

Thursday 1.27.22 - Pressing On or Passing Out? <https://wp.me/p7jDK1-9YI>



What is it that makes one athlete better than another? Three factors in my book. Athletic ability, the desire to be the best, and a great coach. You can have great potential but if being the best isn't driving you and coming from within you and you are doing the training that needs to be done then fame for your accomplishments will not happen. We will be watching a lot of the people that have done that soon the coming Winter Olympics.

Some of these women and men are household names because we have watched them show the world how great they are. They stand on the platform hoping they are in the middle getting the gold medal. Michael Phelps has done that in the Olympics with 23 gold. The most ever...the next person is Larisa Latynina...a mere 9 gold.

However, there are plenty of others we know who have excelled in their field whether it be sports, music, painting, making statues, knowledge in specific fields, and even some Christians who have done historic things...or who has been the greatest servant. Because the rules change when we get to heaven. Who gets the gold in heaven...those who have served the Lord in their lifetime by serving others here on earth.

Yesterday we looked at the Apostle Paul putting on display his trophies. There were 7 achievements that he shares. However, there was no display case in his home. Used to be but he got rid of them when he realized they were as valuable as a pile of manure. They were tossed out on Trash Day and he spent the rest of his life serving Jesus and helping to establish groups of Christians.

And talk about a thankless job. Scholars estimate he planted 14 or more churches which then multiplied and started other churches. There was no fame in doing so. There were no gold medals hanging from his neck...but plenty of scars on his back from beatings he received multiple times. Rarely was he put up in the Hilton...instead he was chained up in the prison after being beaten up and one time stoned to death outside of Lystra. And when God resuscitated him...he walked back into Lystra to continue to help the Christians there.

So, it is no wonder we read these words in Philippians 3:12-14...

*“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal. **but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.** Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. **But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.**”*

And was that easy for him? Absolutely not!!! Here is what Paul said to the church in Corinth...

*“...**been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty**”*

lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, ... three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches."

Paul wins the gold medal for sure...if it is the gold medal for suffering for being a Christian. I do not think Paul was a maniacal crazy person so zealous that people thought of him as a nut. We can know that by the incredible letters he writes to his churches. He was brilliant but beaten, unstoppable but unwelcome. And pardon me for saying this but he faced a life of shit almost every day.

And what did he do? How did he respond to his adversities? Did they deter him in his calling? No...he did this...forgetting whatever was behind him and straining toward the next trip to the local jail...

He pressed on straining forward to whatever God had for him that day.

Notice this important point he was forgetting what was behind him. Undeterred from what God was sending him to do. Knowing that all his sins were forgiven and his only goal was to serve his Savior. He laid down his life for his Lord...not dwelling on his past but straining forward to whatever God had for him next. At one point God allowed a demon to torment him to keep him humble after he got a glimpse of heaven.

So...how do we do that?

So, before we get to the HOW we need to examine the WHY!!!

Why should we be forgetting what lies behind and pressing on to do God's will in our life? There are several why's. Because you need to do it for yourself. You have lived long enough in the shame and isolation of sexual brokenness. You feel pity and self-loathing and it has strained all your relationships to the breaking point. The wages of sin is death and your addiction to porn and sex has been killing you and affects almost every area of your life.

It is a cancer that does not seem to stop growing...because you keep feeding it. Compare yourself to where you were a few years ago. Have you gone deeper into the darkness? Are you doing things now that a while ago you never thought you would do? Porn and sex always want more. More frequency and more variety.

The first why is you need to do it for yourself. I know if you are married you would probably say you need it for your wife. She is next in line. Before she will want to repair the damage to the marriage she needs to see you change before she will know that you are working on your recovery. Then she might be able to forgive what your sexual sin has done to her.

If she begins to see you change...then there is hope. If not then begin to plan on going to Divorce Court and being separated from your children. Is that what you want? Well, that is what you are going to get unless you begin your recovery.

So, the first why is you need it for yourself. You need to get help and begin the process that every man can take. Tomorrow we will finish with the WHY's and then to move on to the HOW!!!