

RUN THE RACE TO WIN THE PRIZE **(Philippians 3: 12-16)**

INTRODUCTION: Philippians 3: 4-11 describes Paul's encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus and the glorious exchange he made when he gave up all he was for all Christ is. Verses 4-7 detail what Paul lost in the exchange, while verses 8-11 detail what Paul gained in the exchange:

1. Personal and intimate knowledge of Christ (v. 8)
2. Right standing with God through the righteousness of Christ (v. 9)
3. The power of Christ to overcome sin and serve God (v. 10a)
4. The fellowship of Christ in suffering (v. 10b)
5. Sharing in the future glory of Christ (v. 11)

In Philippians 3: 12-16 we discover that despite all Paul gained in Christ, this did not lead him to passivity in his Christian faith, but created an intense desire to go deeper in his relationship with Christ and to pursue the goal of becoming more and more like Christ. Paul uses the metaphor of a race to illustrate the effort that is worthy in the pursuit of the infinite prize of Christ.

1. **DISSATISFACTION** with my present spiritual condition that motivates me to experience deeper depths of Christ-likeness.

Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3: 12

2. **CONCENTRATION** on one thing: remaining faithful to Christ each step of the race in order to cross the finish line a winner.

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet, but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead...

Philippians 3: 13

3. **MOTIVATION** to run and win the race comes from keeping my eyes fixed on the prize of Christ.

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3: 14

4. **DISCIPLINE** in training standards, without which no one wins the race.

Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; however, let us keep living by the same standard to which we have attained.

Philippians 3: 15-16 (compare 1 Corinthians 9: 24 - 10: 13)

HELPFUL TIPS IN RUNNING THE RACE (Philippians 3: 17-21)

1. Follow GODLY EXAMPLES who pursue Christlike sanctification.

Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. Philippians 3:17 (compare with Philippians 4:9)

2. Flee FALSE TEACHERS who pursue selfish gratification.

For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. Philippians 3: 18-19

*Four marks of enemies of the cross:

- Destiny = JUDGMENT (whose end is destruction)
- Desires = OUT OF CONTROL (whose god is their appetite)
- Deeds = SCANDALOUS (whose glory is in their shame)
- Disposition = SELFISH MINDED (who set their minds on earthly things)

5 QUESTIONS TO ANSWER BEFORE FOLLOWING ANY MINISTER

- Is he under strong ACCOUNTABILITY? Of the 21 N.T. qualifications for a Christian leader, 20 of the 21 deal with a man's character & home life.
- Is he preoccupied with acquiring WEALTH? The Bible says a minister is to be "free from the love of money...not fond of sordid gain."
- Is he SKILLED in accurately handling God's Word? Most heresies are truth out of balance taught by men not trained in Biblical interpretation.
- Does he teach the WHOLE COUNSEL of God's Word? The issue for a false teacher is not truth but seduction, therefore, he gives people what they want to hear, not what they ought to hear. Examine not only what he teaches, but what he fails to teach.
- Is he committed to his HOME? The home is where the heart is revealed and a false teacher does not want his heart exposed.

3. Focus on CHRIST'S RETURN and future glorification.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. Philippians 3: 20-21