

# Philippians 3:12-14

## *Distractions*

### Image Church // Philippians Week 9

MPS: Lay aside anything that hinders you from running after Jesus.

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#### Introduction

Well good morning image family and friends that are joining us this morning!

I hope that you're doing well, **I know it's been a weighty and difficult last several weeks.** More than ever in a lot of ways we've come face to face with the reality of the broken world that we live in.

I want you to know that we're in this together as a Church Family as we cling to the hope of the gospel together... More than ever we have to see the importance of unity, and humility, we have to remember that we have the answers to everything that's happening...

And that we serve as the **model** for what can be in light of who Jesus is and what He's purchased for us...

***I just want to open up this morning by coming before the Lord and praying toward that end.***

One of the ways that we want to respond in the midst of everything that's been happening is by something that we're launching called the ***Love Your Neighbor Movement.*** We want to put feet to the mission and ministry that we have in this city in a tangible way.

Even in the face of COVID-19 we want to remember that ***even though some of our methods have changed, the mission hasn't changed!***

So, we've put together a **framework** for how we can love our neighbors- and it will give us a **footprint** for continued efforts even after COVID!

So, stay on the lookout for more information, you can also go to ***imageatl.com/LYN***

- I am excited about this- make sure to stay engaged and ready as we keep pressing the gospel forward!

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***Well, the finish of the 1989 Tour De France was one for the record books...***

Coming into the final stage of the race, which was a time trial, **Greg LeMond** was 50 seconds behind a Frenchman named **Fignon** (*fin-yon*)

- And there was no way that anyone believed that he could make up that kind of time gap in one time trial...

In fact, the **French newspapers** had already prepared a special edition with Fignon (*fin-yon*) on the front page...

And as they entered into that final stage, **Greg LeMond** said he didn't want any radio information on the race or other riders, meanwhile **Fignon** (*fin-yon*) was getting as much information as possible...

**Greg LeMond** wanted to ride this final stage hard as he possibly could with no distractions, no information on where other people were, or what his time was- he had one focus, only one thing mattered, going all out and getting to the finish line as fast as he possibly could with everything he had left...

**Greg LeMond** ended up riding the fastest time trial in Tour de France History and won by **8 seconds**, which is the *narrowest margin in history!*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cycling-passion.com/eight-seconds/>

**Why do I share that??** Because it's a picture of what Paul's going to be holding up for us in the text today...

In the same way that **Greg LeMond** removed any and all distractions, so that he could focus on the finish line and the Prize...

Paul is going to call us to **remove any distractions** that keep us from looking at the prize, which is Jesus!

**You have to wonder** if one of the contributing factors to Fignon's (*fin-yon*) loss in the 1989 Tour De France was that he was thrown out of rhythm by all of the information that he was receiving about **Greg LeMond!**

Last week we talked about how *the gospel changes everything*, and how the call of Christianity is to live radically, where we **consider everything a loss compared to Jesus...**

- Where He's the one thing that defines everything, and that we spend our lives running after Him at all costs!

**For many of us the reason why this is so difficult, is because we're distracted...**

We're hearing *too much chatter over the radio*; we're looking over our shoulder at other people or other things instead of looking forward with our eyes locked on the finish line and the prize which is Christ...

Let's look at what Paul has to say about this, and what kind of posture we should assume so that we keep our eyes on Jesus.

## Philippians 3:12-14

Here's where we finished last week that set's up our text for this week Paul says this in **verse 10 My goal** is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, **11** assuming that I will somehow reach the resurrection from among the dead.

Now he's going to continue this flow of thought in **verse 12...**

**12 Not** that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus. **13** Brothers and sisters, I do **not** consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, **14** I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.

**I want to give you 2 Truths that will keep us from getting distracted in the Christian life**, so that we can say with Paul that we consider everything a loss compared to Christ!

### 1. The Christian life is not a lazy river, it's a race

**Lazy river** = no goal, no prize, no finish line... You just hop in and float!

- For many of us this is what the Christian life looks like...
  - o We've gotten distracted by the comforts of this life...

Here's what Paul says that the Christian life should look like:

**Race** = You train, you strain, you give it all you have, you're running for the finish line, you have your eye on the prize...

- I make every effort (v. 12)
- reaching forward (v.13)
- I pursue as my goal (v.14)

Paul is fighting to run the race - this is encouraging... Paul doesn't have it all together!!

And here's the other part, if Paul is fighting and grinding to run the race of Christianity how much more then, do we need to be fighting and grinding in our race!?!)

**He isn't running for his salvation; he's running because of His salvation...**

He's working out his salvation, living in light of a future reality... A future prize, He knows who's waiting at the finish line of His life... JESUS!

### **The caliber of the Prize always dictates our efforts in this life...**

- Prize is awesome- we are willing to do whatever
  - Bonus, promotion, more money etc...

We often let those prizes dictate us more than Christ...

- **Why?!**
  - **Short term gratification**
  - We don't believe that Jesus is better

Paul knew what the prize was and that everything else pales in comparison to it... **Do you?**

- Do you know the prize???
- Gospel...

When you understand the prize, when you understand what you get, then everything in your life becomes about that prize...

- **Example:** Olympics- they give everything because they know what the prize is...

We know what the prize is **should we continue in the faith**- which means that we should be willing to do whatever it takes to orient ourselves around the prize as we keep our eyes on the finish line...

We train ourselves in the Word, we devote our selves to prayer, we commit to a church family we serve, we give, we lay down our lives...

- All of those things are marks of devotion to the race that we're called to run!

Running after Jesus, not for our salvation, but because of our salvation!

Do you see the Christian life as a race where Christ is waiting for us at the finish line? Is our goal Him? Do we see Him as the greatest prize??

**Some of us need to get off the raft and into the race and start running after Jesus...** We need to stop expecting that we just magically get pushed through the Christian life...

### **God's given us:**

- the church
- Spirit
- Word
- Prayer

All of which orient our eyes around the prize!!

2<sup>nd</sup> truth that will keep you from getting distracted:

### **2. Stop looking over your shoulder at things of the past**

**Forget everything that hinders your faith and obedience...**<sup>2</sup>

But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, **14** I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus.

### **What does this look like?**

- **A. Pride of the past** – tethers back to Paul's resume
- **B. Guilt of something in the past**
  - **Conviction vs. guilt**

I want you to think through these two things... **What is the most recent thing that you did that you're gloating in??**

- *Flesh out... This takes your eyes off the prize of Christ and puts them onto yourself... looking in the mirror instead of looking at Christ...*
  - **DISTRACTION**

### **What is the thing that you feel most guilty about??**

- Sin
- Gospel application here

## **Conclusion [VAMP]**

<sup>2</sup> John Piper

We very easily get distracted from the prize which is why we don't ***consider everything else a loss compared to Christ...***

We get lured in to the ***lazy river*** or ***we get lured into looking back over our shoulder...***

Here's what I want to leave you with... What I want to challenge you to do, I've told you what to lay aside, I want to tell you what to lay hold of...

***Remember everything that serves faith and obedience...***<sup>3</sup>

- If a memory of what you were saved from?
- If a memory of a triumph of grace...

***Pray***

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.