

Reach for God's Goal

August 5, 2012

PHILIPPIANS 3:12-21

Vol. 2 Num. 31

Core Competency:

Single-mindedness- I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. (Matthew 6:33)

Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate matters so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ DISCOVER His Word

What does God MEAN? Answer the questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with others.

❸ LIVE His Word

How does this truth FIT? God's word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFE GROUP.

Introduction

During the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games, an American named Greg Foster was the favorite to win the 110 meter hurdles. Because of his dominance in this event, ABC did a short pre-event biography on him. On the day of the race, the gun went off and the runners charged toward the hurdles. Even though Foster was obviously nervous, he kept the lead. Unfortunately, just as he vaulted over the last hurdle, he turned his head ever so slightly to see where everyone else was. This was a critical mistake. The act of taking his eyes off of the finish line cost him the race. In that fraction of a second, another American, Tom Jefferson, managed to inch ahead and win the gold.

Paul compares the Christian life to running a race and urges the Philippians to keep their eyes focused on the finish line. To know Christ and to continue growing in Christ-likeness, Paul says believers must make every effort to reach the goal. You and I will never get to the point where we can say, "I have arrived." Neither should we look at our past and erroneously conclude that it is a hopeless pursuit. God desires us to set our sights squarely on our Lord Jesus Christ. He wants us, by faith, to lay aside everything that hinders us and the sin that so often entangles us. He wants us to run knowing that God himself will provide all that we need to persevere in this race.

Regardless of where you are, God invites you to run. Remember that this earth is not your final home. You were created for something much better.

As the writer of Hebrews said,

"Let us, then run with patience the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrew 12:1-2)

This Week

As you read, prayerfully think about the goal of your life, and compare them to God's goal for you. Are you making every effort to attain that for which God has called you?

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? The words God uses to communicate matters so pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage:

Philippians 3:1-11

¹²Not that I have already reached the goal or am already fully mature, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus.

¹³Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead,

¹⁴I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵Therefore, all who are mature should think this way. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this also to you.

¹⁶In any case, we should live up to whatever truth we have attained.

¹⁷Join in imitating me, brothers, and observe

those who live according to the example you have in us.

¹⁸For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

¹⁹Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame. They are focused on earthly things,

²⁰but our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

²¹He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subject everything to Himself.

② DISCOVER His Word

What does God MEAN? Answer the following questions and then bring to your COMMUNITY GROUP to discover and discuss with others.

- a) What do you think was God's goal when he took hold of you? What is the goal of Christian life that Paul refers to in verse 12?

b) How can you, as stated in verse 12, "Make every effort to take hold of it"?
- How would you say that living the Christian life is like running a race? Look carefully through this passage and list as many possible "training principles" that you are able to find in this passage and elaborate a little on each. Tell which is most meaningful to you and why?
- Why do you think it is important for believers to forget what is behind? How could not letting go of the past hinder your relationship to God and/or possible future service?
- a) Look up the word "citizenship" in the dictionary. How does this add to your understanding of your

identity in Christ?

b) How do the following passages address different aspects of citizenship? If possible, link this to the definition above.

a) Colossians 1: 21-22

b) 2 Corinthians 4:18

c) Hebrews 11:13-16

d) 2 Corinthians 5:20

5. This week, our core competency is single-mindedness from Matthew 6:33. Think about the major areas of your life such as work, relationships, finances, leisure time, etc... How might your own kingdom be in conflict with God's kingdom and what might you do about it?

Sermon Notes:

③LIVE His Word

How does this truth FIT? God's word is lived in real life so engage with truth in your LIFE GROU

In your group, explore verse 12 and discuss what Paul meant by "making every effort to take hold of it..." What does that look like?

30 CORE Competencies

10 Core Beliefs

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 Core Practices

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I live life with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away God's Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away God's money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 Core Virtues

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ