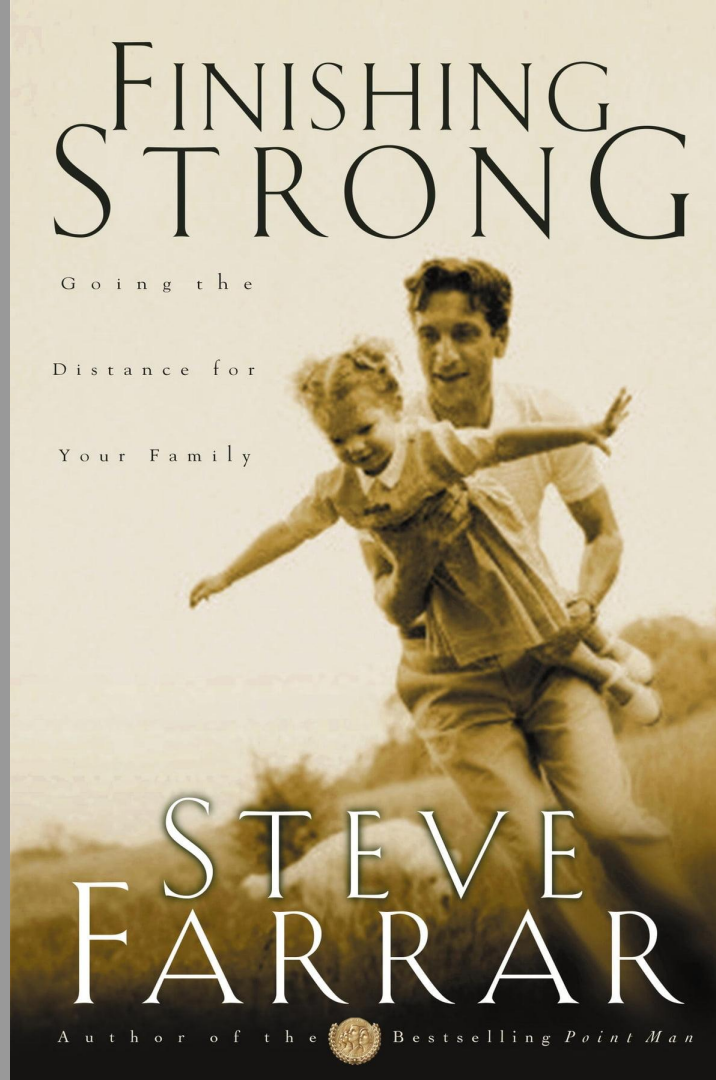


BOOK REVIEW BY
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SETTING OF THE BOOK

- The book was published by Steve Farrar in the United States of America in 1995.
- We can learn a great deal from it.
- It's focus is on how to run and finish the race of life with integrity.
- The last third in the race of life is crucial.
- It is the time to lengthen your stride, focus on the fundamentals , and above all else, don't trip up!
- No one ever got a medal for an incomplete race. Stay in the race and finish strong.
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- The book has 10 chapters which are grouped into three parts.
- Part 1: The Priority of Finishing Strong consists of 3 chapters.
- Part 2: The Perils of Finishing Strong consists of 3 chapters
- Part 3: The Prototypes of Finishing Strong consists of 4 chapters.



PART ONE

THE PRIORITY OF FINISHING STRONG

CHAPTER 1 - ONE OUT OF TEN

- Truth is heavy, so few men carry it - a Jewish Proverb
- On the average, one out of ten people who start the christian race finish strong.
- In 1945, three young men (in their mid to late twenties) with extraordinary gifts were preaching the gospel to thousands of audience across the nation. They were : Billy Graham, Chuck Templeton and Bron Clifford
- Within 10 years, only one of them was still on track for Jesus Christ. Templeton decided that he was no longer a christian and decided to pursue a career as a radio and TV commentator, while Clifford lost everything and became an alcoholic and financially irresponsible. He died shortly at 35 without any honour.

IT'S NOT HOW YOU START THAT MATTERS. IT'S HOW YOU FINISH

- We must stay true to Jesus. Keep your heart close to Jesus every day.
- It's a long way from where we are now to the finish line
- Satan is in no hurry to get his preys. His weapons include:
 - Moral bankruptcy
 - Discouragement
 - Liberal theology
 - Obsession with money making
- A twenty year old man who just started his ministry wrote down the names of his contemporaries on a blank page in his bible. They numbered up to 24. They were sold out for Jesus Christ, trained for ministry and burning with desires to serve the Lord.
- Year after year, he would revisit the list and strike out the names of those who have fallen out of the race.
- After 33 years, there were only three of them remaining out of the original twenty four.
- A popular preacher went to minister in Scotland some years ago. After the program, someone approached him and asked of his father, who had also preached in Ireland (another country) thirty years before that. He also asked about two of his fathers contemporaries who were making waves then.
- The young man confirmed that only his father was still standing in Christ.
- The other two men had derailed from the race. One denied the faith, the other died an alcoholic.

ARE THESE STORIES EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE?

- Another study showed that 250 men quit the ministry over a 24- month period.
- You would probably say these stories are interesting, but they don't relate to you because you are not in full time ministry.
- Every christian who is serious about following Jesus Christ is in the ministry full time.
- Are you a husband or a wife? Are you a father or a mother? If yes, then, you are already in full time ministry.
- The devil might have hid this truth from you but please read Ephesians 4:11–13 and Colossians 3:23
- Whatever your profession, if you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, then ultimately you work for Him.

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU WILL BE THE ONE MAN STANDING OUT OF TEN?

- Whatever your profession is, you are the light of the world, and the salt of the earth. Jesus Christ didn't say anything about part-time. You are a christian 24/7.
- The one who finishes strong is an exception because the odds are against you when it comes to finishing strong.
- Finishing strong is not impossible, but it is improbable.
- It will take some tough choices and personal brokenness to finish strong.
- It is the rare man/woman who finishes strong.
- It is the exceptional man who finishes strong.
- It is the teachable man/woman who finishes strong.

WHAT EXCEPTIONAL MEASURES ARE YOU TAKING IN YOUR LIFE TO ENSURE THAT YOU FINISH STRONG?

- Finishing strong requires some deliberate personal decisions. If you remain on cruise control in your christian journey, you will most likely be among the nine who didn't finish strong.
- In Num. 13, Moses sent 12 spies (carefully selected leaders from each of the 12 tribes of Israel) to the land of Canaan. Only two of them eventually finished strong.
- Finishing strong is about being a Caleb and a Joshua.
- Endurance is required to finish strong because finishing strong is not a sprint, but a marathon.
- It's a long race, and long races don't require speed. They require grit, determination, and finishing power. Heb. 12:1-2

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO START DOING WHAT IS RIGHT

- Some people may think that it's impossible because they have made some mistakes in the past or that they have not even started.
- It's never too late to begin doing what's right.
- As long as you are breathing, it's never too late to confess your sins to God in genuine repentance and receive His forgiveness.
- Just because you failed before does not mean that you should remain a failure.
- A poem, titled, " THE RACE" by an AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

THE RACE

Defeat! He lay there silently, a tear dropped from his eye.

“There’s no sense running anymore—three strikes,

I’m out—why try?”

The will to rise had disappeared, all hope had fled away,

So far behind, so error prone, closer all the way.

“I’ve lost, so what’s the use,” he thought, “I’ll live with my disgrace.”

But then he thought about his dad who soon he’d have to face.

“Get up,” an echo sounded low,

“Get up and take your place.

You were not meant for failure here, so get up and win the race.”

With borrowed will, “Get up,” it said “You haven’t lost at all,

For winning is not more than this— to rise each time you fall.”

So up he rose to win once more, and with a new commit,

He resolved that win or lose, at least he wouldn’t quit.

So far behind the others now, the most he’d ever been,

Still he gave it all he had and ran as though to win.

Three times he’d fallen stumbling, three times he rose again,

Too far behind to hope to win, he still ran to the end

They cheered the winning runner as he crossed, first place,

Head high and proud and happy; no falling, no disgrace.

THE RACE

But when the fallen youngster crossed the line, last place,
The crowd gave him the greater cheer for finishing the race.
And even though he came in last, with head bowed low, unproud;
You would have thought he won the race, to listen to the crowd.
And to his dad he sadly said, "I didn't do so well."
"To me, you won," his father said.
"You rose each time you fell."

- All of life is like that race, with ups and downs and all,
- And all you have to do to win—is rise each time you fall.
- Don't listen to that voice that asks you to "Quit! Give up, you're beaten,".
- "Get up and win that race."

YOU CAN BE THAT ONE GUY WHO FINISHES STRONG NO MATTER WHAT YOUR PAST SAYS

- In 1921, a Swede youth and his wife arrived in Africa to serve the Lord in line with their calling and commitment to God.
- The work was hard, the conditions horrible, and the people hostile and unresponsive. Their lives were constantly in danger.
- Due to the difficult terrain, his wife died shortly after having the second child.
- He had only one result to show for all his efforts - one young boy convert.
- Filled with doubt and discouragement, he left his baby, a girl, with some missionaries because he was too ill to travel and relocated back to Sweden with his first son.
- Many years later, the daughter got married and went to look for his father.
- She found him, a 73 year old man, bedridden in a shabby apartment and surrounded by bottles of liquor.
- She told him that God still loved him and shared with him how that boy, his only convert had become a gifted leader and minister of the gospel. He had led thousands of souls to Christ.
- The man broke down and asked God to forgive his rebellion and wasted years.
- Unknown to him, he had only 6 months to live. His last 6 months were very productive and he restored broken relationships.
- He turned around the 40 wasted years prior to the last six months around, then died finishing strong.
- Finishing strong does not mean finishing unblemished.
- Finishing strong does not mean finishing perfect. That is impossible.

FINISHING STRONG MAY BE HARD, BUT THE OTHER OPTION IS HARDER ULTIMATELY

- Have you gone a long way without an answer from God on your requests that you are now considering junking the christian race? Don't quit.
- The enemy/devil would like to lure us into believing that the other way is the easier way.
- Anchor your hope in Jesus because strong men who stand alone would fall, but weak men who depend on Him will stand.
- If we finish strong, it will only be because we have tapped into Ultimate Strength, Limitless Wisdom, the Fount of Courage, the Source of Perseverance.
- Although, the gate of hell want us to fail, He will get us across the finish line if we depend on Him.
- Do not remove yourself from His protection and power.

WHERE IS THE FINISH LINE?

- The finish line is different for each of us.
- It is when we go to be with the Lord.
- The interesting thing about this race is that no one knows where the finish line is. Some may have 40 years to go while some others have just six months.
- Therefore, it is not how long, but how well you run and finish your race.
- We will finish strong by fixing our eyes on Jesus.
- All the disciples of Jesus Christ finished strong, except one. This is a much better finishing rate than one in ten.
- The reason for this is that they kept their focus on Jesus. The one who didn't finish strong either lost focus or was never focussed on Jesus Christ.
- And then one day—in an instant—the race will be over! We'll cross the finish line, and life on earth will be over.
- And because we have listened to Him, because we have obeyed Him, we will realize that we didn't just finish.
- We finished strong.