

Finishing Well

Creating Partnerships to Encourage Men to Finish Well in Life

REFLECTIONS ON Faith

Barry Morrow

“MEN LUST,
BUT THEY
KNOW NOT
WHAT FOR;
THEY WANDER,
AND LOSE
TRACK OF THE
GOAL;
THEY FIGHT
AND COMPETE,
BUT THEY
FORGET THE
PRIZE;
THEY SPREAD
SEED, BUT
SPURN THE
SEASONS OF
GROWTH;
THEY CHASE
POWER AND
GLORY, BUT
MISS THE
MEANING OF
LIFE.”
-GEORGE
GILDER

MEN: THEIR FEARS ABOUT FAITH AND CHURCH LIFE...

According to Sam Keen, author of *Fire in the Belly, On Being a Man*, men and women fear totally different things: “Men’s fears focus around the loss of...independence, while women fear the loss of significant relationships. We (men) most fear engulfment, anything that threatens to rob us of our power and control. Women most fear abandonment, isolation, loss of love.” If Keen is even partially right, then there is a good chance that much of modern church culture, while comforting women, is *frightening* to men. Consequently, typical churchgoing that is rich in providing friends and relationships, something most women deeply desire, and which shields a woman from her deepest fear, by the same token forces a man to encounter his deepest fear. In his book, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, David Murrow devotes a chapter to other “fears” that can make men leery of church involvement. Do some of these ring true?

MEN FEAR INCOMPETENCE...

One of the recurring themes that I hear from men is that while the man is working 60 plus hours per week to earn a living and support the family, “my wife has plenty of time to go to Bible studies and grow spiritually.” Consequently, most men have not had the opportunity to grow in their knowledge of the Bible, and learn the Christian “lingo.” To put it another way, men hate to be outshone by women, but it happens all the time in the church. Sarah Sumner observes, “Most men who are bad golfers would rather go play bad golf than go to church. That’s how incompetent they feel in the house of God. It would take a miracle for biblically incompetent men to feel excited about gathering with a group of biblically competent women.”

MEN FEAR PUBLIC SINGING...

Most people have it figured out that if they are going to be church-going Christians, they better *love* to sing! Christians rarely gather without breaking into song, yet many men feel incompetent about singing. Pastor Robert Lewis has noticed the interesting trend of “praise-skipppers” in his megachurch. These people (mostly men...surprised?) will consistently arrive half an hour late to the worship service, and then sneak out as soon as the sermon is over. Churches need to understand that to many men, today’s contemporary worship service of thirty minutes plus of praise music may very well serve as a barrier to involvement. There is a good chance many men would consider what the church is all about...*if they just didn’t have to sing.*

MEN FEAR THE “LIFESTYLE”...

Many men fear that if they start going to church, they might have to adopt a boring, *churchy* lifestyle, kind of like the lifestyle led by Ned Flanders, a character on *The Simpsons*. Writer Mark Pinsky writes: “Religion informs nearly every aspect of Ned’s life, from the doorbell that chimes ‘A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,’ to his air horn that blares the Hallelujah chorus...He belongs to a Bible-study group and keeps notes stuck on his refrigerator with a sign of a fish magnet...Ned does not allow the kids to use dice when playing board games because dice are wicked. He is hesitant to buy the children Red Hots candies because there is a lascivious caricature of the devil on the package. The kids’ favorite games are Good Samaritan and Clothe the Leper.” All too often, the world has the misconception that the Christian life is boring, out of touch with reality, devoid of excitement, fun, or challenge.



MEN FEAR THE SUPER-HUSBAND SYNDROME...

One easily gets the idea from reading many Christian books about being a Godly man that Christian men are supposed to be magnificent in all areas of life! I’m convinced that for all the excellent literature that is available to our generation in terms of being a great husband, father, etc., there is a subtle, yet *real*, downside. The downside is that it has so significantly raised the expectation level that men can easily become defeated. Writer Kevin Leman writes: “Not only are men supposed to attend morning Bible studies, but they’re also supposed to get home in time for dinner, spend time alone with each child, date their wives once a week... This is a heavy load, and some Christian men start to resent it.”

“TO LIVE IN
THE PAST
AND FUTURE
IS EASY. TO
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THREADING
A NEEDLE.”
-WALKER
PERCY

“Formerly, a public man needed a private secretary for a barrier between himself and the public. Nowadays he has a press secretary to keep him properly in the public eye.” -Daniel Boorstin

“No illusion is more crucial than the illusion that great success and huge money buy you immunity from the common ills of mankind, such as cars that won’t start.” -Larry McMurtry

“Museums are just a lot of lies. We have infected the pictures in museums with all our stupidities, all our mistakes, all our poverty of spirit. We have turned them into petty and ridiculous things.”
-Pablo Picasso

“Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies.” -Groucho Marx

“In the United States there’s a Puritan ethic and a mythology of success. He who is successful is good. In Latin countries, in Catholic countries, a successful person is a sinner.” -Umberto Eco

“If our condition were truly happy we should not need to divert ourselves from thinking about it...I have often said that the sole cause of man’s unhappiness is that he does not know how to stay quietly in his room...What people want is not the easy peaceful life...but the agitation that takes our mind off it and diverts us. That is why we prefer the hunt to the capture. That is why men are so fond of the hustle and bustle.” -Blaise Pascal

“When we get our spiritual house in order, we’ll be dead. This goes on. You arrive at enough certainty to be able to make your way, but it is making it in darkness. Don’t expect faith to clear things up for you. It is trust, not certainty.” -Flannery O’Connor

“I really didn’t say everything I said.” -Yogi Berra

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION...

“In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat her with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God’s gift of new life. If you don’t treat her as you should, your prayers will not be heard.” -Peter’s First Letter, chapter 3, verse 7

WHAT IS *FINISHINGWELL*?



FINISHINGWELL is a unique and personalized service for men to assist them in balancing their work, family, and faith. In a world of constant pressure and change, we often find ourselves under the “tyranny of the urgent.” The benefits of *FINISHINGWELL* include:

- A relationship based upon strict confidentiality in all matters.
- Realistic strategies to balance your personal and professional life.
- Encouragement to make course corrections in life that you want to make.

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