

# Finishing Well

Forging Relationships 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

### WHY SOME MEN HATE GOING TO CHURCH...

Mark Twain once remarked, “I admire the serene assurance of those who have religious faith. It is wonderful to observe the calm confidence of a Christian with four aces.” Whether we agree with Twain’s observation or not, the truth of the matter is that there is a lot of skepticism among men when it comes to church.

In his recently released book, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, author David Murrow provides a helpful analysis in answering the question frequently asked: “It’s Sunday morning: where are all the men?” More often than not, you won’t find them in church. Consider these statistics: less than 40% of adults in most churches are men, and 20-25% of married church-going women attend without their husbands. Murrow’s insightful book reveals *why* men are arguably the world’s largest unreached people group.

### WHERE ARE THE MANLY MEN?

Many *manly* men have all but disappeared from the church scene. Tough, no-nonsense, high-achieving visionaries, and yes, the alpha males, are in short supply in churches. Murrow writes, “These rough-and-tumble men don’t fit in with the quiet, introspective gentlemen who populate the church today. The truth is, most men in the pews grew up in church. Many of these lifers come not because they desire to be transformed by Christ, but because they enjoy participating in comforting rituals that have changed little since their childhood. There are also millions of men who attend services under duress, dragged by a mother, wife, or girlfriend. Today’s churchgoing man is humble, tidy, dutiful, and above all, nice.”

It is Murrow’s belief that most churches today do not mesmerize men, but rather *repels* them. While more than 90% of American men believe in God and five out of six call themselves Christians, only 35% of American men say they attend church weekly (5% in Europe). The bottom-line is that while almost every man in America has *tried* church, two-thirds find it unworthy of a couple of hours each week. As a wise Texan once told Murrow, “Men don’t go to church ‘cuz they’ve been!”

### IS IT OK TO WANT TO SUCCEED AT CHURCH?

Truth be known, men want to succeed in every endeavor they are involved in. Competence is important to them. Men are also competitive. They want to win in every situation. But as Murrow writes, “When it comes to church, the deck is stacked against them...most men do not possess the natural gifts that make a good churchgoer. He’s not very expressive, verbal, or sensitive. He’s not a very good teacher or singer. He’s not comfortable praying aloud or holding hands with strangers.”

For many men, the idea of participating in church life cannot be justified because the return on investment of time, attention, and energy is too slim. More to come on this topic in future newsletters!



### Golf...A Good Walk Spoiled?

Golf is a study in our greed as well as our lack of faith. In remembering a round, we write off the missed two-foot putt and the approach shot that just barely drifted into the trap as not us, as not legitimately part of the round, but incorporate without gratitude the skulled wedge that bounced off the out-of-bounds stake back into the middle of the fairway. In the heat of the round, on the narrow thirteenth with your partner out of the hole, you stand watching your hooked 7-iron vanish into the woods with the burning conviction that it wasn’t you who just hit that shot: it was, instead, an imposter, a demon, an alien from outer space who momentarily breezed into your body. But it was you, and facing this disagreeable fact is one of the moral lessons of golf...Golf morality runs to paradoxes. He who hits down sees the ball soar. He who looks up tops the ball into the tall grass. He who tries to hit hardest loses yardage...Golf’s ultimate moral instruction directs us to find within ourselves a pivotal center of enjoyment: relax into a rhythm that fits the hills and swales, and play the shot at hand...not the last one, or the next one, but the one at your feet, in the poison ivy, where you put it. -John Updike, from *Golf Dreams*

"TO LIVE IN  
THE PAST  
AND FUTURE  
IS EASY. TO  
LIVE IN THE  
PRESENT IS  
LIKE  
THREADING  
A NEEDLE."  
-WALKER  
PERCY

"If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a man." -Mark Twain

"The most important difference between business and academia is this: In business everything is dog eat dog. In academia it's just the reverse." -E. John Rosenwald, Jr.

"Man is a thinking animal, a talking animal, a tool-making animal, a building animal, a political animal, a fantasizing animal. But in the twilight of a civilization he is chiefly a taxpaying animal." -Hugh MacLennan

"The fundamental defect of fathers is that they want their children to be a credit to them." -Bertrand Russell

"Hating people is like burning down your own house to get rid of a rat." -Harry Emerson Fosdick

"A church is a place in which gentlemen who have never been to heaven brag about it to persons who will never get there." -H. L. Mencken

"Some luck lies in not getting what you thought you wanted but getting what you have, which once you have it you may be smart enough to see is what you would have wanted had you known." -Garrison Keillor

"To believe in the supernatural is not simply to believe that after living a successful, material, and fairly virtuous life here one will continue to exist in the best-possible substitute for this world, or that after living a starved and stunted life here one will be compensated with all the good things one has gone without: it is to believe that the supernatural is the greatest reality *here and now*." -T. S. Eliot

## Scripture For Reflection...

"God saved you by his special favor when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things He planned for us long ago."

-Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, chapter 2, verses 8-10

## 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.

Contact me to see how *FinishingWell* might be of benefit to you. A two-page document describing the benefits and particulars of the service is available upon request.