



“GO FOR THE PRIZE!” **Philippians Chapter 3:1-14**

> FIVE KEYS TO VICTORY:

(v1) KEY #1 – REJOICE!

– “*Rejoice in the Lord*” – The key for continuous rejoicing is our Lord Jesus Christ, thus Paul says it is “*not tedious, but for you it is safe.*” Paul sees this call to “REJOICING” not redundant, but *encouraging, fulfilling and SAFE (secure).*

- The Biblical definition of JOY is: *A positive attitude or pleasant emotion; delight.* Many levels of joy are also described, including gladness, contentment, and cheerfulness. But the joy which the people of God should have is holy and pure. This joy rises above circumstances and focuses on the very character of God.

- In the Psalms, for example, the psalmist rejoices over *God's righteousness (71:14-16), salvation (21:1; 71:23), mercy (31:7), creation (148:5), word (119:14,162), and faithfulness (33:1-6).*

- *God's characteristics as well as His acts are the cause of rejoicing. The joy required of the righteous person (Psalm 150; Philippians 4:4) is produced by the Spirit of God (Galatians 5:22).* This kind of joy looks beyond the present to our future *salvation (Romans 5:2; 8:18; 1 Peter 1:4,6)* and to our sovereign God, who works out all things for our ultimate good, which is *Christlikeness (Romans 8:28-30).* This kind of joy is distinct from mere happiness. Joy like this is possible, even in the midst of sorrow (1 Corin. 12:26; 2 Corin. 6:10; 7:4). (Nelson's Bible Dictionary)

(v2) KEY #2 – BEWARE! BEWARE! BEWARE!

– *Three BEWARES are listed:*

(1) BEWARE of DOGS – The commentator Barnes writes, “The Jews called the pagan dogs, and the Muslims call Jews and Christians by the same name. The term dog also is used to denote a person that is shameless, impudent, malignant, snarling, dissatisfied, and contentious, and is evidently so employed here.”

- Jesus said in Matthew 7:6 - “*Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.*”

- Referring to the crucifixion of Christ the Psalmist declares in Psalms 22:16-18 - *For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.*

- Peter writes in 2 Peter 2:22 - *But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."*

- Dogs, the ungodly are also found outside the New Jerusalem in Revelation 22:14-15
- *Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.*

(2) **BEWARE of EVIL WORKERS** – An evil work comes from an evil heart Mark 7:20-23 - *And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man."*

- **EVIL WORKERS** defines one who labors and teaches **disorder** in a moral world. It is the failure of rational and free beings to conform in character and conduct to the will of God. This great evil is defined and realized in Romans 1:18-32.

(2) **BEWARE OF THE MUTILATION** – Warren Wiersbe writes, “Here Paul uses a pun on the word "circumcision." The word translated "circumcision" literally means "a mutilation." The Judaizers taught that circumcision was essential to salvation (**Acts 15:1; Galatians 6:12-18**); but Paul states that circumcision of *itself* is only a mutilation! The true Christian has experienced a spiritual circumcision in Christ (**Colossians 2:11**) and does not need any fleshly operations. *Circumcision, baptism, the Lord's Supper, tithing, or any other religious practice cannot save a person from his sins. Only faith in Jesus Christ can do that (Romans 2:25-29).*”

(v3-6) **KEY #3 – WORSHIP!**

– Paul writes in Colossians 2:11-12 - *In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ. We have no confidence in the flesh as Paul unveils his religious self-righteousness, which is worthless, as only faith in Christ brings true worship of God in Spirit (John 4:19-24).*

(v7-11) **KEY #4 – FAITH!**

– **FAITH IN CHRIST** produces: (v8) the **KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST**; (v9) the **RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD**; (v10a) the **POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION**; (v10b) the **FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS**; (v11) the **RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD!**

(v12-14) **KEY #5 – PRESS ON!**

– **HOW TO OBTAIN THE PRIZE:**

➤ **FORGET!** - We are called to **PRESS ON**, to **REACH FORWARD** in **CHRIST**,

FORGET past failures, sins, and shortcomings; learn from each event, then exercise spiritual disciplines to strengthen your faith unto **VICTORIOUS** Christian living! 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 - *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

➤ **REACH!** - Believers are called to “**PRESS TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.**” Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 - *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*

➤ **PRESS ON!** - Hebrews 12:1-2 - *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

➤ **GO FOR THE GOAL!** - 2 Timothy 4:7-8 - *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*