

Philippians

A GUIDE TO JOY

Philippians 3:12-16 – Running To Win

July 19, 2020

*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 3:14 (ESV)*

Why work on spiritual maturity?

Principles of Spiritual Maturity

- 1. Spiritual maturity begins when I realize I need to mature.**

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect,... Philippians 3:12 (ESV)

- 2. Spiritual maturity takes effort and hard work.**

...but I press on to make it my own,... Philippians 3:12 (ESV)

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 (ESV)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1–2 (ESV)

3. We pursue spiritual maturity when our heart is filled with gratitude to Jesus.

...but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Philippians 3:12 (ESV)

4. Spiritual maturity requires learning to focus on one thing.

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,... Philippians 3:13 (ESV)

The secret of progress in anything is learning to not be distracted by everything.

A. I need to forget the achievements and the failures of my past.

B. I need to put all of my effort into being more like Jesus in the future.

5. Spiritual maturity in this life comes with great reward in the next life.

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"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. Revelation 22:12 (NIV)

Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. 2 John 8 (NIV)

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. Hebrews 11:6 (ESV)

6. There is no other path to spiritual maturity beside the one Paul gave.

Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Philippians 3:15 (ESV)

7. If we become complacent, we can lose spiritual maturity.

Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Philippians 3:16 (ESV)

Conclusion

- A. **Spiritual maturity doesn't just happen. We need to work hard to pursue it, like an athlete running to win.**
- B. **Be careful of theological and practical perfectionism. As soon as we think we do not need to be more like Christ, we will become less like Christ.**
- C. **Progress in anything requires not being distracted by everything. To grow in Christ, we need to learn to silence distractions in our life, let go of our past, and focus on the future.**
- D. **We pursue spiritual maturity when our heart is filled with gratitude to Jesus for what he has done.**
- E. **Pursing spiritual maturity in this life comes with great reward in the next life.**
- F. **When we gain spiritual maturity, if we become complacent, we can lose spiritual maturity.**

Life Group Questions

1. What stuck out to you in the message? What is one thing you will apply?
2. How can people let the successes and failures of the past erode their capacity for spiritual maturity?
3. Paul was a "one-thing" guy. What would people who know you well say is your "one-thing"? What is one change you can make in your life this week to make spiritual maturity a priority?
4. Read Ephesians 4:11-16. After reading these verses, how would you describe genuine spiritual maturity? How does God use other people to help us mature?
5. Read Romans 5:3-5, James 1:3-5. How does God use suffering to help us mature in Jesus?
6. Read Colossians 1:28-29. What role do pastors and teachers play in helping us become more like Jesus? How seriously should they take their job?
7. God uses a variety of means to grow us in Christ. Some ways are: Listening to pastors and teachers, Bible reading, prayer, Christian friendships, reading of Christian books, Scripture memory, and serving others in the church. What is one area you will focus on this week to improve your maturity in Christ? What is your plan to make it happen?