

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Have you ever run a race before? What was your experience like? What motivated you to finish the race?
2. What comes to mind when you think of 'a mature Christian'? What does maturity look like in the Christian life? Does it mean an absence of struggle?

DIG DEEPER

Read Philippians 3:12

1. What does Paul mean when he says that he has "not already obtained all *this*"? What does Paul mean by 'this'? See 3:10-11.
2. How does Paul's humility shine forth in this verse?
3. Since Paul has "not already obtained all this," what is his strategy?
4. What is his motivation? "*because Christ Jesus has _____ me his _____*". When did that happen? Why?

Do you remember when God grabbed a hold of your heart and lifted the scales from your eyes? When did this happen to you?

Read Philippians 3:13-14

5. Paul is an example to us of how to pursue Christ and run this race of faith. What is his exhortation for the following:

Past: _____ what lies behind.
What are the consequences of living in the past? What do you need to let go of from your past so that you can move forward in your Christian race?

Future: _____ to what lies ahead.
How are you making efforts to keep your eyes on the finish line?

Present: _____ toward the goal for the prize.
How are you running the Christian race today? Are you a spectator? Walker? Runner?
6. Paul's ambition is to "press on toward the goal to win the prize." What goal? What prize?

Read Philippians 3:15-21

7. Verse 15 suggests that some people in Philippi felt they had attained "sinless perfection". What do you suppose leads some Christians to act as though they have arrived?

How can we avoid falling prey to this attitude?

Only let us _____ to what we have attained. Philippians 3:16

Brothers, join in _____, and keep your eyes on those who _____ you have in us. Philippians 3:17

8. Compare and contrast a believer and the enemy of the cross that is spoken of in verses 18-19.

Believer	Enemy of the Cross
Their end is eternal life	Their end is _____
Their God is the triune God: Father, Son & Holy Spirit	Their god is _____
They glory in the cross.	They glory in _____
Their mind is on things above.	Their mind is _____

9. What is the reason we should not follow the lifestyle of sensualists (v. 20)?
10. What is the bright future which awaits all citizens of heaven (v. 21)?

BRING IT HOME

1. What complacency do you see in your own pursuit of the knowledge of the Lord and growth in holiness? How can you fight against that?
2. The spiritually mature recognize their need to grow and press on to pursue Christ and His purposes. What areas of your life do you desire to grow in Christlikeness?
3. How can our heavenly citizenship provide us with hope amidst all the upheaval in our earthly countries?
4. Do you ever think of yourself as a foreigner? Do you eagerly await the return of Christ? If so what are some things that should characterize your lives?
5. In what ways might a modern Christian be tempted to make a god of their desires?

PRAYER POINTS

- Praise the Lord that God pursues us and saves us not because of anything good we have done, but because He loves us!
- Pray that we would continue to mature in the faith and press on to pursue Christ & His purposes.
- Pray that we would live as citizens of heaven with our hope in the return of Christ.