

NOVEMBER DEVOTIONAL: *Finish Strong*

Football fans know that a game can change quickly.

A team can play a great first half, build a comfortable lead, and head into the locker room feeling pretty good about where they stand. But the game isn't over at halftime. There is still another half to play.

Sometimes a team comes back onto the field and loses its intensity. Maybe the players become a little too comfortable or stop doing the little things that helped them gain the lead. Before long, the other team gains momentum, and a game that seemed safely in hand becomes a battle.

Life can be a little like that.

Many of us here today could probably say we are somewhere in the "second half" of life. We've raised families, worked jobs, served churches, helped neighbors, taught Sunday school, cared for parents, encouraged children and grandchildren, and walked through more seasons than we can count.

And after all those years, it might be tempting to think, *I've done my part. It's time for somebody else to take over.*

There may be seasons when we need to slow down physically. There may be things we once did that we simply cannot do anymore. But slowing down is not the same thing as stepping out of God's purpose.

As long as God gives us breath, He can still use our lives.

In John 2, Jesus attended a wedding where the wine unexpectedly ran out. He performed His first recorded sign by turning water into wine. When the master of the banquet tasted it, he was surprised that the best wine had been served later rather than earlier.

He said:

“...You have saved the best till now.”

— John 2:10 NIV

What a wonderful thought for this season of life.

The world often tells us that our best years are behind us. But God can continue to use us in every season of life.

Our younger years may have included more energy, more activity, and perhaps fewer aches and pains! But later years can bring something just as valuable: wisdom, experience, patience, perspective, compassion, and a lifetime of seeing God’s faithfulness.

Paul wrote:

“And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good.”

— 2 Thessalonians 3:13 NIV

Notice that he didn’t say, “Keep doing good until you reach a certain age.”

He said never tire of doing what is good.

Our role may change, but our calling to love God and love people does not.

Maybe your greatest ministry today is a phone call, a handwritten note, a conversation over coffee, a kind word, a generous gift, or a prayer whispered for someone who never even knows you prayed.

Those things matter.

In football, veteran players are valuable because they have been there before.

They recognize situations younger players may miss. They understand pressure, and they know that one bad play does not mean the game is over.

Life experience gives us some of that same perspective.

We have seen God provide.

We have seen prayers answered.

We have survived disappointments we once thought would overwhelm us.

We have watched God bring good out of difficult seasons.

And now we have the opportunity to remind those coming behind us:

God is faithful. Keep going.

Paul said in Philippians:

“...Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal ...”

— Philippians 3:13–14 NIV

That should be our attitude too.

Our first half may have included some outstanding plays and a few fumbles.

But the game isn't over.

There is still time on the clock.

There are still people to encourage.

There are still prayers to pray.

There are still stories of God's faithfulness to tell.

There are still people who need the wisdom God has given us.

And there is still good work God can do through our lives.

So when the world says, “Slow down, step aside, your best days are behind you,” perhaps we should remember the words spoken at that wedding:

“You have saved the best till now.”

Because God isn’t finished with us yet.

There’s one more thing we need to remember about this second half.

As Christians, we aren’t playing the game wondering whether we are ultimately going to win.

Jesus has already won the victory.

Through His death and resurrection, Jesus defeated sin and death. Because we belong to Him, the final score has already been settled.

Paul reminds us:

“But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
— 1 Corinthians 15:57 NIV

That changes the way we live the rest of our lives because as Christians, we are getting closer to the greatest victory of all.

Every year we have walked with Jesus has given us another opportunity to see His faithfulness. Every trial He has carried us through has given us another reason to trust Him. And every day brings us closer to heaven—and to seeing our Savior face to face.

So yes, let’s finish strong.

And let’s remember that our victory is in Jesus.

Closing Prayer: Father, thank You for the years You have given us and for Your faithfulness through every season of our lives. Thank You for the victories we have celebrated and for carrying us through the losses, disappointments, and difficult seasons along the way.

Help us to use whatever time You give us well. Keep us serving, loving, praying, encouraging, and pointing others toward You. Most of all, remind us that our hope is not in how strong we are or how well we have played the game. Our hope and our victory are in Jesus.

Thank You that because of Him, sin has been forgiven, death has been defeated, and we have the promise of eternal life with You. Give us courage for the days ahead and faith to keep going so that we can say we kept the faith, finished the race, and trusted Jesus all the way.

In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen.

TRANSITION TO MUSIC

Devotional Leader Continues:

And I can't think of a better way to end our devotional today than by singing about the One who has given us that victory.

Let's sing together: "**Victory in Jesus.**"

Live accompaniment on keyboard or guitar works best; otherwise, play a recording. Provide printed or on-screen lyrics so everyone can join in.

Note: If you use recorded music, be sure your organization or venue has any permissions or licenses required for public performance. If you reproduce or display lyrics, be sure you have permission or the appropriate license to do so.