

THE DISCIPLINE OF FORGETTING: KEEP STRIVING!

(Philippians 3:12-16)

Series: "The Disciplines of a Godly Life" (Part 15)

...Have you ever run in a race? Most of us have and know that running well requires a few essentials. These include: never look back at the course covered, keep your eyes fixed on the finish line, and grind out every single step with all the strength you can muster. This is the basic formula to running well.

...The Christian life is often described as a race, a running race that has a beginning, middle, and an end. Your salvation was the beginning, your daily striving forward is the middle, and heaven with Jesus is the finish line.

...The Apostle Paul in writing to his beloved friends at Philippi used the metaphor of a footrace to encourage them to daily serve the Lord and grow in likeness to Him. Press on, and keep striving!

THREE REQUIREMENTS NEEDED AS WE PRESS FORWARD IN LIVING TODAY FOR JESUS. ...Remember, as you run the race of life, keep your eyes focused upon Jesus!

I. Requirement #1: A Sanctified Forgetting. Forget The Path Already Run. (v.13)

- A. Paul teaches from his own life. He forgets the things behind. What are these things?
 - 1. They are not his knowledge of the Bible and Christian teaching. Nor did he forget God's grace and mercies, for he talks about those throughout this letter.
 - 2. Rather, this forgetting was the kind of forgetting that occurs when we cease to let things that are in the past overshadow the present, that lets the past be past, both the good and the bad, and that constantly looks forward to the work that God still has for us to do. (Boice) This involves both the GOOD and the BAD!!!!
- B. Israel provides a bad example for us in this. (Numbers 11:5-6)
 - 1. God promised to care for them in the wilderness and did so providing manna and...
 - 2. The time came when the people ceased looking forward to the land God promised them and began to look back at their life in Egypt. "The leeks and garlic." Quail!
...The point: They began to look back and failed to trust God for the present and...
- C. Often there seems to be many leeks-and-garlic Christians among us. You are one if you are constantly looking to the past. If your testimony is primarily of what God did years ago, and not so much on what He is presently doing, if so then you are looking to the past.
...Remember: Look back and give thanks to the Lord for all, then leave it and move forward.

II. Requirement #2: A Sanctified Looking Ahead. Look Forward To Things Ahead.

- A. Paul tells that he is fixing his gaze on the many things that God would yet be doing. (3:13)
...He often told of "open doors" and he expected the Lord would open doors and he would go through them instantly. Through these doors, he was always striving toward the things ahead.
- B. Paul tells of "the goal" and "the prize." Most people think those refer to heaven.
 - 1. "The prize" probably does ultimately refer to heaven.
 - 2. But Paul lays stress upon "the upward call of God." This emphasizes the ascent.
..."Calling" almost always refers to our being conformed day by day to be like Jesus.
- C. We as Christians can err in two ways:
 - 1. By only looking at the past. This is sin. This lacks faith in God for the future.
 - 2. By only looking to the distant future. We miss the many blessings God has for us today.
...Instead we are to run the race striving toward each new task before us.

III. Requirement #3: A Sanctified Striving: Press Forward To The Things Ahead.

...We are now involved in a great struggle for God's best...it requires perseverance, discipline, and focus.

- A. Our present striving is not only against oneself or circumstances, but against evil spiritual forces who would hinder us. (Ephesians 6) Keep your eyes fixed upon Jesus, our only hope.
- B. Arm yourself with God's armor. (Ephesians 6) This includes: truth, righteousness, the Gospel, faith, salvation, the Word of God and prayer. As we engage in the battles of the Christian life that result from our striving for the victories that God sets before us, we can take confidence in the fact that the victory of Jesus Christ has already guaranteed the outcome. By His death and resurrection Jesus Christ decisively defeated Satan and the forces of darkness.
...And by wearing His armor we advance today under His victorious banner.

SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN MY LIFE?

1. Don't live in the past! Thank the Lord for it, learn the lessons from it, and press ahead today serving the Lord and being made like Him. Be intentional about this, or else it will never happen.
2. As you face the struggles and battles of today, keep focused upon Jesus. Tell Him of your fears, failures, and doubts. Ask Him to work through your brokenness for His glory. He will.
3. Live each day as a gift from the Lord and give yourself to the many things He brings your way. He is actively working out His will in your life and desires you to advance His work through you.
4. As a sinner, the only way for you to forget your past with all of its sin is to find a Savior who can forgive you for all of it. The only one who can is Jesus, who died as the "sin-substitute" on the cross. In doing this, He paid the price for your sin. Today, cry out to Jesus and He will save you and give you life and a home in heaven.