

The Finishing Factor

A Teaching Inspired by the Holy Spirit
and Transcribed by Douglas Birk

Preface

I received this revelation over the course of 8 years of serving in the music ministry at Church on the Rock in St. Peters, MO. God, through His tender way of changing me, is teaching me through His word how to be a servant. While I've learned much on how to be an effective servant, sometimes I still struggle with being a servant, not just "doing" service. And during those times I've asked God for wisdom. And, true to His word (James 1:5-6), He gave me the wisdom I needed to grow and become more capable.

Specifically, this teaching outlines a very important principle in God's word demonstrated by Jesus in His life and other individuals in the Bible. I have called this precept "The Finishing Factor".

My prayer is that this teaching will cause music ministries around the world to refocus their efforts to become better finishers and not just becoming well-known musicians and singers. And not just finishing what WE choose to do. Finishing what God has given us to do!

Introduction

This teaching highlights one of our Lord's greatest traits. He was a finisher! As we'll see in this document, Jesus spoke many times about His desire to finish those things Father God gave Him to do here on earth. Jesus was always focused on finishing the Father's work. He wasn't here to do His "thing", He knew His purpose was to fulfill the Father's plan.

I'm titling this teaching "The Finishing Factor" since I believe the principle of being a finisher is absolutely necessary to our success as music ministers. We need to serve as Jesus did. He never had a "dry" service. Every time He ministered He was anointed and signs and wonders followed Him. Why should we settle for one dry time as we minister in music? Why do we settle for normal and average when God's plan is extraordinary and excellent?

I believe each of us will have to judge ourselves (me included!) after reading this. We have a choice to make. To focus on finishing what God has given us to do or not. It is up to each of us to make this choice and pay the price to finish and finish strong!

The Finishing Factor

The finishing factor is a lifestyle in which **finishing** what you're **given** to do as directed is more important than what you do or how you do it.

In this teaching, I'll:

- describe a principle I call "The Finishing Factor"
- prove that it is a biblical principle through numerous scripture references
- identify the benefits of applying it in music ministry
- list ways to put it into practice

What is it?

The finishing factor is a lifestyle. It is not something you can just do on Sunday mornings or when you want to act "spiritual". God knows the difference! It is an "every day of your life" style that puts more importance on finishing what you're given to do than the actual task itself. While it is important that whatever we do for God is our personal best (let's not neglect excellence), we need to understand that the particular task we're performing in the Body of Christ is not what gives our service worth. Moreover, our worth in the Kingdom is NOT determined by our works period! Our worth was determined by the price God paid for us! Yet, in music ministry, way too often our focus is our last ministry "opportunity", where we were, what we sang and played, with whom we ministered, how well the congregation responded, etc. Comparison is the rule, not the exception. Our greatness ends up being measured by the world's scale and not by God's. And in doing so, we gravitate away from God's plan. We should never measure ourselves by the world's standards, their methods, or even by ourselves and others in ministry. God has higher ways! He measures us by our obedience to His word. He gauges us by our heart condition. He grades us by the degree we finish His plan for our life.

"The Finishing Factor" requires respect for the God given authorities in our life. We can't finish "given" tasks without a giver! Unless we submit to the God-given authorities in our life, we will only finish our own goals and not His or not finish at all. We would be like those who, after accomplishing a bunch of "churchy" things, will find themselves rejected by Jesus because they never knew Him and His ways. And I know that, for musicians and singers, this is a difficult subject. We are conditioned by the world's system to question authority, not submit to it. Yet God says in His word:

1 Cor 16:16 (Amplified)

I urge you to pay all deference to such leaders and to enlist under them and be subject to them, as well as to

everyone who joins and cooperates [with you] and labors earnestly.

Romans 13:1-2 NKJV

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgement on themselves.

Hebrews 13:17 (Amplified)

Obeys your spiritual leaders and submit to them [continually recognizing their authority over you], for they are constantly keeping watch over your souls and guarding your spiritual welfare, as men who will have to render an account [of their trust]. [Do your part to] let them do this with gladness and not with sighing and groaning, for that would not be profitable to you [either].

We need to understand that submitting to godly authority is to our benefit! It doesn't hinder us from accomplishing God's plan for our life, it helps us stay on track and keeps us in His will for our life. Musicians and singers have to put aside their egos and become like Jesus, a servant of servants. As we do this, we will position ourselves to operate in the finishing factor. Without submitting to godly authority, we have no way of finishing His given tasks for our life.

So, to quickly review, the finishing factor is:

- An "every day of your life" style that focuses on finishing His plan for our life
- A principle that positions us to reap the ministry benefits of Jesus
- A method dependent on godly authority to be effective
- An alternative to the world's system of measuring greatness

Scriptural Proof

Consider how Jesus ministered. His focus was never on Himself. He wasn't caught up in the pursuit of achieving miracles to astound people. He wasn't in the people pleasing business. Although great throngs followed Him, He never played to the crowd or based His success on their response. His focal point was doing those things the Father gave Him to do and completely finishing them. In fact, to Jesus, finishing the Father's will was a source of life giving power that His disciples could not yet understand or tap into. In the

following scripture, Jesus identifies finishing the Father's work as nourishment:

John 4:32, 34 (Amplified)

But He assured them, I have food (nourishment) to eat of which you know nothing and have no idea... My food (nourishment) is to do the will (pleasure) of Him Who sent Me and to accomplish and completely finish His work.

To Jesus, not being a finisher of the Father's work meant STARVATION! He had a source of life sustaining power that His disciples knew nothing about. Talk about your multi-vitamin! Jesus received nourishment through being a finisher. His choice of words is not just dramatic. He truly required the finishing factor as part of His daily diet. His disciples were often too concerned with matters such as who was greatest. In today's time, this is still a problem that plagues music ministries. Jesus would remind them that, to be the greatest required being servant of all:

Mark 9:33-35 NKJV

Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?" But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest. And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

Jesus didn't just mention the finishing factor once. Again, Jesus was consumed with finishing. Even the Father's witness of Him was dependent upon it:

John 5:36 NKJV

But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish - the very works that I do - bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.

This scripture plainly explains the finishing factor. Father God was Jesus's authority, giving Him the tasks to be performed. Jesus's part was to finish the tasks. The power of God authenticated the words Jesus spoke.

Yet, it's not just finishing the task any way we choose that is pleasing to God. Another key component of the finishing factor (...as directed...) is HOW we finish the given task. Jesus didn't just find His own way to finish

those tasks. Many times, we as musicians "make our own rendition" instead of playing a part as written or as directed. Or, we choose to stay in our comfort zone instead of practicing on our own time and allow God to stretch us. Even worse, we may comply during rehearsal but play it "our way" during the service. We may think we can get away with this, but anyway you look at it, this is simple disobedience to authority and to God. Musicians in general don't like to be told what to do, let alone HOW to do it. I realize this may seem strong, but it is "little foxes" like this that cause us to stop the anointing from flowing as we minister.

Jesus didn't have this problem. He didn't have anything to prove nor did He have to be comfortable. He performed the given tasks just like the Father showed Him:

John 5:19-20 NKJV

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel."

John 8:28-29 NKJV

Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.

John 6:39 NKJV

This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

John 12:26 NKJV

If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

What powerful scriptures! Jesus not only was obedient in finishing, He was also obedient in how He finished the task. He completed the works in like manner, submitting both to the what and the how. And the most amazing part is knowing that God WANTS to show us how He would do it!!

He wants us to learn from Him about His way of doing things. Talk about guaranteed victory! We will know and operate in His ways better through applying the finishing factor. And, as we please Him, He will never leave us alone as we minister. He will minister through us (that's how He honors us!) as we serve. That brings total victory!

Those things the Father gave Jesus were intended to never be lost. The Father's will for Jesus's ministry was total victory every time Jesus ministered. He was anointed to do good and to finish the Father's work. His will for us is the same! Every service should be a time in which God can have His way and minister through us to those in our midst. Every time we sing a prophetic song we should see the lost come to a saving knowledge of Christ (1 Cor 14:24-25). Every time we minister the church should be edified (1 Cor 14:12). We have the choice to make, do His work His way and bless all those around us, or make our own path and hurt those around us and face certain defeat. What a privilege we have to be a part of His tasks in this earth. We should be so excited every time we minister as worshipers and praisers, knowing that we're not under pressure to perform or make ourselves look good. If we are focused on operating in the finishing factor, God will do the impossible we can't do and we'll see Him be glorified instead of our talents, gifts, and abilities.

In addition, Jesus wasn't just obedient to do the Father's works the Father's way. Jesus also spoke the words the Father spoke to Him. This was not a suggestion from Father God, it was a command. Again, Jesus demonstrates total submission to godly authority. He wouldn't even speak anything the Father had not spoken to Him. Jesus spoke the Father's words all the time ("whatever I speak") and this was a vital part of Jesus's source of power on the earth. The Father's words represented the Father's authority. Jesus spoke those words to release the Father's authority.

For us in music ministry, we must be meditating and speaking God's word, speaking His logos word and the rhema word He has given over our particular ministry. The songs we use must line up with His word. Everything we do in our music ministry must be found in His word. Why would we want to walk in the world's musical ways when His ways bring His anointing and power! This is not a suggestion for us, it is a command that we praise and worship God as He sees fit, not as we feel comfortable. It is the anointing of God that destroys the yoke, not the style of music we use nor the perfection with which we "perform". Our focus must be to position our ministries to be vessels through which the anointing of God can freely flow. And the finishing factor can help us do that!

Jesus stayed focused on finishing throughout His entire ministry. When, in John 17, He prayed for Himself, the disciples, and the church, He said these words:

John 17:4 NKJV

I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

In this verse Jesus clearly declares that the work the Father gave Him is finished. Verses 2 through 4 identify the major tasks Father God gave Him. First, to provide the way for all people to receive eternal life through Himself. Second, to help everyone know the Father and the Son and grow in that knowledge as a believer. Third, to glorify Father God on the earth by finishing His work.

Shouldn't our goals in music ministry line up with the tasks the Father gave Jesus? Notice that the first two tasks Jesus mentions in His prayer are reaching the lost and bringing them to a saving knowledge of God! If you read the entire prayer that encompasses all of chapter 17, not once does Jesus mention any of the miracles He performed. His prayer was that the works the Father gave Him to do would continue through the disciples and the believers to come. That's you and me he prayed for!

In our music ministries, we have been given the same tasks the Father gave Jesus, reach out to the lost, help get them saved to know Jesus, and thereby bring glory to the Father in the earth. I believe we will make the right choice and not spend our time trying to glorify our abilities, talents, and gifts. We will choose to put our ministry goals in line with the Father's goals. We'll reach out to a hurting world with the Gospel expressed in song and drama. We'll be the laborers of the harvest, helping to bring the perishing to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

While I could do on and give examples of the finishing factor in the ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-15) and in the lives of Paul the Apostle (2 Timothy 4:7, Acts 20:24) and Zerubbabel (Zechariah 4:8), I'll move on to summarize the benefits of applying this factor.

The Benefits of Applying the Finishing Factor

By applying this factor to music ministry, we will reap the same benefits that Jesus reaped upon His:

- Salvation of the unsaved (this is the Father's heart and must be a prime motivation for all we do in ministry)
- physical, emotional, and spiritual nourishment for ourselves (food others know nothing about) that gives us the extra strength we need to finish the Father's work
- clearer understanding of the Father's will and His ways of doing things, guaranteeing total victory
- Greater level of God's Presence going before us
- God confirming the Word we proclaim by signs and wonders following every time we minister!

In short, we will have what everyone is chasing, TRUE success! In addition, several additional benefits can be expected:

- Reduction of strife that once held us back
- Ministry flows from our hearts to reach hurting people
- Improved cooperation to help the vision of the house come to pass
- Oneness of purpose, thereby not giving Satan a foothold
- Freedom from comparison which is unwise
- Increased respect for godly authority
- True servanthood increases!

Where Do We Start?

Simple... Don't try, DO! Here are some ideas:

- Decide that you need to change, even if others don't.
- Identify those people that God has placed in authority over you and submit to them. If you're not sure, ask!
- If you are already in a position of leadership, it is all the more important to start now. Those under your care (not control!) need an example, and the best example for them is YOU!
- Don't expect yourself to change overnight. Allow the Holy Spirit to gently and completely control the process of renewing you.
- Meditate on scriptures concerning servanthood, especially examples of how Jesus ministered as a servant of all.
- Take time with God to evaluate why you do what you currently do and allow Him to place His light on those areas that need adjustment.
- Keep your eyes on His plan and how grand it is!!

This concludes this teaching. I pray that, in reading this, you are now ready to start being a finisher of all God has given you to do for His glory. Be blessed, servants of the Most High. Glorify Him with everything you finish!

In Christ,

Douglas Birk

©2000 Gift on the Altar Praise