

Monday, May 25

Who of us have projects we've started but they remain unfinished? Who of us went to the store to purchase items to complete a task, but the items were seldom, if ever, used (and now might have more value in a garage sale)?

Who of us excitedly began reading a book, but now it conveniently rests on our nightstand or on a bookshelf . . . half-read (if that much)? Who of us initially put energy into a personal life change (some call it a new year's resolution), yet it was never ignited?

Does that frustrate the heck out of you? It does me. I have great intentions, and I also often have poor follow-through. I don't always finish what I start - a home project, a running race, a commitment to personal health, prayer time, bible reading, investing in relationships. I just don't do it.

But God is different. He always finishes what He starts.

Philippians 1:6 And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

That's a remarkable truth - God never has a to-do list. He's not dependent on chance or luck to accomplish His purposes, and there's never a possibility that His eternal plans won't be fulfilled. He always finishes what He starts.

Isaiah 46:9-11b I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose . . . I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it."

What exactly is it that God will finish?

The apostle Paul gives us an answer [Romans 8:29] *God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. (Message paraphrase)*

As an imperfect, broken, messed up sinner I love knowing that end, but it has promise for our lives right now. Paul's declaration to the Philippians and the Romans wasn't only about completion on the last day, but about progress today, as well.

He wasn't just stating, "Hey, don't worry, everything's going to work out in the end." He believed that God would unleash His holy power in them and their spiritual growth and fruit would be evidenced now. He knew, without hesitation or reservation, that the work God had started in them would increase, expand, and multiply until the end when God would finally finish the work.

The good news for us is that God is completing us by producing in us more and more love and grace fueled by truths about Him and His promises. He's perfecting our hearts and minds around that which is *true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. . . . that are excellent and worthy of praise* (Philippians 4:8).

God's reshaping, sharpening, and finishing is happening - right now - in you and to you, because God doesn't have a to-do list. It's always, in Christ, a "done" list.

Don't ever lose heart. Don't ever give up. Don't ever doubt the power and passion of God to complete the purposes He has for you.

Because . . . God always finishes what He starts.