

# The Race

## The Road to Heaven Part 6 Philippians 3:12-14 8-21-2016

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Summary: After speaking against legalism in the first half of the chapter, Paul now warns against the opposite error: quietism. Not even Paul has gotten to a place where he can coast. The race goes until you die. And to stand firm to the end, you must run like an Olympic athlete, not looking back at anything in your past that will slow you down, but straining toward righteousness and everything that Christ died to make you.

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**Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, 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, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.**

## Introduction

Do you think the Apostle Paul watched the Olympics in his day? I think he did. You can tell what a preacher is interested in by the things that show up in his sermon illustrations again and again. And for Paul, I don't know if he was an athlete, or if he was just really into watching sports, but he uses those analogies a lot, and today's passage is an example.

**Philippians 3:13 ...one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize**

That's the language of running a race. And there are three things Paul wants us to know about this race of the Christian life:

- The Distance
- The Prize
- The Strategy

## The Distance: It Ain't Over Till It's Over

First, the distance. Is this a 50-meter sprint? A 1500 meter? A marathon? How long is it? The very first thing Paul wants us to know about this race is that it's not over.

**Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect...**

Then he says it again in verse 13. And he addresses them to get their attention.

### 13 Brothers

Hey! Look at me. Listen to this.

**... I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it.**

He has been a Christian 30 years. He is the most spectacular Christian ever. In the next paragraph he calls all Christians to follow his example. And yet not even Paul had reached a point where he could just coast. He was still running. He had obtained some of it, but only a tiny bit compared to the full, final form of our salvation.<sup>1</sup>

**1 Corinthians 13:12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.**

So his first point is it ain't over till it's over. This race goes until you die.

Paul repeats three times that he hasn't yet arrived, and in the middle he throws in that address to get their attention: **Brothers!** He wants to do everything he possibly can to demolish any idea that someone might have that salvation is in their hip pocket. So many people think that just because they have been converted, and they know Christ, now they can coast. It's just a matter of time and they are guaranteed to receive all the final blessings of salvation no matter what. It's all sewn up; it's a done deal, regardless of how they live or what they do in this life, their destiny is in the bag. And Paul says, "No – that is absolutely not the case." The final goal isn't something you just wait for, like you wait for a date on the calendar to arrive. It is something you run towards.

## Legalism and Quietism

He needs to make this clear because the whole first half of the chapter Paul has been railing against legalism. We are not saved by religious observance, or by good works, or any kind of effort or activity on our part. We are saved by the power of God's grace that comes through knowing Christ by faith – not by works. That's the first half of the chapter. But now what Paul wants to do is to warn us about going too far the other way. Sometimes Christians will see the error of legalism and say, "Legalism is horrible. I don't want to fall into legalism." And so they go in the opposite direction and embrace what's known as *quietism*. Quietism is that teaching that says, "Let go and let God." Don't put forth any effort. Don't

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<sup>1</sup> When Paul says "Not that I have already obtained all this, the words **all this** are added by the editors; in the Greek it's just **Not that I have already obtained**, or **Not that I have already reached**. Silva points out that this is an example of the very common Greek practice of not mentioning the object again right after it has just been mentioned (Silva, 174). He takes the implied object to be the immediately preceding phrase (**the resurrection from among the dead**). Paul is using the resurrection here as a kind of shorthand for the final culmination and completion of all the aspects of salvation (full knowledge of Christ, full deliverance from sin, full fellowship with God – everything God has promised as part of our salvation). Paul clarifies the fact that that is what he means when he adds the phrase "**or have already been made perfect.**"

strive, don't struggle, don't work – just rest in God and let him do the work. They say things like “Stop trying and start trusting,” or “Rest, don't run.”

So Paul wants to warn us about that. The solution to legalism is not quietism. It is true that we are not saved by works. But the problem with that phrase “saved by works” isn't the word “works.” The problem with that phrase is the word “by.” Don't get rid of the word *works*; get rid of the word *by*. Replace it with the word *for*. We aren't saved *by* works, but we are saved *for* works.

**Ephesians 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith... 9 not by works...10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**

We aren't saved by works, but we are saved for works. And so the first half of Philippians 3 is that first part – absolutely NOT by works. But now Paul wants to make it equally clear – we are saved for good works, and so we need to run after those works like an Olympian running for the gold. And so this whole section is all about movement.

**12 ... I press on**

**13 ... straining toward what is ahead**

**14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.**

## **The Upward Call**

Scripture speaks a lot about the concept of our calling. Many times it speaks of being called by a certain name or title. Other times it speaks of being called to a particular task. But here he is talking about being called in a *direction* – upward. Keep moving. Don't stall out. Don't slow down. Run hard. Move, move, move – and all this movement is upward movement. Movement in the direction of knowing Christ and all that goes along with final salvation.

If you were converted, that's great. But what is conversion? It's a turning. And what good is it to turn and face in a new direction if you don't then start actually moving in that new direction? We need to run in the direction we've been called to. We run hard to take hold of the salvation that we have been called to.

**1 Timothy 6:12 ... Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called**

## **Why Run?**

Now, ultimately what you have been called to involves moral perfection. And that is not something you're going to reach by striving. It is something that is going to happen to you when Jesus returns. Notice how Paul switches to the passive voice when he brings up perfection.

**Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already obtained (that's active), or have already been made perfect (that's passive).**

We are not going to be perfect until that Day when he makes us perfect at the resurrection of the righteous.

So one question that might come up in your mind is, “If perfection isn't even possible in this life, and it's something that is going to happen to me at the resurrection, what's the point of running?” Why press on toward that goal if it's not even attainable now? Suppose an astronaut is scheduled for a trip to the moon in the year 2019. He wouldn't say, “That day hasn't arrived yet, but in the meantime I keep jumping.” Or suppose there were some magic gym where I could go and, as soon as I walked in the door, I would instantly have the physique of a world-class body builder. All I have to do is walk through the door and the transformation will be instantaneous – just like the transformation at the resurrection. If I

were driving in my car to that gym, I wouldn't bring weights with me so I could do some curls in the car on the drive over. Why would I, if it's all going to happen instantly? If perfection is going to happen to us, why run?

## **Run for a Taste of Heaven Now**

Two reasons. First, the message of the Bible is basically this - God simply says to us, "All I require of you is to desire heaven. I just want you to want to live with me in my house forever. If you want that more than you want this world, that's all I require." And so we say, "Yes! I want that. And I want that more than I want anything in this world." So God says, "That's great. Now, what if I told you that you could have a piece of it right now? What if I told you that you could experience my presence and escape sin right now? It's not easy, but the harder you run, the more of it you can have now." What would you say? If you want heaven more than you want this world, and if a portion of heaven is available here and now if you run, then you'll run.

## **Run to Stand**

That is one reason to run. Another reason is that Paul wants to make sure that when that Day arrives, he's ready. In order to be included in the number of people who will be raised in the resurrection of the righteous at the end of the age, you have to stand firm in your faith all the way to the end. And the only way to stand firm to the end, is to run like there's no tomorrow.

If you had to summarize the point of all of chapter 3, how would you do it? Take a look at how Paul does it.

### **Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my brothers ... that is how you should stand firm in the Lord**

So Philippians chapter 3 is all about how to stand firm in the Lord.<sup>2</sup> And the whole thing is about pressing on and moving forward and running hard. So the way to stand firm is to run. That's the key to stability in the Christian life – keep moving forward. It's kind of like riding a bike. If you try to stay stationary on a bike it's very difficult to balance. But once you get moving forward, even a little child can balance. And the faster the bike moves the more stable it is. The slower you go, the more unstable you are, and if you go too slow, you tip over. That's how it is with the Christian life. If you want to stand firm so that you're still in the faith when Christ returns, keep running.

It is amazing how many Christians are just standing still waiting for something to change before they start moving ahead spiritually.

"I'm waiting for things to calm down and for life to get back to normal."

"I'm just waiting for things to ease up at work."

"I'm waiting for an opportunity."

"I've been through a lot - I'm waiting for my emotions to heal before I jump back in."

"I'm in a bad spot right now. I'm waiting until I'm in a good place, and then I'll start moving again."

Think about that statement for a second. I'm waiting until I'm in a good place, and then I'll start moving?" That's not how it works. If you want to get into a place other than the place you're in right now, you have to move.

And I know, some of you have been hurt so severely that you don't feel like you can move. When you get hurt emotionally, it's kind of like having hypothermia. If you have ever been lost in the woods and your core temperature gets dangerously low, all you want to do is sit down in the snow and stop moving and just go to sleep. But if you do that you will die. You have to keep moving. That's how it is with your spiritual life too. You can't stay stationary. If you have been through some horrible trauma or some terrible suffering, emotional healing is not going to come by standing still spiritually. Nothing good

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<sup>2</sup> We saw in 1:27 that was Paul's big concern for the Philippians – that they stand firm.

is going to happen by staying still. You will never heal. Whatever has happened to you, leave it in the past and keep moving.

Ok, so what kind of race is it? It's not a short sprint. This entire life is the race. That's the distance – what about the prize? What is this prize we are running for? What is Paul striving to take hold of?

## **The Prize: Righteousness**

### **My Goal: Christ's Goal**

**12 ... I press on to take hold of that for which<sup>3</sup> Christ Jesus took hold of me.**

When Jesus Christ took hold of me, he had a reason for doing that. And that reason – that goal Christ had in saving me – that is now my goal. Christ's reason for saving me is now my reason for living.

### **Christ's Role and Our Role in Salvation**

But before we look into what that reason is, let's just take a minute to think through this idea of Christ Jesus taking hold of us. That imagery points to Jesus' personal action in your salvation. When you became a Christian, that wasn't just you signing up for an organization. Every Christian was laid hold of by the personal action of Jesus Christ. Jesus used a thousand different inward impulses and outward providences to grab a hold of your affections; he got a grip on your heart, gathered in your will, and made you his own. He took hold of you. If you are a Christian, that's your testimony. One day, Jesus Christ reached down and took hold of you. If he would not have done that, you never would have come to Christ. You never would have believed the gospel.

### **The Goal: Righteousness**

Christ decided to grab hold of you, and he did that for a reason. And it wasn't just so that you would go to heaven someday. He took hold of you because he wanted you to be a certain kind of person here and now in this life.

**Titus 2:14 Jesus Christ gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.**

Jesus died to make me a certain kind of person, and so now it's my goal in life to become that kind of person. And I run toward the goal of becoming what Christ died to make me. That's the prize.

The race goes until you die – it ain't over till it's over. The prize is righteousness – becoming what Christ died to make you. Now one more point – the strategy. How are we to go about taking hold of this goal? How do we run this race?

## **The Strategy: Forgetting and Straining**

**13 Brothers, 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, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.**

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<sup>3</sup> The phrase translated **that for which** is used by Paul to mean *because* in Romans 5:12 and 2 Corinthians 5:4, but apparently not in Philippians 4:10. Whichever translation is accepted, the meaning is essentially the same. If it means because, then it's "I run to take hold [of the goal I've been talking about] because Christ took hold of me." So either way, the thing Paul is striving to take hold of is Christ's purposes in his salvation.

## Singlemindedness

### **One thing I do.**

Another reason athletes are such a great illustration of the Christian life is that not only do they strain with utmost effort, but they also are great examples of single-minded focus. If you go home today and turn on the Olympics, you are not going to see any of the athletes drifting off in some other direction in the middle of a race. The swimmers don't turn and swim over to explore some other area of the pool. The runners don't jog over toward the stands or take some alternate route. They are all moving in the shortest possible distance toward that finish line. They have one purpose, one goal, one objective. When he says in verse 14 **I press on toward the goal**, that word **goal** means marker, and it referred to the marker at the finish line. The runners would not take their eyes off that marker. They fixed their eyes on that so they could run straight for it.

And Paul says, "That's the one thing I do in life." Striving for holiness was not Paul's #1 priority; it was his *only* priority. If you asked Paul, "What are your priorities?" he would not say, "God is first, then family, then ministry..." He would say, "I only have one priority. I only have one objective in life: to become what Jesus Christ died to make me – that's it. If I'm committed to my family, it's for the purpose of becoming what Christ died to make me. If I do a ministry, or go to work and make a tent and sell it, or I go on a vacation or take a rest or have some recreation, or if I hang out with friends - I have one reason for doing all of those things: they are all just steps that I'm taking in this race where I'm running as hard as I can after the goal of taking hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. That's my one thing."

Isn't that exactly what Jesus taught Martha?

**Luke 10:41 "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but only one thing is needed..."**

**Psalms 27:4 One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek...**

**Psalms 73:25 Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.**

One thing – nothing else. Now, within our pursuit of that one thing, we might have priorities. There are certain things that will help me toward that goal more in this moment than other things. So it's fine to have priorities within your ultimate goal of pursuing Christ. But if you have a list of priorities and one of them is pursuing Christ, there shouldn't be anything else in the list. This is a good principle to remember if you ever find yourself asking the question, "How far is too far?" when it comes to some questionable activity. If you're doing something, and your conscience is a little uneasy about it, and you're wondering, "Is this sin? Or is this okay?" Usually when we asked that question, that's the wrong question. The right question would be, "Is this helping me pursue my one thing? Is this going to help me know Christ better, draw near to him, take hold of that for which he took hold of me? If not, then I have no reason to do it." You should never do anything that isn't part of that one thing.

## Forgetting

So Paul's one thing is to run the race, but his strategy for running the race has two parts to it. The first one is **forgetting what is behind**. Normally in Scripture, forgetting is a bad thing. Forgetting things we need to remember is one of our biggest problems in living the Christian life. We forget God's blessings, we forget his mighty works and how he has taken care of us in the past, and so we worry. We forget about the bondage of sin, and so we go back into it and re-enslave ourselves. We forget about the joy of intimacy with Christ, and we run after other things. We forget principles from Scripture. So many of our problems stem from forgetting.

But here we see there are some things that we should forget. What are they? The most common answer people give when they rip this verse out of context is to forget past trauma. Someone was abused as a child, and the counselor tells them, "You have to forget what is behind and move forward." Or you talk to somebody with PTSD and say, "You have to just forget about those horrible things that happened

and move forward.” Is that what Paul is talking about in this verse - forgetting past traumas? Did Paul forget his past traumas? No, in fact, not only did he not forget them, he brought them up in his writings repeatedly. And in 2 Corinthians 11 he gives a long list of them. For many people, just one of these incidents would be enough to give them PTSD.

- Multiple unjust imprisonments
- Flogged five different times
- Beaten with rods three different times
- Stoned
- Shipwrecked three times
- Twenty-four hours on the open sea
- Constantly on the move
- In constant danger from rivers, bandits, Jews, Gentiles, false Christians, in the city, in the country, at sea
- He labored and toiled and often went without sleep, without food, without water, and without warm clothes

Was he trying his hardest to forget all those things so he could heal? Not at all.

**2 Corinthians 12:10 ... I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

He wasn't trying to forget them – he delighted in them because he knew God was using them to make him more dependent on Christ. All those horrific things that evil people did to him brought him happiness and joy because he understood what Scripture teaches about God's good purposes in suffering.

So what was it that Paul forgot about from his past? It wasn't his suffering or past traumas in his life. So what was it? Remember the context.

**13 ... one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize**

It is the context of a foot race. You don't look behind you in a race because that slows you down. In the 1954 Empire Games in Vancouver there was a dramatic showdown between the only two men on the planet who could run a sub-four-minute mile: Roger Bannister and John Landy. It was one of the most dramatic races ever, with an amazing story behind it. But I'll just tell you about the very end. Landy had a huge lead on the third lap, but Bannister closed in, and on the final stretch Bannister was just a couple strides behind Landy. And then Bannister made a move and gained a little, and when that happened, the crowd roared, which made it so Landy couldn't hear Bannister's foot fall. So in one of the most replayed sports videos of all time, Landy looked back over his left shoulder to see where Bannister was, and at that moment Bannister passed him on his right and won the race.

That wasn't the first time a runner made that mistake. It's as old as the Bible. Paul saw it happen, and for him it was an illustration about the Christian life. So when you put the phrase in that context, it's clear what Paul means. What are you supposed to forget? Anything in the past that is going to slow you down in the race when you dwell on it.

Paul didn't forget his past traumas because those didn't slow him down in the race when he thought about God's purposes in them. When he did that, they actually helped him in his race, so he remembered them and he talked about them.

So what kinds of things do slow you down? What should we forget? How about past sin? That was one I thought of, but then I went back to the Scriptures and looked at Paul's example. Did he forget about his past sins? No. Right in this very chapter, back in verse 6, Paul mentioned the thing that made him the chief of all sinners – his persecution of the church. He brought that sin up frequently in his writings.<sup>4</sup> Paul

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<sup>4</sup> Acts 22:4-5, Acts 26:9-11, 1 Tim.1:13, 1 Cor.15:9.

didn't forget his past sins because remembering what he was saved from helped him run the race. So again, what is it we should forget?

## **Former Boasts**

There are a couple things we can see right here in the context of this chapter. One thing Paul is definitely leaving in the dust is all that stuff in verses 5-6. All his past religious practices that he used to put so much confidence in.

That is something that will slow you down if you don't leave it behind. A lot of times people come out of some religious system and they think they have put it behind them, but there are still some parts of it that still affect them. Martin Luther railed against the Roman Catholic Church with the harshest language, and yet there were still aspects of Catholicism that showed up in his beliefs. Sometimes it takes years to sort out all the things that were wrong about whatever system you came out of.

Leave your past religion in the past. And beyond that – anything besides God that you are tempted to put your confidence in – leave it in the past. The things that make you feel safe - maybe it's your education, your bank account, your job, your spouse, your experience, your good looks, your personality, your talents, your strict religious observance - whatever you are tempted to rely on apart from God, leave it behind.

## **Ground Covered**

The other thing from the context here is not just the bad things in Paul's past, but the good things. The first portion of the race - his past 30 years of walking with the Lord. Sometimes there is a temptation to try to ride on the strength of past zeal for the Lord – kind of resting on your laurels. If you have not finished the race yet, and you turn around to admire how much ground you've covered so far, you are going to lose the race. If you run the first 25 miles of a marathon, and then you stop and expect a gold medal because of the amazing time you made in those first 25 miles, but you never run that last mile, you lose the race. If you've done well in the past as a Christian, that's great – praise God, but keep your eye on the finish line. Don't look back.

## **Past Guilt**

Those are a couple things I see in the context, but again – I think Paul doesn't specify what to forget because we need to forget anything and everything that slows us down in the race. There are all kinds of things that could slow you down. How about this – not past sin, but past guilt? Forgiven sin can't slow you down, but clinging to forgiven guilt can. The sin is a reality, but once you are forgiven, the guilt no longer exists. You might still feel guilty, but those feelings are false. There is no actual guilt anymore after God has forgiven you. So instead of dredging that sin up and beating yourself up over it and condemning yourself, forget what is behind and strain on towards what is ahead. Self-condemnation will slow you down, so throw it off. Leave it in the past.

## **Sinful Pleasures**

Another thing we should leave in the past is the memory of pleasures that we have experienced from sin. We are tempted to re-commit those sins mentally by remembering the pleasure. But all that does is train your soul to love sin, and it will destroy your desire for God. So leave the pleasures of sin in the past and strain on toward what is ahead.



## **Wrongs Done Against You**

Another thing to forget - wrongs done against you. If someone has hurt you, deal with it according to biblical principles, and then leave it in the past. When you forgive someone for something, part of forgiveness means making a decision that you will not dwell on that sin anymore, and you will not look at that person through the lens of that sin, and you will not allow that sin to affect your relationship with that person. So whenever you are tempted to rehearse what they did in your mind again, have a plan for something else to think about. Think of an attribute of God for each letter of the alphabet, or five gestures of God's love you can enjoy right now, or something that will take enough brainpower so you can't do that and think about the past wrong.

## **Others' Failures**

And don't just forget wrongs done against you, but forget all wrongs. Don't dwell on the failures or weaknesses of others. Leave that stuff in the past and strain on towards what is ahead.

## **Defined by Your Future, Not Your Past**

Remember what you need to remember, forget whatever will slow you down, and keep moving. Don't look back. You can't drive a car looking in the rearview mirror all the time. You can't win a race looking over your shoulder. Don't live in the past – there's no future in it.

The future is what matters, and so it's not wise to let your past control you. The psychotherapy world tells you that you are a product of all the things that have happened to you in your past. They say that's what defines what you are. And that would make sense if there were no Creator. If people were just the product of meaningless, purposeless evolutionary processes, then your identity would be defined by the sum total of your past experiences. That would be all there is to you.

But the truth is, someone did create you, and he created you for a purpose, to become something, and *that* is what defines you. Your identity, then, is defined not by your past but by your future – what you are becoming. A man is what he is – not what he was. And even more significant is what he will be.

Have you ever wondered why the Bible speaks so often about our holiness and so little about our sinfulness? Our experience is that we constantly stumble into sin, but the Bible says we are holy and righteous and love God and love one another, etc. Why? Because when God looks at us, the way we are going to be throughout all eternity defines us much more than the way we are in this brief moment in this life. If I asked you, "Who was George Washington?" what would you say? You would probably say, "He was our first president." George Washington became President at age 57 and died at age 67. So for 85 percent of his life he was neither President nor a former president. But when we look back from our perspective in time we can see the big picture of who he was. He was our first president, because that's what he ended up becoming. When God looks at your life he sees the big picture – the eternal picture. God can see what you are becoming, what you were created to be and will be for all eternity. The fact that you have not yet reached your full maturity is incidental.

In fact, that is where the George Washington illustration breaks down. While he was a non-president throughout most of his life, a saint will be holy for all eternity and is sinful only during this short life. So a better illustration might be a fertilized egg in the womb compared to a fully developed human body. I doubt any of you walked into church today and said, "Look at all these highly developed eggs." The way you start out isn't your identity. So don't dwell in the past – there's no future in it.

If your childhood was horrible, or your past adult life has been a disaster, no problem, because God specializes in redemption. What you are becoming is more important than what you were. If your childhood was great and you've done some spectacular things in the past, that's great, but don't rest on that because what you are becoming is more important than what you were. So run!

## Straining

And that's the second part of the strategy for this race – not just **forgetting what is behind**, but also **straining toward what is ahead**. You watch those Olympic athletes straining every nerve and muscle to the absolute limit, and that's the picture Paul gives us for what our Christian life is supposed to be like. Twice in this passage Paul says **I press on**. (Your Bible might say **make every effort**) That's a word that normally means to chase or pursue or to hunt something down. So in the context of a race the idea seems to be running like you are trying to overtake someone. You're straining to catch up to the leader and win.

The word **prize** is used only one other time in the Bible.

**1 Corinthians 9:24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.**

So it's not talking about the silver or the bronze – it's talking about winning the gold.

The Christian life is an Olympic race where you run as if only one person were going to make it to heaven.

When the quietists who say, "Let go and let God," or "Rest, don't run," or "Stop trying and start trusting" – don't listen. There is no stronger language God could have used to describe how we are to strain and strive and run. We are called to trust *and* to try. Rest *and* run. Let God and let loose with the most vigorous effort you possibly can. And if you're getting tired, redouble your effort to draw near to Christ because he promised that if you do that, you will find rest for your soul. Rest and rejuvenation don't come from backing off or slowing down; they come from getting nearer to Christ, which means running harder in his direction.

**Romans 12:11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.**

**Benediction: Hosea 6:3 Let us know the LORD; let us press on to know him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth."**

## Application Questions (James 1:25)

- 1) What kinds of things tempt you to wait instead of running?
- 2) What are the things from your past that threaten to slow you down if you focus on them?
- 3) In practical terms, what would it look like if your life if you were to step up the intensity of your running one notch above where it's at now?