

FINISHING OUR RACE WELL
Jay Zinn — 1/25/12 — River's Edge Church

Numbers 13:1-6, 26-31; 14:1-12, 20-34

God had Moses send 12 men into Canaan to spy out the land. Ten of the men came back with: “We’re grasshoppers before these giants” and the remaining two, Joshua and Caleb, had a different view: “They are grasshoppers before us! Let’s take them out!” It all boils down to a perspective of kingdom eyes or natural eyes. The ten swayed the masses who accepted defeat before any battle ensued. The result, they never got to live out their potential in God and the whole generation became assigned to wander in the desert for forty years. A whole generation died (over a million people), which approximates to 300 burials per day. The only two of the ten spies who did not die in the desert—Joshua and Caleb.

Joshua 14:6-14

Caleb: “I’m eighty-five years old, I’m here, now give me that hill country the Lord promised me forty-five years ago, and I’ll drive out those giants.”

2 Timothy 4:6-18

Paul: “I have fought (as in a contest) the good fight, I have finished (staying power) the race (as in a 26 mile-plus marathon), I have kept the faith (rules, contract, required training). Now there is in store for me the crown (victor’s wreath) of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who long for his appearing.”

High School: Track & Cross Country — (Finish Well)

Four Stages of Life & Ministry:

1. The Beginning Years 1-30
2. The Becoming Years 31-50
3. The Building Years 51-70
4. The Bequeathing Years 71 +

Barnes: 1 Cor. 13:13 – “Now these three remain: ***faith, hope, and love*** — Barnes adds “***grace.***”

1. **The Beginning Years — 1-30:**

- a. The Season of the Child — “huios” = stresses the dignity and character of the relationship.
- b. The season of ***Faith*** — “I can!”
- c. 0-20 - Involuntary rote learning under tutelage
- d. 21-30 – Voluntary years of developing goals and plans

2. **The Becoming Years — 31-50:**

- a. The Season of the Son — “pais” = signifies a child in relation to descent, a *servant*.
- b. The season of **Hope** — “I will!”
- c. We begin to seek out mentors and faith fathers.
- d. We begin to flesh out the definition of love
- e. Pursuit of studies
“In the tradition of the Hebrews, study was worship, perhaps its highest goal.”
- f. Some mentors are discovered through writings.
- g. Acts 2: “Your young men shall see vision, your old men will dream dreams (Caleb).
- h. Learn to handle the difficulties of life (40’s) — (trust God, forgive, stay close to God).
- i. “Failure need never be failing and success is never final.”
- j. Learn to cherish each day the Lord lets you live.

3. **The Building Years — 51-70:**

- a. The Season of the Man
- b. The season of **Love** — “I am!”
- c. Fathering years: “pater” = nourisher, protector, mentor.
- d. A season of creating a legacy by sowing into sons and daughters.
- e. The best season for writing books because convictions and processing have gelled.

4. **The Bequeathing Years — 71 +:**

- a. The Season of the Father — “propater” — forefather
- b. The season of **Grace** — “I give!”
- c. Give away what has been given to us (wisdom & counsel).
- d. Not the time to close up shop.
- e. Encourage the younger visionary as they take command of the ship.
- f. A time to finish well and finish strong!
- g. **Paul:** “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. NIV