

FINISH LIKE YOU STARTED

(JOHN 1:43-45, 6:4-6)

The sport of track and field is very exciting to me. I was not the fastest on the track but I was one that when my event came I was committed to **FINISHING LIKE I STARTED**. I understood if I started well, kept form, focused on technique and took 3 steps between the hurdles I would successfully cross each hurdle. From sprint races through the marathon and beyond, running is one the most elemental and instinctive of human movements. Let something happen right now and watch how fast people begin to run. All hurdles races begin with a traditional sprint start from the starting blocks. Life can be like running the hurdles. Life is a sprint & distance race of 60m, 100m, 110m, 200m, and 400m. The hurdles in life are set at different heights that must be cleared by the runner. You must **FINISH LIKE YOU STARTED**. Hurdles are like the obstacles we encounter in life. The Apostle Paul reminds us in **(1 Cor 9:24)** that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize. Then he reminds us that we should run in such a way that we receive **the prize**. Paul was sharing with us to **FINISH LIKE WE STARTED**. It is so amazing how we can be so excited about starting something. We are excited when meet someone new that we click with. We get excited when we join an organization, church, sorority, fraternity, social group, choir or auxiliary. We are so excited when we first enter into relationship with Jesus Christ but as time goes on and we are tested by the hurdles of life our level of excitement diminishes. Right when we encounter something that is perceived to be bigger than our faith we shift our focus from Jesus to the material thing **(the obstacle / hurdle)**. When the relationship is put to the test our level of excitement, expectation, and faith is not where it was when we started. The question that stares us in the face is “What happens when the hurdles and the test of life are put before us. In **(John 1: 43-45)** Jesus desired to go to Galilee notice that Jesus finds Phillip. No one brings him to Jesus **(as Andrew did Simon, Phillip did Nathanael)**. **(John 1:43)** states that Jesus wanted to go to Galilee so He found Phillip and said to him “follow me”. Notice that **Phillip started out well**. He did not hesitate when Jesus said follow me. He did not say wait a minute I will be right back. He did not say let me finish what I am doing first. He did not say I just got off work I am tired. He did not say go ahead I will catch up. Phillip had a seeking heart and that is evident in how he responded to Jesus. Look at **(John 1:**

45), Phillip finds Nathanael. Phillip and Nathanael must have known one another and both of them must have studied the Law and the Prophets and both were seeking the Messiah. **Phillip started out well** and this is evident because when **Jesus found him and said “Follow Me”**, his ears, his eyes, and his heart were open to receive him and he followed Jesus. **Yes, Phillip started out well.** He started like he wanted to finish. He followed Jesus and witnessed water changed to wine, the cleansing of the temple, the nobleman’s son healed, the paralytic healed and **BUT** now we come to a hurdle, obstacle, a point in the faith race where his faith would be tested (**The feeding of the 5,000**). Look at (**John 6:4-6**), the crowd came to Jesus and so Jesus sought out Phillip again and asked him a question. Where shall we buy bread that these may eat? In (**John 6:6**) it states that He said this to test Phillip. Jesus was not asking for a plan He already knew what he would do (**John 6:6**). He was testing Phillip so that Phillip would reveal to himself what he was like. Jesus already knew what Phillip was thinking. He knew Phillip was probably counting the number of people in the crowd. He knew Phillip was probably doing estimates. He was pessimistic. His focus was on the crowd and not on Jesus. After being with Jesus all this time, after seeing so many miracles he focused on the impossible and not what Jesus could do. Look at (**John 6:7**), One denarius was a day’s pay for a common labor, 200 denarius would be 8 months wages when Phillip saw the great crowd he became overwhelmed by what seemed impossible. He was not **FINISHING LIKE HE STARTED**. Phillip’s way of thinking had rubbed off on Andrew to a point (**John 6:8**). But at least he still brought the boy to Jesus expecting Jesus to do something. Jesus actions demonstrated that five barley loaves and two fishes was enough (**John 6:10-12**). With God all things are possible when you **FINISH LIKE YOU STARTED**. I know that many of you are facing what seems to be impossible today (**FINISH LIKE YOU STARTED**). **You** may be like Phillip looking at your money and saying this is not sufficient (**FINISH LIKE YOU STARTED**). You may be looking at the situation and saying this is just too much (**FINISH LIKE YOU STARTED**). You may be dealing with an illness and saying Lord what am I going to do (**FINISH LIKE YOU STARTED**). Your relationship your auxiliary, or your job may be in the valley of the shadow of death but remember it is just a shadow of death (**FINISH LIKE YOU STARTED**). **Get your focus back** you believe. Jesus is saying right now as he said to His disciples at the feeding of the 5,000 **“make the people sit down”**. Jesus wants to move in your situation

BUT you have to show him by your faith that you are going to **FINISH LIKE YOU STARTED**. The test that you may be going through will reveal you to you. How many of you know that Jesus strength is made perfect in your weakness? Phillip was greatly used in the spread of the gospel in the early church. Multitudes came to Christ as a result of Phillips preaching. He **FINISHED LIKE HE STARTED** and so can you.