

STRIVING FOR THE PRIZE (Philippians 3:13-14)

1. Forget.

- a. Paul said the first part of his plan was “forgetting those things”.
- b. The ability to forget is a very Christian virtue.
 - i. I don’t mean forget where things are or someone’s name.
 - ii. Rather, the ability to put out of our minds those things that distract us from running the Christian race.
- c. There are things in our past that we need to forget about.
 - i. If we keep looking back, at successes or failures, we fail to see where we are presently headed.
 - ii. We may need to forget error that we were once taught.
 - iii. We may need to forget failed relationships that hinder what we could have now.
 - iv. We may need to forget about good things we’ve done: stop living in the glory years.
 - v. We need to forget the past pleasures of sin.
 - vi. We need to forget the times we’ve been wronged so that we don’t hold grudges.
- d. Think of Paul.
 - i. Paul, at one time, was a Jew who could be envied.
 - ii. Galatians 1:14; Philippians 3:4-6).
 - iii. He could have looked back at what he had given up and it caused him to be depressed in times of trial.
 - iv. Instead, Paul did not allow those things to hinder him (Philippians 3:7-8).
- e. According to verse 13, he forgot all those things.
- f. A key to striving for the prize is the ability to forget.

2. Focus.

- a. Paul said he was “reaching forth unto those things which are before”.
- b. Once all those things that hinder us are forgotten, we can then begin the striving process for the glory of heaven.
- c. It is interesting to get inside the mind of a competitor by listening to them talk about what is in their mind in the heat of competition.
 - i. They will talk about focusing strictly on the task at hand.
 - ii. They will talk about forcing out distractions.
 - iii. They will talk about pushing back any thoughts of failure.
 - iv. They will talk about how each part of their bodies and each thought is given to accomplishing the task at hand to gain the victory.
- d. Paul was single-minded in his drive to obtain heaven: “this one thing I do”.
- e. Heaven will be won because we focused on the prize (Hebrews 12:1-2).
 - i. If there is something that arises, some sin, we must repent of it quickly.
 - ii. We don’t want them to grow into greater problems that really hinder us from obtaining heaven.
 - iii. This is the idea of self-discipline (1 Corinthians 9:25-27).
- f. We can’t allow the cares of this world to choke us out of the race (Mark 4:18-19).

- i. There are good things in this world that can take the place of the most important thing.
- ii. We must seek the kingdom first (Matthew 6:33).
- g. A key to striving for the prize is focus.

3. Finish.

- a. The calling of God is called the high calling, or upward calling in some versions.
 - i. We are ever striving to go upward.
 - ii. There is no peak or plateau that we reach and say we've done it all and we are deserving of heaven.
- b. That is something the Judaizing teachers taught.
 - i. Be circumcised and keep this list of commandments and your goal is reached.
 - ii. God will owe you salvation.
- c. It seems as though some today believe they've had their ticket to heaven punched.
 - i. Some seem to be saying: "I've done enough".
 - ii. "Heaven has to be mine now".
- d. Those that say such things haven't read Paul (Philippians 3:12-13).
 - i. Paul most certainly didn't feel that way.
 - ii. He had not arrived at where he needed to be.
 - iii. Only facing death could he say that he had finished his course (2 Timothy 4:6-8).
- e. There is no doubt the Christian life is difficult, but it is not impossible.
- f. Peter tells us that if we keep adding to the Christian graces we won't fall (2 Peter 1:10).

Not an original outline but don't know the source