

Paul's One Thing: Pursue God's Purpose

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

I Will Run, This Is Amazing Grace, I'd Rather Have Jesus, Through It All, King of Kings

WELCOME

What comes to your mind when you hear the name McDonald's, Apple, Samsung, Honda, Rolex? How about when you hear your name, what comes to your mind? What are you best known for?

WORD

PHILIPPIANS 3:7-16

⁷But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. ¹¹Not 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. ¹²Brethren, 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, ¹³I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

What is the most important thing in your life today? What is it that you dream about or meditate on? What is that one thing that makes you happy, and without it, you'd feel like life would have no meaning at all?

When we talk about the ONE THING, what enters most of our minds is the word PRIORITY. The word "priority" came from the Latin "*prior*"; it was singular and did not have a plural form. But as time passed, we created the plural version of the word to denote the "*most important things*" in life — making PRIORITIES a word of absurd contradiction. If everything is a priority, then there is no priority at all!

We shall now focus on the Apostle Paul's ONE THING as mentioned in **Philippians 3:13-14**. When Paul wrote this, it was already about 30 years since his encounter with Jesus at the Damascus road and he was no longer a young man. Now in prison because of the mission God has given him, he begins by saying "*I have not yet obtained*" perfection. He starts at a place of humility and then goes on to define that his ONE THING is to **pursue God's purpose for his life**.

How do you pursue God's purpose for your life faithfully like the Apostle Paul?

1. FORGETTING WHAT LIES BEHIND

Once upon a time, Paul's purpose was RELIGION. We read Paul's list of many achievements in **Philippians 3**, and we see that expanded in the records of Luke in **Acts 22**. Here, Paul narrated about his education and origin — he was a zealous man for God, learning from the top educators of his time (Gamaliel), and he persecuted the early Christians, then called followers of The Way. We have to understand that he did all these with the mindset that he was following the truth. On the road to Damascus, however, he encountered the Real Truth, the Way, and The Life — Jesus Christ.

After encountering Jesus, Paul surrendered his purpose in exchange for God's purpose. In **Romans 12:2**, Paul reminds his audience that God's purpose is worthy of our pursuit, because His will is good, pleasing, and perfect.

Acts 22:8-10 shows us that when Paul submitted to what God wanted him to do, he eventually had to let go of his past. It was going to haunt him from time to time, but he learned to view the past through the lens of God's truth.

If you want to pursue God's purpose for your life, do not be imprisoned by your past. Past mistakes, regrets, and even successes are things to let go of at the foot of the cross of Christ. You then reach forward to what lies ahead without a heavy burden on your conscience!

2. PRESS ON TOWARD THE GOAL

PRESS ON has the idea of giving your "*full energy*". You apply yourself to this new pursuit as you have placed the past behind you, and you relentlessly press on towards the **GOAL** God has set for you. Christianity was never meant for passivity — it is a love relationship where you give your best to pursue God. Paul was appointed for a purpose (**Acts 22:14-15**) — **to KNOW Him and make Him KNOWN**. He was to make Jesus known to many others. You cannot make Him known if you don't know Jesus personally!

Your perspective will impact your purpose. The right perspective — rooted in knowing Christ fully through His Word — directs our purpose so that things like riches, achievements or failures, and recognition, are counted as loss in contrast to the righteousness which we achieve only by **faith in Jesus Christ** (**Philippians 3:8-9**).

There will be many problems in life. Fog and darkness in life will come, but you will have to learn to fix your eyes on the **GOAL** to finish the race. You press on towards that



WORD (cont'd)

goal — from the simplest ones like faithfully practicing spiritual disciplines, to grander, bigger things like leading other people to a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ — and aim to continually please God — make that your priority in life. Remember, His purpose is our priority!

3. PRIZE

The goal and the prize are interconnected here. The prize is never awarded at the beginning of a pursuit — it is given as a reward for a job well done. **1 Corinthians 9:24-25** tells us that we will earn an imperishable prize if we accomplish the call of God to complete His mission. In **1 Timothy 4:8**, Paul reminds Timothy to fulfill God's purpose and look forward to the reward that God grants to faithful men and women of faith (**2 Corinthians 5:9-10**).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

- 1. Self-Check.** We are about to end the first month of 2020; how are you doing in your pursuit of your “one thing” priority? Is it clouded by many other smaller “priorities”?
- 2. Setting It Right.** Paul clearly sets the ground rules — forget what lies behind. What are things in the past that you cannot let go of? These can be habits, hang-ups, or unforgiveness and bitterness. What prevents you from letting these hindrances go?
- 3. Living It Out.** How differently will you live your life this year compared to last year so you can be more successful in the pursuit of God’s purpose for you of knowing Him and making Him known to others?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray that people around you in your family, at work, our government leaders, etc., will have a desire to know their true purpose for living. Share the gospel to them, leading them to Christ who is the only one who can give them their real purpose in life.

4. UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS

The most beautiful part of Paul’s ONE THING is that it still goes back to Jesus. **Hebrews 12:1-2** reminds us to **FIX OUR EYES ON JESUS** as we run the race marked out for us. Jesus confirms this in **Revelation 22:12**, where He promised He brings the reward with Him. Salvation is a gift, you don’t earn it, but the reward is due for something you have done. Paul in **1 Corinthians 9:24-25** puts it wonderfully — we must not waste our lives; we don’t just drift in life; we must be intentional in the things we do to meet the purpose God has set for us. He has prepared amazing things beyond our understanding, and the most amazing of which is we get to hear Jesus Christ say, **“Well done, good and faithful servant.”** So, let us all pursue God’s purpose like the Apostle Paul did!

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
- A God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends