

## “Running in a Race”

*Scripture: “I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ~ Philippians 3:14*

If you are like me, you love getting a gift or a prize. When I was in children’s church, I always loved it when the teacher would call on me for an answer for a change to go to the “PRIZE BOX.” This box was full of candy, cheap toys (which at the time I thought were amazing), and other various items. One got to go to the “treasure chest” if they were good in class, but the PRIZE box was only for special occasions. As I grew older and began competing in sporting events, I began to strive for different “prizes.” I wanted championships, medals, and other forms of recognition for a job, or season, well done. One of the areas that I loved competing in was a foot race on the playground. It didn’t matter what the sport, the goal for me was to WIN. But can I tell you that our version of winning and God’s version of winning are drastically different. That is what the apostle Paul is teaching this church in Philippi. They were use to Roman games and competitions, but Paul wanted them to see how God views winning and success. To many, a race meant running as fast as you can to win, but in God’s eyes it was more of a marathon, or journey. In a marathon, you cannot just start out full speed ahead or else you will give out in no time. Rather when trying to win a marathon, the runner must start out at a slow and steady pace and keep the endurance level the same for the duration of the race. I am sure many of you know the story of the tortoise and the rabbit. The rabbit was faster, but when he got tired, he rested. However, the tortoise kept a slow and steady pace and won the overall race. That is what the apostle Paul was revealing. Paul’s goal was to be like Christ, which should be our ultimate goal as well. He knew that he would receive his reward when God’s upward call came (the end of the race). Like Paul, we won’t reach the goal of Christ-likeness in this life, but we will receive it instantly in the next: “It has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (I John 3:2).

The upward call (finishing the race) of God is our motivation to run the race. We should live in light of being called out of this world at any moment into the presence of God, where we will receive our eternal, and everlasting, reward. We were all sinners and on our way to Hell when God so graciously chose us for salvation that He might eternally make us like His own Son. What a story! It’s epic when you think about it. What a motivation to run. We are running with purpose. While other run from God, we can run to God. We run towards our goal, Heaven. Time to lace the shoes a little tighter, grab a refresher from the living water to quench our thirst, and start jogging again at a steady pace towards home!

*Prayer: Lord, help me to run this ready at a steady pace. When I am tired, give me your strength. When I am thirsty, let me drink from the rivers of living water. Don’t let me give up or burnout, but help me stay on course with my eyes fixed towards the end goal, Heaven. In Jesus Name, AMEN!*

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