

Finishing Well

My father was especially gifted with his hands. He was a barber by career, but early in his life he had worked at a lumber company. He had a wonderful fascination for wood, and for what could be accomplished with it.

Putting the finish on a piece of furniture is the final step in its construction, and I watched the delight in his face as a project neared completion and that process began. The bulk of the work creating the function in a chest, table or chair happens much earlier, of course. But it is the finish – the staining and varnishing – that very often gives a piece of furniture its beauty. The finish brings out the grain and luster of the wood, the smoothness of the craftsmanship, and the shine that signals its completion.

We are each called to end our lives well, but our finish is not simply at our death. It is also in our bringing closure to each day in such a way that we allow for a new beginning the following morning. It is saying with thankfulness and humility, “I’ve done what the Lord put before me to do today to the best of my ability. And now I give my all to Him anew so that He might recreate me and use me again tomorrow.”

Author Ralph Waldo Emerson offered this advice:

Finish every day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely and with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense. This day is all that is good and fair. It is too dear, with its hopes and invitations, to waste a moment on yesterdays.

And as Lord Chesterfield wrote:

Know the value of time; snatch, seize, and enjoy every moment of it. No idleness, no laziness, no procrastination. Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.

The God Who began a good work in you will finish it day by day, and ultimately bring it to completion.

Finishing well is a virtue, indeed.

--Beecher Hunter