

THE TWELVE STEPS TO A FANTASTIC FINISH

II Timothy 4:9-15

Step Number Eleven - Servanthood: May I Hear Well Done

We are taking 12 Steps to a Fantastic Finish.

There is one word we have not used yet and it is critical if we are to make a strong finish – Servanthood: May I Hear Well Done.

And so the focus today is upon servanthood and our key verses are going to be verses 10 and 11 in chapter 4 when we get there.

What we are talking about today is probably critical to every area of your life.

It is not only something that you have to get a hold of to make a fantastic finish, it is a law of life.

It is basically learning to serve others.

What we are talking about is being spent in service.

Giving the gift of ourselves.

We never outgrow servanthood.

We will never come to a time in our lives when we cease to serve others.

Now I realize that is total counterculture because what the culture says is that when you reach 65 you cease to serve because you have done your thing and you switch over to entitlement.

If you switch over to entitlement I can guarantee you two things and neither one of them are very much fun:

1. You are going to be a very lonely person.
2. You are going to die early.

Bill Hybels with Willowcreek Church, wrote a little book called *Descending into Greatness*.

He tells the story of being in college and a French professor with a very strong French accent stood before the class and made a statement that changed his life forever.

He said, "Fulfillment will never come through self-gratification." And in essence he is saying, I finally learned in this screwed up, mixed up world that the people who are really happy and are fulfilled are the people who have learned to spend themselves in the interest of others.

(*Descending into Greatness* by Bill Hybels and Rob Wilkins) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright - Bill Hybels, 1993.

One of the best books that was written by Fenelon is *The Seeking Heart*. He says, "Remember that you are not called to be well-served, but to serve Him well. Learn to be gentle and patient with all that disturbs you. . . . To do small things that are right continually, without being noticed, is much more important. These small acts attack your pride, your laziness, your self-centeredness, and your oversensitive nature. It is much more appealing to make great sacrifices to God, however hard they might be, so that you might do whatever you want with the small decisions of life. Faithfulness in the little things better proves your true love for God.

It is the slow, plodding path rather than a passing fit of enthusiasm that matters."

(*The Seeking Heart* by Fenelon) Auburn, ME: Christian Books. Copyright - Christian Books, 1992. 182 pp.

Mark 10:45

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

MARRIAGE IS A LABORATORY designed by the Lord to teach us how to be servants.

Larry Crabb is right. He said when you have two selfish people in marriage it is like having two ticks and no dog because they are always trying to get what they want in the thing and they are frustrated in the midst of it.

Now I want to give you a quote.

I do not know his spiritual orientation.

Albert Einstein – you think of him as the physicist and the scientist and he came up with all these great theories. Listen to what he says about life:

“How extraordinary!!! is the situation of us mortals! Each of us is here for a brief sojourn; for what purpose he does not know, though he knows not, though he sometimes thinks he senses it. But without going deeper than our daily life, it is plain that . . .

WE EXIST FOR OUR FELLOW MAN.”

There is the principle. We exist for each other.

And when your focus is outward instead of inward you are preparing yourself for a fantastic finish.

You have learned the basic principle that undergirds not only scripture but all of life.

Let's get after it. Are you ready? Verse 9

V. 9 *“Make every effort to come to me soon.”*

Now if I were to translate that word “*soon*” I would translate it “quickly.”

I would translate it “at once, without delay, as soon as possible.”

This is a panic situation.

Paul knows that he is going to die.

He knows that there is a little window of opportunity and he is hoping and praying that Timothy

will get the letter – and it is going to take him about six months to get there after he gets the letter –

because he is going to have to travel about four months over land and a couple of months over water.

And as far as the water is concerned he has to get there before November 6 because between November 6 and about March 15 no one sails boats because the sea is too stormy. So Paul is urging.

The other thing you learn here is he is lonely.

He really wants to see Timothy one more time before he dies.

Paul is saying:

“Timothy, I would like for you to drop everything and come as soon as you possibly can.”

Verse 10

V. 10 “For Demas deserted me, having loved this present world, and gone to Thessalonica, Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.”

Demas deserted me and he did it having loved this present world.

He chose to desert.

He chose to walk out.

That is a very strong Greek word.
It means to leave helpless.
It is like it has been a cold shock to the apostle
that he has lost Demas.

Now Demas is mentioned twice.
And in studying those other passages,
Paul does not use very complimentary words.

With some of the guys there is a big, long list:
“*my fellow soldier, my fellow worker,*”
and there is this list of commendation for them.

When Demas is mentioned, he is just mentioned –
at the end of the book of Philemon and he is just mentioned in
Colossians.

Think for a minute.
How would you feel if you were Demas
and you are in a relationship with the apostle
and word comes down that the court appearing was negative
and he is going to die?

Well the first thing that goes through your mind is
guilt by association.
I had better get out while the getting out is good.

It could be that Demas sees the handwriting on the wall and
he is committed to Paul but not to Paul’s Lord and he,
therefore, wants to save his hide.

So, *“Demas deserted me and the reason that he did is because of his love of this present world.”*

The choice comes to each of us as to whether we will dedicate or desert.

Demas chose the later. He would never be able to say:

“I fought a good fight, I finished the course, I kept the faith.”

He will never hear from the Lord,
“Well done thou good and faithful servant.”

Do you think of anybody else scripturally who made bad decisions under stress that disqualified them from servanthood or from position?

You remember Jacob when he is preparing his dish for the Texas chili cookout and in walks Esau and what does he want? He is starved to death and so he chooses to sell his birthright for a temporary bowl of chili.

Look at Judas Iscariot, You see a lot of other Biblical characters who really deserted the Lord in the stretch.

Now these other guys who are mentioned – Crescens, we do not know anything about him.

But we do know this about Crescens:
he had to be a real strong leader.

Where is he going for ministry? He is going to Galatia.

Galatians is the only book in all of Paul's writings that has no thanksgiving for the church.

There are a bunch of people in that church who have become legalistic and they are living by the law instead of by grace.

And he starts right out, he does not say thank you for them, he gets right into it and deals with it.

Now we do know a lot about Titus.

Titus goes to Dalmatia, that is his assignment.

Where do we see Titus?

Titus is probably one of the first Gentile Christians that Paul led to Christ on the missionary journey.

The next time you see him is in Corinth. Paul sends him to the Corinthian church to straighten that mess out.

Where do you see him the next time?

We are going to open up a ministry on the Island of Crete, who are we going to send?

Get Titus over there.

And he gets the little book of Titus written while he is there on Crete. You know archaeologists have excavated on the Island of Crete and they have found a cornerstone and it is "to our beloved Titus."

Titus you are finished in Crete, get on to Dalmatia.

And so here late in the game, Titus is up in Dalmatia carrying on a ministry.

When verse 10 says that

"Demas loved this present world," what do we think of? We think of what some people call

"worldly individuals."

When we use the term *"worldly,"*

what do we mean by that?

David Roper in his book, *The Strength of a Man* says,

“worldliness is the lust of the flesh

(a passion for sensual satisfaction),

the lust of the eyes

(an inordinate desire for the finer things in life), and the pride

of life (self-satisfaction in who we are,

what we have, and what we have done).”

“Worldliness, then, is a preoccupation with

ease and affluence. It elevates creature comfort to the point of

idolatry; large salaries and comfortable life-styles become

necessities of life.

Worldliness is reading magazines about people who live

hedonistic lives and spend too much money on themselves and

wanting to be like them.

But more importantly, worldliness is simply pride and

selfishness in disguises.”

Dave Roper, *The Strength of a Man*,
quoted in *Family Survival in the American Jungle*,
Steve Farrar, 1991, Multnomah Press, p. 68

That has to be the framework that is behind this desertion
that takes place here on the part of Demas.

Now, verses 10 and 11 are our key verses.

What we are doing is sharing some principles here by negative
connotation.

You have seen Demas, he has not done it.

But you have seen Crescens and Titus, they are still hanging
in there and being spent in these new fields of ministry.

Let's move on and look at the next verse and put this business
of servanthood together. Verse 11

V.11 *“Luke alone is with me. Pick up Mark and be bringing him with you, for he is useful to me for service.”*

Luke probably is writing this letter for Paul.

Now do you know Luke?

Luke has been trained medically.

Paul and Luke were both highly educated individuals. They both had a passion for ministry.

They had a passion for evangelism.

Now you know Luke for two reasons.

The Spirit of God reached down and used Luke to write the:

1. Gospel of Luke.
2. Book of Acts.

So Luke has had a phenomenal impact and he is part of the legacy.

So now what he wants is not just Dr. Luke but he wants two other guys to join him, Timothy, and John Mark?

That is his goal, that is his game plan if all of this works out.

“Luke alone is with me. Pick up Mark and be bringing him with you, for he is useful to me for service.”

Who is John Mark? Deserter!

John is the son of a wealthy family in Jerusalem and influential in the early church.

On that first missionary journey with Paul and Barnabas (and it is believed that Barnabas was probably his uncle), I think we had a pushy momma. She wanted her young son to be

exposed to some of the finest ministry in the world and so she kind of pushed her way into this and saw to it that John Mark received an invitation to travel with the boys and be out in ministry and mature on the foreign field.

They left Antioch and they arrived in Cyprus, they had ministry on the Island of Cyprus, the three of them, and they took the boat over to Pamphylia and we do not know what happened but as soon as they hit the shore in Pamphylia, John Mark booked passage back to Jerusalem and let Paul and Barnabas finish that first missionary journey alone.

Now John Mark either received a dear John letter when they arrived in Pamphylia and he had to make tracks to get back to Jerusalem to deal with that or he was homesick for mamma. We do not know what it was but he left.

Then you remember Paul and Barnabas get back to Antioch and they are reporting to the church about what God has done in this marvelous ministry.

One day Barnabas wakes up and he hears Paul singing in the shower with Willie Nelson, *On the Road Again*. And he knows they are going on a second trip.

So Barnabas goes to Paul, and says I have been talking to my nephew John Mark and he really has it together. He is so sorry about messing up.
He really wants to go with us.

Now you think Paul is pretty loving but he just basically says over my dead body – he is not going. Once a deserter, always a deserter.
I gave him one try and he is not getting another one

as far as I am concerned.

Now Barnabas being filled with the Spirit just sweetly said I am sorry you made that decision,
I am out of here too, you lost both of us.

Now Paul is all alone.

He is determined enough to get moving on the missionary journey so he gets a hold of this visiting Bible teacher from down in Jerusalem by the name of Silas and they take off up to Asia Minor.

Barnabas, along with John Mark, head off across the Island of Cyprus, the same way they went on the first trip and traveled. Now he drops in and out of the Biblical record but it is interesting that when we come down to the end and the pieces start to fall together, John Mark needs to come because he is profitable *“to me for service.”*

I want Mark here.

Mark had a tremendous ministry with Peter.

And because he had a ministry with Peter he was very knowledgeable what was going on in Rome.

Paul is already passionate about mobilizing the saints in Rome and he could see John Mark involved in that ministry and he wants him there to be in service at this critical time.

Chuck Swindoll says, “God is a Specialist at making something useful and beautiful out of something broken and confused.” John Mark is a great illustration of that.

I admire John Mark a lot because he did not quit.

He stayed in there, had a significant ministry with Peter before he was crucified,

and now he is in the hall of fame as far as I am concerned.

He gets a chance to be with Paul in his final days.
And Paul wants him to be there with him.

Like Paul Harvey, do you know the rest of the story? The Spirit of God reached down and took this deserter and let him present Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Mark as the perfect servant.

Now tell me God does not do great things.

Verse 12

V. 12 *“But Tychicus I sent to Ephesus.”*

Now the name Tychicus means “fortunate.”

And you are fortunate if you had a chance to meet him.

Eph. 6:21 *“. . . Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you.”*

Col. 4:7 *“Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information.”*

Do you know what I think?

Tychicus is in Rome and he gets to carry this letter to Ephesus, give it to Timothy, and then Tychicus is going to take the pulpit in Ephesus so Timothy can drop everything and get to Rome immediately.

Now that is the way Paul thinks in deploying his people.

Now when you get to verse 13, do not get lost:

V. 13 “*When you are coming, be bringing the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, also the books, especially the parchments.*”

Now he is giving three commands:

- 1. Make haste.**
- 2. Pick up Mark.**
- 3. Bring my cloak, the books, and the parchments.**

When Paul says bring my cloak, the Mamertine Prison in Rome is a dungeon that is nothing but stone and it is cold and it is damp and winter is coming and he needs his cloak.

Why did he leave his cloak in Troas.

There are many who believe that he was arrested by the Roman authorities in Troas and they took him and he had to leave his books and his personal belongings and so, therefore, it was left there.

Or he might have chosen to travel light and left those things there hoping that they would be brought to him. So we understand the cloak part but what about the books and the parchments.

The man wants the Word. Can you believe it?

This late in the game. He wants to read the letters.

He wants to discover the glories of his Savior in these final days.

You cannot get along without the book.

And Paul wants his parchments.

Verse 14

Verse 14 *“Alexander, the coppersmith, did me a great deal of harm, the Lord will pay him back according to his deeds.”*

Evidently Alexander, the coppersmith, is a squealer. He told the Roman authorities some things that were not true about Paul and got him arrested.

And it is also believed that the Roman government made him their star witness at the opening hearings and did a great deal of damage.

And it could very well be possible that he is the one who is responsible for Paul's execution.

Paul also warns Timothy about him but would you notice there is no bitterness, there is no spent emotional energy, there is no hatred, there is nothing said about revenge – the Lord will take care of that.

Verse 15

Verse 15 *“And you also be guarding yourself against him for he vigorously opposed our words.”*

In this final verse we see the Apostle warning Timothy:

“AND YOU [Timothy] ALSO BE GUARDING YOURSELF AGAINST HIM.”

The REASON this admonishment is given is found in the last phrase:

“FOR HE VIGOROUSLY OPPOSED OUR WORDS.”

As we close,

What is our Step #11? Servanthood: May I Hear Well Done.”

Okay, can I give you three ways to do it?

1. Serve the master. 1 Cor. 4:1: *“Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”*
Make him your number one priority.
Make yourself available to serve.
That is being a vessel for honorable use – remember back in chapter 2.
2. Your mate. Make a determination that every day you will yoke up when you wake up with your mate and determine to be a blessing
in doing the things for her or him you did when you courted each other.
You had no problem serving one another in those early days of love.
Make a re-determination that Eph. 5:25 is true:
“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her.”
3. Be a servant in your ministry. 2 Cor. 4:5: *“For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake.”*

Bruce Wilkinson says, “When you pray, make sure your will is in neutral so God can shift it.”

Sheila Walsh has touched a lot of people and she admits that this is the prayer that she prayed that turned her life around: “Father, I stand before You now with empty hands.

Whatever You put in my hands, I will welcome, and whatever You take away, I will gladly let it go.”

(God’s Most Precious Jewels are Crystallized Tears: True Stories of Women Who Turned Their Misery Into Ministry by Barbara Johnson) Nashville, TN: Word. Copyright – Barbara Johnson, 2001.

Now there are 12 lessons that come out of this study.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: Do you have a reputation of being a person who is available at a time of emergency?

LESSON #2: Is the Lord and what He wants the most important thing in your life?

LESSON #3: Isn’t it a comfort that the Lord will never leave us nor forsake us?

LESSON #4: Mark teaches us that having made a mistake does not mean that we cannot finish strong in the accomplishment of the Lord’s mission for our lives.

LESSON #5: Are you known as a person who is “useful” in the Lord’s service? (verse 11).

LESSON #6: Do you often drop everything and answer urgent requests?

LESSON #7: The choice is dedicate or desert.

LESSON #8: What are the things you would ask for if you knew you did not have long to live?

LESSON #9: Are you careful and concerned about your relationships with others?

LESSON #10: One of the greatest things you can do to help you with the problem of loneliness is to make lots of good friends.

LESSON #11: Are there some people who have done you a “great deal of harm” and you need to let go and let the Lord take care of that situation? (verse 14).

LESSON #12: There will never come a time in your life when you are allowed to cease to serve.

STUDIES IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY

“The Twelve Steps to a Fantastic Finish”

Key verse 2:15 — *“Make every effort to present yourself to God, approved, as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, guiding the word of truth along a straight path.”*

STEP NUMBER 11 – Servanthood: May I Hear Well-Done 2 Timothy 4:9-15

Key verse 4:10-11

Notes

v. 9 Make every effort to come to me soon.

v. 10 For Demas deserted me, having loved this present world, and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus to Dalmatia.

v. 11 Luke alone is with me. Pick up Mark and be bringing him with you, For he is useful to me for service.

v. 12 But Tychicus I sent to Ephesus.

v. 13 When you are coming, be bringing the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, also the books, especially the parchments.

v. 14 Alexander, the coppersmith, did me a great deal of harm; the Lord will pay him back according to his deeds.

v. 15 And you also be guarding yourself against him for he vigorously opposed our words.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 2 Timothy 4:9-15 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.
2. What caused Demas to desert the ministry, according to verse 10?
3. Read 1 John 2:15-17 and describe the world from John's perspective.
4. How is Mark described in verse 11?
5. Read Mark 10:45 and answer this question: Am I considered by others as a faithful servant?
6. What instructions does Paul give to Timothy in verse 13?
7. What did Alexander the coppersmith do to Paul? What will the Lord do in response?
8. Read Isaiah 54:17 and describe what Paul asks Timothy to do, with regard to Alexander the coppersmith in verse 15.
9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?