

Finishing Strong

Week 2 - Three Years of 'Made to Last'

Note: You may find the Message Podcasts & Group Guides in this series at actschurchlakeway.com.. This is all also found on the ACTS Lakeway smartphone app, available for download in the app store for your phone or tablet.

Group Connection Point

What are two relatively 'small things' that you are thankful for?

Group Discussion Questions for Finishing Strong - Week 2

1. What is something small that someone did for you recently that had a huge impact on your day (bought you a coffee, sent an encouraging text, etc.)?
2. Why, in certain moments, does a small gesture of love mean so much to the person receiving it? If small acts of kindness really do matter, then why do you think people don't perform them more frequently?

Read Mark 4:26-29

3. What do we know about the potential of seeds? Why do you think Jesus uses the analogy of seeds (the parable of the sower, the mustard seed, etc.) so often, in explaining how 'the Kingdom of God' works?
4. In this parable, we see the potential of a small seed brought to fruition (you might want to look that word up!). This story focuses on a season-long PROCESS of growing. The seed grows day after day, week after week, until a harvest appears and is brought in. Can you think of at least one way in which you have seen God working through a process (rather than an all-at-once action) in your life? Take a few minutes to reflect; and then share stories.
5. Note how the center of action continues to shift in this short parable. Initially, the man is the subject of this story and the one who acts. But it's not until the end of the parable that the man again takes action (4:29). The seed, and then the soil, become the main subjects in the middle of the parable. Note how the seed continually grows without the work of the farmer! Make some connections: How would you relate this to the nature of your work - in relationship to the work of God - in your own spiritual growth? In the growth of the Kingdom?
6. In this parable, we see a small seed having a large impact. In what small ways are your small actions contributing to a greater cause? In what ways have you seen fruit come from this?
7. Have you ever talked yourself out of doing something because you thought it wasn't 'big enough'? Think of a time, specifically, when you held back from making a financial contribution because you felt you couldn't do something bigger. Share one experience, from your past, if you are comfortable in doing so.

8. This month ACTS Lakeway celebrates the culmination of a three-year Capital Stewardship Campaign, called 'Made to Last.' The goals of this special effort include the following:
- The first \$100,000 is set aside to help start two new churches and round out the congregation's first decade of church planting.
 - The next cluster of funds raised pays down the loan on our Mountain Top facility (annual mortgage payment of \$79,000). With reduced or eliminated building debt, ACTS Church Lakeway is freed to pursue its unique calling on the leading edge of a multiplication movement.

What do these goals tell you about the values of this particular local church (ACTS Church Lakeway)? How do these values line up with your own personal values?

If you were able to participate in this campaign, what has 'Made to Last' taught you in regards to greater generosity and fruitfulness in your life?

Whether or not you were able to participate in 'Made to Last', what is one way you might be stretched even further, so that you continue to excel in what the New Testament calls 'the grace of giving'? (look up 2 Corinthians 8:7).

9. React to the following quote: '*Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little*' (Edmund Burke). Make applications to your own situation, as time allows.

Our ability to grow and produce fruit is only possible through the grace and love of Jesus. We accomplish BIG things, not by our power, but by His! With this in mind, encourage one another with the words from Ephesians 2:8-10. Pray for one another, that each might pursue his or her own small part, in contribution toward the big things that God is up to!

Individual Journaling and Reflection Questions for Finishing Strong - Week 2

- What cause is currently tugging at your heart and speaking to you? How have you gotten involved or how can you move forward?
- What is a small act you can do today that could have a great impact on the life of someone else?
- Are you relying on God's strength or are you trying to do 'produce an entire harvest, all alone? How can you allow Jesus to increase and yourself to decrease?

Prayer for Finishing Strong - Week 2

As you take time to pray in your small group or throughout the week on your own, here are some ideas and concepts which may help focus your prayers:

- Pray for the 'Made to Last' Campaign and that its impact contributes to the growing Kingdom of God.
- Pray for increasing generosity in your life - that you become more and more someone who looks to give to those in need, as well as to efforts that extend the Gospel of Jesus.
- Thank God that we rely on the power and love of God and not our own. Praise God that it is by His grace alone that we bear fruit!