**Introduction**

**To Finish Well We Must Get Back in the Race**

Dr Chuck Stecker

“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Acts 20:24

Several years ago, my wife and I were visiting a friend of many years when he decided he would take us to Atlantic City, New Jersey. We had never visited Atlantic City prior to this trip. We had both heard of the famous “Boardwalk” and knew there were several casinos located there.

Although we had no intentions of gambling, we both thought it would be an interesting experience. As we approached the casino area, we could see lines of busses parked. Neither one of us were prepared for our emotions as we entered the first casino. On a Tuesday afternoon, the casino was filled with seniors gambling.

It was not just the fact that the casino was filled with seniors, they were lifeless. Their faces were almost catatonic. They had no emotions. They were not happy or sad. They were sitting at the slot machines with blank stares as they entered the amount to be wagered.

In a very short amount of time, Billie and I both felt sick to our stomachs and we went outside to sit on a bench facing the ocean.

When we talk about the wealth of a nation, it is so easy to be grieved when we see the untapped wealth of experience of our seniors who go to the casinos and sit with blank stares because they do not realize they still have a great purpose remaining in their lives.

***If You Passed Your Baton – TAKE IT BACK*** is more than a book. It is our attempt to help change the culture of our communities, churches and nation. It is the heart of every author included in this project to reverse a diabolical trend that is sidelining the greatest resource we have in our nation and the world today – our seniors.

Before a great change can take place in our culture and the world, we must first change ourselves.

We have bought into a terrible lie. The lie is there is a time to “Pass the Baton” and step away.

We have confused the “***Baton of Engagement***” with the “***Mantle of Leadership***.”

Passing the baton is a modern-day term from relay races where one runner passes the baton to the next runner. What is rarely considered when the runner completes the passing of the baton, they must quit running, step off the track and stay out of the race. In summary, they are FINISHED!

In the United States, we have two generations of seniors who feel they have been told their time was over. They have been told to pass the baton, quit running, get off the track and they are no longer needed in the race.

We must have a shift in our thinking. As seniors, we must embrace the concept of pouring into the next generation, passing the mantle of leadership and staying in the race until God calls you home.

I would like for you to travel with me back to the casino in Atlantic City. What I initially saw was men and women sitting lifeless, without emotion and gambling. While that was sad, I came to realize what caused me to be sickened was a casino filled with incredible experience, in every area of life, going untapped by the communities who saw them as retired and having passed the baton.

I also saw a casino of men and women who shared the blame in that they had bought into the lie and “checked out.”

This is more than a book to be read. It is a resource to call out a generation of seniors to get back in the race and finish well. Our communities and churches need our seniors now more than ever.

It is a resource for pastors and ministry leaders in helping them better understand the incredible possibilities if they will tap into the wealth of experience and availability of their seniors.

I would like for you to imagine forty-seven male and female authors who have contributed to this book ranging in age from nineteen to eighty-five from across the United States and Canada. Authors include pastors, ministry leaders, military, housewives, mothers and grandmothers, fathers and grandfathers, educators, students, husbands and wives, widows and widowers, counselors, denominational leaders, community leaders and CEO/Director’s of non-profits. Some of the authors have been published extensively and others have not been published prior to this book.

In short, I am deeply honored and greatly humbled by the men and women who have given their hearts and minds to this project.

It is important to know this book parallels the seminar from A Chosen Generation, “If You Passed Baton – TAKE IT BACK.” The title of each part of the book is the same as the title of the corresponding session in the seminar.

Finally, the Apostle Paul stated in 2 Timothy 4:7:

**“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”[[2]](#footnote-2)**

As a generation of seniors who want to finish the race and finish well, we must

GET BACK IN THE RACE.

Today is the day and now is the time!!

***If You Passed Your Baton – TAKE IT BACK***

1. [*The New International Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/niv2011;ref=BibleNIV.Ac20.24;off=3;ctx=are_facing_me.$EF$BB$BFm_24$C2$A0~However,_I_consider_). (2011). (Ac 20:24). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [*The New International Version*](https://ref.ly/logosres/niv2011;ref=BibleNIV.2Ti4.7;off=2;ctx=arture_is_near.$EF$BB$BFe_7$C2$A0~I_have_fought_the_go). (2011). (2 Ti 4:7). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)