

GOOD ENDINGS

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It has been said that all good things must come to an end. While this is generally true, it is also true that not all things have a good end. To have a good end, one must prepare and work toward that end. A good, diligent labor usually has a good end. The wise man said, "The end of a thing is better than its beginning" (Ecclesiastes 7:8a). How is this illustrated in life?

- ◆ When you read to the end of a book, you have more understanding about the subject of that book than when you began reading it.
- ◆ When you reach the end of a year, you have completed 365 days of living life, accomplishing tasks, and serving God and your fellow man.
- ◆ When you come to the end of your journey, you have safely traveled the miles necessary to get where you need to go.
- ◆ When you finish a job, you have accomplished something that did not exist before you started.
- ◆ When you finish a meal, you have received the nourishment your body needs.
- ◆ When you are done exercising, your body has received the physical activity it needs to remain healthy and strong.
- ◆ When you wake up in the morning, you have received the rest your body needs.

You get the idea.

The Bible speaks of good and bad ends. Some who rejected God and embraced evil had terrible ends, like Jezebel and Agag. Some who lived serving God met tragic ends but were victorious in death. One of the best examples of this is the apostle Paul.

Paul knew that he was near his end on this earth when he told Timothy "the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Timothy 4:6). Paul lived so he could finish well: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (v. 7).

If one runs the race of life well, he will have the same hope at the end that Paul had – "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (v. 8).

Live so that you have a good ending as the curtain closes on your life. If we run our race faithfully, our reward will be eternal life that has no end. To God be glory "in the church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end" (Ephesians 3:21).