



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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Forget the past and reach the goal!

Scripture: Philippians 3:12-21

Paul said his goal was to know Christ, to be like Christ, and to be all Christ had in mind for him. This goal absorbed all his energy. This is an example for us. We should not let anything take our eyes off our goal—Christ. With the single-mindedness of an athlete in training, we must lay aside everything harmful and forsake anything that may distract us from being effective saints of God.

Hebrew 12:1 shows that we do not struggle alone, and we are not the first to struggle with the problems we face. Others have run the race and won, and their witness stirs us to run and win also. **What an inspiring heritage we have!** Therefore, our life involves hard work. It requires us to give up whatever endangers our relationship with God, to run patiently, and to struggle against sin with the power of the Holy Ghost. To live effectively, we must keep our eyes on Jesus. We stumble when we look away from Him to stare at ourselves or at the circumstances surrounding us. **We are running for Christ, not ourselves, and we must always keep Him in sight.** Winning a race requires purpose and discipline. It takes hard work, self-denial, and grueling preparation. We are running toward our heavenly reward.

Paul had reason to feel sorrow about the past—he held the coats of those who stoned Stephen, the first Christian martyr (Acts 7:57-58). **We have all done things for which we are ashamed, and we all live in the tension of what we have been and what we want to be.** Because our hope is in Christ, however, we can let go of past guilt and look forward to what He will help us become. Don't dwell on your past. Instead, grow in the knowledge of God by concentrating on your relationship with Him now. Realize you are forgiven, and then move on to a life of faith and obedience. Look forward to a fuller and more meaningful life because of your hope in Christ. Sometimes striving for perfection can be so difficult that it leaves us drained and discouraged. We may feel so far from perfect that we think we can never please God with our lives. Perfect means mature or complete, not flawless in every detail. **However, following Jesus requires total, undivided commitment without turning back to old habits or earthly distractions** (Luke 9:62).

Ephesians 4:11-13 the purpose of the 5-fold ministry. Our oneness in Christ does not destroy our individuality. The Holy Spirit has given each of us special gifts for building up the church. Now that we have these gifts, it is crucial to use them. **Are you spiritually mature, exercising the gifts God has given you?** As you begin to recognize your special area of service, use your gifts to strengthen and encourage the church. We that are mature should press on in the Holy Ghost power, knowing that Christ will reveal and fill any discrepancy between what we are and what we should be. Christ's provision is no excuse for lagging devotion, but it provides relief and assurance for those who feel driven.

We that are mature should press on in the Holy Ghost power, knowing that Christ will reveal and fill any discrepancy between what we are and what we should be. Christ's provision is no excuse for lagging devotion, but it provides relief and assurance for those who feel driven. Paul challenged the Philippians to pursue Christlikeness by telling them to follow his example. This did not mean, of course, that we should copy everything he did; he had stated that he was not perfect (3:12). We must focus our life on being Christlike. We must discipline ourselves to pray, read and study the Word of God.

Paul encouraged Timothy in (1 Timothy 6:12, 19) to actively persevere in spiritual warfare, firmly grasp the reality of eternal life, and live out the public confession of faith made before others. Saints who are generous with their worldly wealth are investing in eternity, securing a solid spiritual future, and fully experiencing true eternal life. As Paul neared the end of his life, could confidently say he had been faithful to his call (2 Timothy 4:7-8). He faced death calmly, knowing he would be rewarded by Christ. **Is your life preparing you for death?** Do you share Paul's confident expectation of meeting Christ? The good news is that the heavenly reward is not just for giants of the faith, like Paul, but for all who are eagerly looking forward to Jesus' Second Coming. **No matter how difficult the fight seems—keep fighting.** We will discover when we are with Jesus Christ that it was all worth it.

People of God, forget the past and reach the goal!