

Deeper Joy: Press On - Phil 3:12-14

Readings: Heb 12:1-3; Phil 3:7-14

Intro: In Phil 3:1-11, Paul has made it clear that righteousness (= being right with God) was only possible through faith in Christ and in no other way. In our passage (vss 12-14) he works out the implications of this.

1. As you think back on the sermon, what are the differences between an Olympic running race and the “grace race” of the Christian life? See how many you can list.
2. The “grace race” is like a coin and has two sides (vs 13b). The negative side is “forgetting what is behind” and that can’t mean wiping memories of past mistakes from his memory bank. Rather, it has to do with *not letting these things set the agenda for his life now*. In an appropriate way, share if such things as your past, your regrets and your “if only”s are something you struggle with. How can we help ourselves – and others – to “forget” what is behind? (see if Isaiah 1:18 and Micah 7:18,19 can help here)
3. The positive side of the grace race is “straining toward what is ahead” (vs 13b), a reminder that it is a race that takes effort and energy (as we saw in 1:27, “work out your salvation...”). How is this same truth brought out in 1 Tim 6:12 and 2 Peter 1:5? What are the areas in your life where more effort needs to be put in? How can you help one another? (see if Heb 4:14-16 can help).
4. What is the “prize” Paul speaks of in vs 14? How does this help us to have “deeper joy”? (see if Rom 8:18 and 2 Cor 4:16-18 can help)
5. In Heb 12:1-3 we have another image of a race and another strategy to help us. See what practical helps you can pick up from these verses and discuss them with your group.

Please make sure you pray for each other and encourage one another to “press on”