



**“Running on Purpose”**  
**Philippians 3:12-16**  
**The Joy of Unity: The Book of Philippians**

Philippians 3:12-16 – “Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.”

**Introduction:**

- What’s the difference between a casual jog and running a race?
- Understanding who we are influences what we do.  
Philippians 3:12b “...but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.” (ESV) cf. Rom. 8:14-17

**Runners Tip #1 – Successful Runners Must Be Hungry**

Philippians 3:12 – “Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.”

- Paul the G.O.A.T. of Christians tells us not to rest on what we’ve done.
- We don’t stop when we feel like it, we stop when we’re done. (Luke 10:29-37)

**Runners Tip #2 – Successful Runners Must Be Self-Aware**

Philippians 3:13a – “Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do...”

- “95% of people think they’re self-aware, but only 10-15% truly are.” – Forbes Magazine  
Romans 12:3 – “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.
- Imperfection drives our progress.  
“Unless you try to do something beyond what you’ve already mastered, you’ll never grow.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson
- The importance of “**One Thing**”.  
Mark 10:17-27 – “...*one thing* you lack.”; Luke 10:38-42 – “...*one thing* is necessary.”
- Successful athletes don’t do everything well, they do *one thing* phenomenally.  
“Your capacity to say no, will determine your capacity to say yes to greater things.” – E. Stanley Jones

**Runners Tip #3 – Successful Runners Must Have a Short-Term Memory**

Philippians 3:13b – “...forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead...”

- Forgetting – *epilanthanomai* – refers to no longer being influenced or affected by.

Hebrews 10:15-17 – “And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,” **then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”**

- We’re called to strain forward because what lies ahead is more important than what is behind.
- If we want our progress stalled, we’ll spend our lives holding grudges, holding on to past success, and constantly looking over our shoulders.

#### **Runners Tip #4 – Successful Runners Must Have Their Eyes on the Prize**

Philippians 3:14 – “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

- Press – *diōkō* - think of a hunter in pursuit of his prey.
- No athlete has ever become successful by merely reading, observing, or listening.  
“Knowing is not enough, we must apply.” – Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe
- Aviation’s “One and 60 Rule”
- The goal is the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. It starts with “why”.

#### **Runners Tip #5 – Successful Runners Must Have the Right Attitude**

Philippians 3:15 – “Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you...”

- The race is not a sprint, it’s long distance. cf. Heb. 12:1; Matt. 24:9-13
- We’re not running by our own standards.  
1 Corinthians 9:26-27 – “So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.”
- The race is an individual one that is better ran together.
  - The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30)

#### **Runners Tip #6 – Successful Runners Must Have Clear Expectations**

Philippians 3:16 – “...however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.”

- We’ve received the standard. The end is according to the predetermined finish line.

#### **Conclusion**

- Story of Cliff Young & the Westfield Ultramarathon
- **The Christian life is an ultramarathon that we are to run with endurance & purpose.**  
1 Corinthians 9:24 – “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.”

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What word or phrase stood out to you from the message? Why?
2. Describe how does your life gets when your priorities get mixed up?
3. What are some ways that may help you have a better short-term memory?
4. What does it look like for you to continually reach forward toward the prize in Christ?
5. How can you improve how you are running?