answer pleased the Lord, so he not only granted what Solomon asked for, but also gave him incomparable riches and honour. This is summed up in 2 Chronicles 9:22: "Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom."

Solomon, however, had a heart problem. He loved many foreign women, marrying some 700 of them and taking another 300 as concubines. When he was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods. It seems that Solomon was also a people-pleaser, or at least a wife-pleaser. Rather than seek to persuade his wives to follow the Lord, he built high places for the gods they followed and made offerings and sacrifices to them. Solomon had an obedience problem too. God had specifically forbidden the people of Israel to take foreign wives for this very reason. But Solomon disobeyed, perhaps telling himself that the rules didn't apply to him.

Solomon's son, Rehoboam, also had a promising start. When he became king, the assembly of Israel appealed to him to lighten the hard service and heavy yoke which Solomon had put on them, promising to serve him if he did so. Rather than make an instant decision, Rehoboam asked for three days to consider the request. At first he took counsel with the old men who had served his father. They advised that Rehoboam be a servant to the people, and speak kind words to them, and then the people would be his servants forever. Rehoboam, however, had a listening problem. Rather than accept the counsel of these men, he went 'advice shopping' – looking for people who would tell him what he wanted to hear. When the young men who had grown up with him advised him to make the people's yoke heavier, Rehoboam decided to

listen to them instead. This decision eventually cost him 10 of the 11 tribes, leaving him as king over the tribe of Judah alone.

The people of the ten tribes then made Jeroboam their king. Jeroboam had been a servant of King Solomon. He was very able and industrious. Ahijah had prophesied that God would tear the kingdom from Solomon and would give Jeroboam these ten tribes. God also promised that if Jeroboam obeyed God's commandments, walked in his ways and did what was right, then God would be with him and build him a lasting dynasty. However, despite this amazing promise, once Jeroboam became king, he developed a fear problem which then led to an idol problem. He was afraid that if the people went to offer sacrifices at the temple in Jerusalem, they would turn back to Rehoboam and kill him instead. And so, despite God's clear promise of blessing, Jeroboam made two calves of gold for the people to go to instead of Jerusalem, as well as temples on high places for which he appointed priests.

These three men started with potential and promise, but then failed because of issues with their hearts, obedience, people-pleasing, who they listened to, fear and idols – "6 ways how to not finish well". While we can of course learn much from positive examples in Scripture, there is also a lot we can take from negative examples like these. They stand as a warning for us. May God help us to learn from the pitfalls these three men fell into, and by his grace enable each of us to finish well, so that we can say, as Paul did, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

Being Fruitful on our Frontlines

Each week at the prayer meeting, we're praying for the frontlines of individuals in the church family. The LICC (London Institute for Contemporary Christianity) have produced '6Ms of Fruitfulness' to help ordinary Christians think through their daily routine and discover how they make a difference for Christ. For more information, go [here](#).

Women's Discipleship in Holyrood

The Ladies' Bible Studies are up and running! Come along to the church on **Thursday mornings from 11am to 12 noon** as we look at the gospels together using Rebecca McLaughlin's book *Navigating Gospel Truth*. There's no book to buy or homework to do, just come along as you are. We'll run until the end of May.

This Saturday (11th May), from 2.30pm to 4pm we're having a **Ladies' Cream Tea**. Come along for some lovely food, live music and time together in God's word. Norma Shippin will be our speaker.



Roofing Work

The scaffolding should be going up this week for the roof repair. The planned working hours for the project will be 8am to 4pm, Monday – Friday and they will also be out most Saturdays. We do not expect any disruption to our Sunday services or activities during the week. Please pray for this work to go smoothly.

Annual Giving – Gift Aid

If you would like a summary of your annual giving under the gift aid scheme, please drop Nick an email (nickandjean@gmail.com). Thank you!

Slugs and Bugs are in town!



Randall Goodgame (creator of Slugs and Bugs) will be in Edinburgh in May and is doing two family concerts for kids and all grown-ups who are young at heart!

Slugs and Bugs LIVE will be happening at Carrubbers on **Friday 10th May** at 7pm (tickets are available [here](#)) and at Hope City Church on **Saturday 11th May** at 4pm (tickets are available [here](#)).

Contact Liz@holyroodevangelical.org for more details.

Songs of Praise

Charlotte Chapel are hosting a **Songs of Praise evening** with Scottish singer-songwriter Steph MacLeod on **Tuesday 28th May** from 7pm – 10pm (doors open at 6pm).

Songs of Praise will be recording the worship for future programmes, and you are invited to be part of the congregation. If anyone is interested, sign up is [here](#).

Church Calendar

For your info and prayers:

- Tuesday: Pickleball and Table Tennis from 7pm
- Wednesday: Prayer meeting at 7pm in person (6.45pm for refreshments) and on Zoom
- Thursday:
 - Women's Bible Studies at 11am (in person)
 - Session meeting at 7pm (in person)
- Saturday: Ladies' Cream Tea from 2.30 – 4pm
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching.
 - Home Groups
- Monday:
 - Baby and Toddlers from 10 – 11.30am
 - Youth Discipleship Team Meeting at 7pm on Zoom



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