

Sunday, January 04, 2015

Staying on Focus #2
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God is for you, and he never changes. He has the means to bring to pass your dreams and desires.

Isaiah 43:18-19 (KJV)

¹⁸ ***Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.***

¹⁹ ***Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.***

Quit looking in the rearview mirror. Stay focused on the goal, what is in front of you. Where there hasn't been any provision or sustenance The Lord will cause His goodness to grace you in this season of your life. Be encouraged that God is going to do a good thing and we cannot make spiritual progress by looking in the past.

Paul was a follower of athletics and made reference to them in his writings.

In the natural there is one winner but in the spiritual race there is a prize awaiting all of us, and Paul gives instructions on how we can run that race.

1 Corinthians 9:24 (KJV)

²⁴ ***Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.***

Paul was near the close of his life.

2 Timothy 4:6-8 (KJV)

⁶ ***For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.***

⁷ ***I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:***

⁸ ***Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.***

There is a crown of righteousness laid up for all of us. Paul used a natural race to make his example, but we know from the scripture that we all have a prize awaiting us.

1 Corinthians 9:25-27 (KJV)

²⁵ ***And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.***

²⁶ ***I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:***

²⁷ ***But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.***

How do we keep our body under? How do we bring our flesh in subjection? How do we keep our mind and emotion? One way is to:

Romans 12:2 (KJV)

² ***And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.***

We bring our bodies into subjection. The Lord will not do it for us, it is our responsibility. Our bodies include our mind, will, and emotions. We must cause them to be our servant.

We cannot allow our emotions to rule us, that soulish part of us into subjection.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (KJV)

***12 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.***

We need to be sure In running our race that we take occasion to ask ourselves how we are doing in running our race? The above scripture gives us guidelines or questions to be asking ourselves.

Sometimes people want to associate patience with weakness. But in the bible that is nowhere near the case. Patience is that quality that doesn't surrender to circumstances nor succumb or give in to trials. It is always associated with hope and is the opposite of despondency.

It's a given when we are running our race and finishing our course that we will have opportunities and circumstances arise that try to steer us off course and try to cause us to quit and give up. Patience needs to be that driving force within us that enables us to push through and keep running in the midst of the difficult situations and not give up. It empowers us to do so.

We also must keep looking unto Jesus.

Hebrews 12:2-3 (KJV)

***2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.
3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.***

Philippians 1:6 (KJV)

6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

Jesus never lost sight of where he was headed. We cannot lose sight of where we are headed and we have to have that value in our minds and not let business come in and crowd out our eternity vision. We have to keep our eyes on the prize, the goal and mark that has been set before us. We would all live differently from time to time if we were told that Jesus were coming tonight. All of a sudden we have our minds set on eternity. We need to live every day that way.

Philippians 3:11 (AMP)

11 That if possible I may attain to the [a]spiritual and moral] resurrection [that lifts me] out from among the dead [even while in the body].

Resurrection is used 41 times in the bible and it is only used once here with this meaning. There is a resurrection available that means coming back to life or lifting up, that will resurrect you out adversity and problems. It will bring you out of defeat.

Paul is writing that from prison. Paul wants to attain and be lifted from the circumstances he was encountering. Paul never complained. He was walking in a place with Jesus that he was able to make his emotions his servant and slave. He had victory while defeat was all around him. This is the resurrection of which Paul was speaking that is available for us today.

Philippians 3:12 (MSG)

Focused on the Goal

¹²⁻¹⁴ I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.

Paul said he was reaching to Jesus and he found out that God had reached out to him in a marvelous way. Whatever adversity or temptation we are faced with right now, when we begin to reach out to Jesus we find out that He is reached out waiting for us to be an assist to us.

So often we put limits and boundaries on ourselves if we keep looking to the weights that keep us from running our race. Paul is expressing how we can through his experiences press on.

Philippians 3:15-19 (MSG)

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it yet! Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it.

¹⁷⁻¹⁹ Stick with me, friends. Keep track of those you see running this same course, headed for this same goal. There are many out there taking other paths, choosing other goals, and trying to get you to go along with them. I've warned you of them many times; sadly, I'm having to do it again. All they want is easy street. They hate Christ's Cross. But easy street is a dead-end street. Those who live there make their bellies their gods; belches are their praise; all they can think of is their appetites.

We are to bring our bodies into subjection.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (KJV)

¹³ There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

James 4:5-7 (AMP)

⁵ Or do you suppose that the Scripture is speaking to no purpose that says, The Spirit Whom He has caused to dwell in us yearns over us and He yearns for the Spirit [to be welcome] with a jealous love?

⁶ But He gives us more and more grace (^[a]power of the Holy Spirit, to meet this evil tendency and all others fully). That is why He says, God sets Himself against the proud and haughty, but gives grace [continually] to the lowly (those who are humble enough to receive it).

⁷ So be subject to God. Resist the devil [stand firm against him], and he will flee from you.

Grace is God's ability and power working to and in us what we can't do for ourselves. We must admit it and receive it.

Romans 8:1-2 (KJV)

⁸ There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

For us to finish our course, we must stay focused on Jesus and we must learn how to deal with our flesh that has such a loud voice from time to time and sometimes it is contrary to what the voice of God says, but God gives grace, grace, and more grace to any evil tendency.

We must stay true to the cause, we must stay committed to Jesus Christ.

Father, right now I come into your presence, and I ask you to forgive me, Lord, when I have missed the mark. I confess my sin before you, and you said you are faithful and just to forgive me and cleanse me from all unrighteousness. I receive right now, my cleansing. And I believe in my heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and I receive Him now as Lord of my life, I am following you the rest of my days. Amen.