

Dear NU Family,

Do you remember the heart-rending moment at the end of the 2015 Super Bowl, when the Seahawks were yards from the end zone, and victory seemed all but won? I'm sure you recall how ready you were to shout out in celebration, only to be shocked by sudden defeat. That split-second turnaround illustrates a timeless truth: **It's not about how strong you start, but how strong you finish.**

Here at the end of the school year, the same truth holds true. Whether you had a semester of victories or experienced more ups-and-downs than usual, you have *the opportunity to finish strong*.

Finishing strong in the eyes of the Lord isn't about perfect grades, a flawless record, or zero struggles. Finishing strong is about fixing your eyes on Jesus, and "pressing on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us" (Phil 3:14). In the process of completing papers, exams, and projects, or preparing for missions trips and summer jobs, you are being called to persevere in the eternal race; the one that matters most of all.

I encourage you to face the things ahead of you this week and this summer with a team on your side. Reach out to leaders and peers in your life for prayer, conversation, and support. And remember that not only the people on your team, but God Himself, will provide you with everything you need to finish strong. Like David, lift up your eyes and see where your help comes from: the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth (Ps. 121:1-2). Because of His great love for you, and the empowerment of His Spirit, you are never truly defeated.

So press on this week, with your team and God at your side, and continue to lay hold of the prize that results from the graciousness and faithfulness of the Lord. I am praying for you all!

In Christ,

Phil

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