



# FOLLOWERS WHO FINISH

By Dr Cecil Stewart OBE

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Jesus never leads us into darkness because He has our best interests at heart and sees the big picture. He is the Alpha and the Omega, so when we follow Him we can expect an acceleration of grace and favour on our lives, as we move forward in faith.

All of us want to finish what we start, but many times we are distracted, turned aside or delayed, but God Almighty has given us the vision, the power and the divine ability to finish what we start. Some time ago I noticed several houses partly built and when I enquired about them I was told they had been sitting for years. The developer, for whatever reason, had not been able to finish those partly built houses, and that is not a nice picture. Jesus said in **John chapter 8 v**

**12** 'I am the light of the world; he who follows me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life'. Jesus Himself said 'I have finished the work you gave me to do'. We must move beyond our human reasoning and comfort zone, and remember **Philippians chapter 4 v 13** 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me'.

Will Rogers said 'even if you're on the right road, you'll get run over if you just sit there', so we must move forward to become followers of Jesus. In **Matthew chapter 4 v 18-19** Jesus walked along by the seaside and spoke to fishermen, saying 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men', so they arose and followed Him. Many people know what to do but they say 'I can't because....' But we shouldn't be restricted when God has called us for He will enable us if we will take the step and not be controlled by feelings or by how things look. **Psalms chapter 126 v 6** says 'He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him'. Sometimes we don't feel like being a blessing to others or praying for others, or speaking words of encouragement to others, but we can go by faith even if we feel burdened.

*“ Follow me, and I  
will make you fishers  
of men ... ”*

When anxiety and depression tried to overcome me as a young man I felt like isolating myself and being alone but by the grace of God and through the love and prayers of family and friends I was able to rise above and start ministering to others. That is when I came out of the pit of depression and **Psalm chapter 40 v 1-2** was a great encouragement, 'I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.' I found there is transforming power in thanksgiving and making a decision to rise above the dark clouds of negativity and depression. **Few people realise the importance of maintaining good relationships with the Lord, our family and friends**, for then life flows through us like a river. **Satan's big dream is to**

“ *I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.* ”

**separate family and stop communication**, so life will be cut off just like the blood supply in our bodies keeps us alive. Good relationships and fellowship keep the flow of life, see **Psalm chapter 133** and **Proverbs chapter 4 v 23**.

**2 Corinthians chapter 6 v 1** reminds us that we are workers together with God, which means we get involved in what God is involved in, we work with Him. What is God involved in? He is seeking to reconcile the world unto Himself; to bring people back into a relationship with their Creator and Jesus is the great mediator between God and man, **1 Timothy chapter 2 v 5**. We need to be focusing on how we can help reconcile people who have lost out with God, who have been disappointed along the way or have suffered offence, perhaps they have given up because they are discouraged. We must look out for them and ask the Lord for wisdom to help them get back on the road again. This is what happened when men ran to lift us and our car out of a field after we hit ice and our car flipped over.

In **Luke chapter 8 v 1** it shows us how the 12 disciples were with Jesus as He moved through the villages to bring good news. If we are not producing good fruit in our lives we need to check the root of our lives. Are the roots of our lives really going down into the soil of God's love? See **Ephesians chapter 3 v 13-21**. Are we rooted and grounded in Him? If we are born again then yes, but we need to be aware and talk and walk like we are, because we have been given divine connections through our relationship with Jesus. See **John chapter 15 v 5-8**.

In **Philippians chapter 3 v 17** Paul said 'Brethren, be followers together of me. Obviously he was following the Lord; he didn't want the people to follow him independently of God. We must make sure we are not living our lives independent of God, but that we are submitted to Him and our lives are all about doing His will,

“ *Are the roots of our lives really going down into the soil of God's love?* ”

servicing Him and doing what He wants us to do. In **2 Peter chapter 3 v 17-18** it tells us to beware, lest we fall from our own steadfastness, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of God. As we focus our minds and hearts everyday, meditating on the word, praising, worshiping and exalting the Lord and getting on with what God has called us to do, we will find that He empowers and enables us to do what is beyond our ability. **Colossians chapter 2 v 6-7** says 'As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in Him'. How did we receive Him? We received Him through repentance, through submitting and surrendering to Him. So we must continue to do that daily, walking with Him, surrendering to Him, being sensitive to the Holy Spirit and moving forward beyond the boundaries of human reasoning, getting on with what He has called us to do.

“ *As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in Him.* ”

### Hebrews chapter 11 v 6

has been a powerful portion of scripture to me personally. It reminds us that anyone who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. So this highlights the fact that when we come to God we not only believe that He is God, but that He gives results, He rewards those who diligently seek Him, not half heartedly, but diligently. In the book of James it says even the demons believe and tremble, but they don't do the will of God. We need to go beyond just believing and act on the word every day.

### In John chapter 6 v 63

Jesus says 'it is the spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing, the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life'. We don't rely on our flesh or man's reasoning, we know it is the Holy Spirit that quickens or makes us alive and that the words

“... our faith is in Him and His word ...”

that Jesus has spoken are spirit and life. We let those words loose through our mouths and saturate our minds with the word every day.

I remember as a young believer I was struggling to understand faith and going on with the Lord, but it was when I started to read the word, take notes and then meditate on scripture over and over that I was helped. **We need to develop an appetite and make time available to let the seed of the word into our hearts** because that is when it takes root and grows so faith increases. Jesus spoke in **Matthew chapter 7 v 24-29** about a wise man who heard His word and acted upon it being like a man who built his house upon the rock, then when the storm came it stood firm. We will also face trials and storms and may feel isolated or let down by people or even offended, but when our faith is in Him and His word none of these things will stop us going on with God. The foolish man heard but didn't do it, he is like the man that built his house without any foundation and then when the storms came his house collapsed. We need to dig down into the word of God, leaving aside everything the enemy has used to contaminate our faith and build a good foundation on the rock, Christ Jesus, then we will go forward from strength to strength.

**James chapter 1 v 22**

says 'be doers of the word and not hearers only'. We need to be acting on the word in our attitudes toward others on a daily basis, ready to forgive, not like the farmer who was on his deathbed and he remembered a friend who had offended him and they had a fallout. On his deathbed he sent for him to come and told him he wasn't going to live and therefore wanted to put things right. So he said 'I am sorry I offended you all those years ago, forgive me', but then he said, 'if I recover forget this apology'. Some people are really not repenting from their hearts, it's only superficial. We need to put relationships right, forgive people who have done us wrong and release them, pray for them and bless them. See **Matthew chapter 6 v 12, Matthew chapter 5 v 24 and Matthew chapter 18 v 15-35.**

I heard a story where a son had fallen out with his father and left home in a

rage. Years later the son desired to return but felt he would not be received. The father lived in a house close to the railway station and so the son sent a message saying 'I am coming by your way on the train, I realise you may not ever want to see me again, but if you will give me another chance then put a flag on the tree beside the house and I will get off the train and come home'.

When the time came to arrive the son eagerly looked out as he approached where the train was about to stop. Looking at the tree he saw that a flag was not just on one but on every branch. This is the welcome home our heavenly Father gives us when we return in true repentance.

**John chapter 12 v 24**, Jesus said 'except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit'. We need to die to our pride, our own ambitions, and say 'I am nothing Lord without you and thank you I am yours and therefore I have power as an ambassador to rule and reign in life'. See **Romans chapter 5 v 17 and 2 Corinthians chapter 5 v 20.**

“ *I am nothing  
Lord without you  
and thank you I am  
yours ...* ”

Here are 3 key points

### We are called to follow

Jesus said 'Follow Me' and if we keep following Him we will finish what He has called us to do. **2 Corinthians chapter 9 v 8-15** shows how He is able to make all grace abound toward us that we have all sufficiency in all things may abound to every good work. We need to be aware of the divine ability that lives within us.

Abound means to leap forward, to go through obstacles and reach our objectives. **Psalms chapter 30 v 11** reminds us that He can turn our mourning into dancing, so we don't need to keep silent anymore, we can witness not only with our mouths but with our lives and the way we live. Our trials can serve to cause us to grow stronger as we go forward and even when things seem to be against us they are working for our good. See **Romans chapter 8 v 28**.

*“ Our trials can serve to cause us to go stronger as we go forward ... ”*

### He empowers you to finish

The Lord continually empowers and enables us as we go forward, following Him toward our finish. **2 Peter chapter 1 v 4** shows how we have been given exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we may be made partakers of the divine nature. That whole chapter shows how we have been given all that is needed to walk in victory and to finish what God has called us to do. In **2 Timothy chapter 3 v 14** Paul said 'continue in the things you have learned'. We have been put in a position where we can finish the course; sometimes we may think we are stuck and that it's over. Some people get offended and cut off relationships with churches and even with family; that is a deception of satan, all that does is isolate you and put you in a position where there is no life flowing to you or from you.

*“ Some people get offended and cut off relationships with churches and even with family; that is a deception of satan ... ”*

## Your gifts and your goals

Remember God has given us the gifts and talents to use for His glory, remember to always walk in the gifts that you have been given and not someone else's gifts. If you are a singer be a singer, if you are an administrator highlight this and develop it to the maximum. Whatever we are called to do let us develop it and finish well what we have started. We have been given gifts and callings, as seen in **Matthew chapter 25 v 14-20**, 3 people were given talents or gifts. The one who got 5 he used it and doubled it, the person who got 2 he also used it and got twice as many, and then there was 1 person who had fear and a wrong attitude who failed to use his gift and hid the talent and lost everything, including his relationship. Use what you have been given and you will become stronger. We need to cast off every

*“ Remember God has given us the gifts and talents to use for His glory ... ”*

burden or anxiety all the time, as stated in **Hebrews chapter 12 v 1-2**. Run the race with patience and put ourselves in a position where we can achieve what we are called to achieve. We really need to highly value our relationship with the Lord and His word. We also need to highly value our relationship with the family and those God given connections. Value the leading of the Holy Spirit and engage daily in living it out, see **Hebrews chapter 3 v 13**, **Romans chapter 12 v 21** and **Revelation chapter 12 v 11**. This way of living enables us to use our God given authority over circumstances and satan, remember we are redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus and when we know who we are it alters how we act, then the love and light of the Lord can shine out of our lives and bring transformation to those in our world. Often I have to check

*“ ... then the love and light of the Lord can shine out of our lives ... ”*

my focus, especially when disappointments and troubles come, it is so easy to become distracted and give our thoughts over to the problem, but I have to remember before the problem ever came God had a plan to bring me through by focusing on His word and trusting in His power to guide me onward and upward. This is great news and it works, so we can pass it on with confidence.

### Facts about finishing

Those who finish well and win the race will have overcome offence; they will have overcome anxiety, discouragement, deception, distraction and strife. They will also have overcome unbelief and frustration, continuing through all of these because their eyes are on Jesus. These things try to stop us and hinder us from finishing but **Romans chapter 5 v 17** says 'those who receive the abundance of grace

*“It is so easy to become distracted...”*

and gift of righteousness shall reign in life'. We have been given more than enough to get through all of these things and keep on going in faith. Remember **Galatians chapter 5 v 6** 'faith works by love', so may we be people full of the love of God, not harsh or judgemental, but ready to bring about reconciliation as we go forward following Jesus to finish what He called us to do and to be aware of the divine connections He has given us which will take us on toward our destiny. See **Hebrews chapter 6 v 12** 'That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises', **Joshua chapter 14 v 8** 'Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the Lord my God' and **1 John chapter 2 v 6** 'He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked'.

God Bless you!

*“That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”*



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