

Finishing Well

Jim Downing

I. Introduction.

- A. Title changed from “Finishing Well” to “Continuing in the Ministry.”
- B. The Old Testament saints were required to change position at age 50, but they were still involved to some degree with Temple practices.
- C. Sixty-five for retirement is simply an arbitrary number for retirement.
- D. The peak age is thirty-three. This is illustrated by boxing. Some Bible scholars say this why Christ chose to die at thirty-three. Mentally, people fall apart too. Christians however are called to grow in knowledge and grace. (2 Peter 3:8)
- E. When growth ceases, death starts. This happens in ministry too.

II. Health.

- A. About 50 million brain cells die every day and are not being replaced. Most cells take seven years.
- B. Someone said that if a diseased cell is replaced by a dying cell it is because we have allowed it to happen. In dealing with prostate cancer he decided to:
 - 1. Make his quiet time into three half hour periods throughout the day.
 - 2. He saw himself being cured in this.
 - 3. Then he saw himself going to the doctor.
 - 4. Then he planned activities where he could testify about God’s healing.
 - 5. In three months he was healed.
- C. The body responds to the mind. We are to visualize and see ourselves through health difficulties and trust God to pull us through.
- D. Our health is important to carrying the gospel. God may not intervene directly, but our bodies respond naturally to our bodies. Our health is under our control.

III. Gifts.

- A. Everyone has been given a gift for the edification of the body. (1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 14:26)
- B. We are to bring every man up to his full maturity. (Colossians 1:28-29)

C. Mature Christians will reproduce, so we focus on maturing men before helping them evangelize.

D. The formula for fulfillment.

1. To discover your gift, dedicate it, develop it and deploy it to the glory of God.
2. When this is done in a family atmosphere for the glory of God this is fulfillment.

E. The gifts do not claim to be inclusive. For example, music is not included.

F. It is important to put our gift into practice.

IV. Creativity.

A. The best way to do something probably has not been thought of yet.

B. As long as one is allowed to produce creatively they are able to maintain a sense of purpose.

1. There is a world of possibilities today especially with the internet.
2. You should have about fifty creative projects that you want to do but never get around to—you will never get bored.

C. Most people all their life have worked under a boss.

1. A hidden desire of retirement is to choose the priorities of your time.
2. Sleep is not the answer. More sleep makes you more tired.

D. How well you manage your time will determine how well you are involved in the ministry.

V. Discussion.

A. Managing your time. You need to determine whether the opportunity has any eternal value. In painting a landscape what you leave out is as important as what you put in.

B. Imagination always wins over will. You communicate to your body more through imagination than simply through trying to will it. There are many natural laws of God and this is one of them—we get into a mode of envisioning what God can do and this sets us up appropriately.

C. There are two things you can pray about—people and the weather. You cannot control the weather, so the main focus is on people.

D. God has certain fixed causes and effects. For example, we will all die. But we can change and control many things and one of those things is our health. If you say “I can,” this is a mobilization for battle. Saying “I can’t” is an excuse not to try. (Philippians 4:13)

E. When talking about doing things of “eternal consequence,” having fun and enjoying life can be included in this. Enjoying life has eternal consequence. The height of spiritual bliss is deploying our gifts for the glory of God.

F. While having a list has been burdensome, knowing that there is always something to enjoy can be liberating.

G. The cause of most deterioration and disease is stress. Positive and negative thoughts affect our health.

H. Boredom is a cause of fatigue.

Application questions.

1. Explain in your own words the three keys to continuing in ministry. Why are these keys important to living a fulfilled life?

2. How did you react to the speaker's discussion on health? Does the imagination have that much power over the body? Explain your opinion.

3. How do you look at the end of ministry in light of the message? What things have you taken from this message?
