



# STARTING OVER

## NEW STARTS... SQUIRREL!

With new starts, come new distractions.

You can be sure, if God is doing a new work in you - starting afresh from addiction, starting afresh in spiritual disciplines, starting afresh in seeking depth and community - the devil is going to be right there behind you, pestering you, persuading you, distracting you.

We read this week that the Jews finally had permission from King Cyrus to rebuild the temple. God wanted it. Cyrus wanted it. Clear sailing. Right? Wrong.

Distractions and complications eventually stopped construction.

So what now? No temple?

Nah, fam! God worked through kings, prophets, and the Jewish people to eventually rebuild the temple and they "celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy."

God finishes what He starts. Jesus was the ultimate finisher on the cross, and we can find hope and security in that - but He also is behind and you beside you, finishing what He started *in you*.

When starting over, distractions and setbacks will come. But we serve a God who is for us, not against us. He is faithful. And He provides.

# IN THE BIBLE.

## **Ezra 4:4-5**

4 Then the peoples around [the Jews] set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building [the temple.] 5 They bribed officials to work against them and frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia and down to the reign of Darius king of Persia.

## **Ezra 4:24**

Thus the work on the house of God in Jerusalem came to a standstill until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

## **Ezra 6:14-16**

14 So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah, a descendant of Iddo. They finished building the temple according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia. 15 The temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

16 Then the people of Israel—the priests, the Levites and the rest of the exiles—celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy.

## **Philippians 1:6**

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

## **Luke 8:4-7, 11-15**

4 While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: 5 “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. 6 Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no

moisture. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.”

11 “This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. 12 Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13 Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. 14 The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. 15 But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

## QUESTIONS.

1. What kind of distractions or setbacks have you encountered when trying to start fresh?
2. What are some ways to combat those things?
3. How can this group support and encourage you in the midst of your new start?

**Whenever you read the Bible, ask yourself these three questions:**

1. What does this tell you about God?
2. What does this tell you about yourself and the world?
3. How is this going to change who you are and how you live?