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Encouragement for Today

Principle 5

“Follow Through”

Glynnis Whitwer, Senior Editor “P31 Woman Magazine,” Proverbs 31 Speaker Team Member

Key Verse:

2 Corinthians 8:11, “Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means.” (NIV)

Devotion:

During a recent youth baseball season, I heard the same words repeated by coaches each time a boy tried pitching or batting: Follow through!

I have to admit, I couldn’t tell whether the players were following through or not. They just looked like adorable little boys in the cutest uniforms. However, the coaches’ eagle eyes immediately saw improper form and the inadequate results.

After hearing it so many times throughout the season, I was surprised the boys didn’t remember to follow through during games. It was drilled into their heads at weekly practice, and if that wasn’t enough, they heard it throughout every inning. Yet, without fail, each little boy got the same advice at some point during every game.

Being completely un-athletic myself, I finally asked my husband what the coaches meant by follow through, and why it was important. He explained that it means to carry a stroke through to its natural completion, and that it increases strength and accuracy – two very important components for any sport.

I also learned that following through is hard. There’s a tendency for the players to get nervous, or distracted. They concentrate on the end result instead of their form and end up disappointed. Plus, unless it’s learned and an ingrained habit, follow through doesn’t feel natural.

Once I learned its importance, I could see the difference. A throw that stops halfway, is weaker than a fully extended one. Follow through at bat means the difference between a little dribble to the pitcher and a powerhouse hit to the outfield.

It’s easy to apply this sports term to almost every part of our lives. Whether it’s finishing a home organization project or losing those last ten pounds, follow through is hard. Just like those sweet little baseball players, we get distracted or

forget to focus on our form. It's easier to quit than to develop the discipline of following through.

Yet, there's power and accuracy when we follow through. Consider the benefits of working through a difficult relationship, or witnessing to a loved one for years and then watching him or her embrace Jesus Christ. As followers of Jesus, we learn to walk in greater obedience when we follow through on the small things that God asks of us.

Following through doesn't feel natural at times. It's hard to finish what we start. But if we want to experience a greater measure of God's power and accuracy in our lives, then we should don our uniforms and start practicing our follow through.

My Prayer for Today:

Precious Lord, I praise You for Your compassion and kindness. You are worthy of all my praise and all I have to offer. I confess the times I have disobeyed You by saying "yes" and then not following through. I pray for strength through Your Holy Spirit to walk in obedience. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Application Steps:

Identify one area of weak follow through in your life. Make a list of five things you need to do to complete that responsibility.

Reflection Points:

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-12. Paul is trying to collect an offering for the poor believers in Jerusalem. Apparently, the Corinthian believers stopped their collection. What is Paul encouraging the Corinthians to complete in these verses? (Verse 7)

Instead of demanding a donation, what approach does Paul take to get the Corinthians to complete their collection?

In verse 11, Paul challenges the believers at Corinth to match their willingness to begin with a willingness to complete the task. Why is this important?

Why might Paul say in verse 10 that completing their giving is "best" for the Corinthians?

Verse 12 speaks to our hearts. What does this verse say is most important?

Power Verses:

John 4:34, "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work." (NIV)

Hebrews 10: 35-36, "So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised." (NIV)

James 1: 2-4, Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (NAS)

Psalms 119:1-2, "Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD. Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart." (NIV)

1 Samuel 15:22, "But Samuel replied: 'Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.'" (NIV)

Additional Resources:

[Radically Obedient, Radically Blessed](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_radicallyObedient.htm) by Lysa TerKeurst
http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_radicallyObedient.htm

[What Happens When Women Walk In Faith](http://proverbs31.gospelcom.net/newresources_whatHappens.htm) by Lysa TerKeurst
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