

Destination ... To Join Him - Get Focused: Part IV

Philippians 3:18-21 ? Once we link up with Jesus, we're on the team that's going to win it all! We should live like champions no matter how tough it gets.

In sports and in life, our desire, discipline, and dedication lead us to a final destination. For the athlete, that destination might be a championship or just the satisfaction of knowing that you maximized your fullest potential. For Christ-followers it's so much more!

Ready

WOULD YOU RATHER ... be the worst player on the best team or the best player on the worst team?

1. During the heat of competition, what kinds of thoughts cross your mind? How does your thought process tend to help or hinder your success?
2. As an athlete, what's more important to you: soaking in each moment on the playing field or enjoying the feeling of accomplishing your personal or team-oriented goals?
3. When the final buzzer sounds, the last whistle blows, the uniforms are all turned in, and the season is over ... what kind of feelings do you typically experience as you look back and celebrate? How do you typically answer the question, "Now what?"

Set

Beyond Your Wildest Dreams

You may love this life or hate it, but Paul makes clear that there's something much greater awaiting followers of Jesus when the final buzzer sounds on this life.

18 For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame. They are focused on earthly things, 20 but our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21 He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subject everything to Himself.

-Philippians 3:18-21

- What does having "citizenship in heaven" (verse 20) mean to you? How should living with that mind-set change the way you view everyday life now?
- Paul also says that one day we will be transformed "into the likeness of _____" (verse 21). Describe some of the positive changes that might accompany that transformation.
- Here are two draft lists, one for Team Earth and the other for Team Heaven. From what you know of the two destinations, list some benefits that come with signing with each

team.

Draft Privileges

Team Earth Draft: _____

Team Heaven Draft: _____

Just as many athletes focus on the ultimate prize but fail to enjoy the moments that lead them there, followers of Jesus can spend the majority of their time thinking about their heavenly destination while missing the blessings of a relationship with Him now.

10 Better a day in Your courts than a thousand anywhere else. I would rather be at the door of the house of my God than to live in the tents of the wicked. 11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield. The LORD gives grace and glory; He does not withhold the good from those live with integrity. 12 LORD of Hosts, happy is the person who trusts in You!

-Psalm 84:10-12, a psalm of David

- What does David tell us about enjoying our relationship with Jesus here and now (verse 10)? Because our eternal life begins now, what are some of the blessings we can receive long before stepping foot into heaven (some in verses 11-12)?

Go

As athletes, there are two things that tend to motivate us: the love of the game and the desire to win. In life the same two motivators are there.

WOULD YOU RATHER ... win by a blowout or win on the last play of the game?

I have asked one thing from the LORD; it is what I desire: to dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, gazing on the beauty of the LORD and seeking Him in His temple.

-Psalm 27:4, a psalm of David

David's words bring us full circle on the 4-D life. It starts with our desire, adds discipline and dedication, and ends with destination ? a place where Jesus is the centerpiece of your life ... every day of your life.

- David desires to ?dwell in the house of the LORD? all the days of his life. What do you think ?the house of the LORD? represents? What kind of ?life? is he describing?
- How can our heavenly citizenship help us get through those times when our discipline and dedication are challenged by adversity and obstacles?

There's more to life than just surviving and collecting more stuff and trophies. The benefits of ?citizenship in heaven? described by David and Paul actually apply to our lives right now. We have access to ?the beauty of the Lord,? His grace, and His power. Joining Jesus' team and living a life that really counts for something takes excellence and intentionality.

Take a few minutes to look back over your notes on the four Ds. Try to identify one doable goal that you can set for yourself in each area and then dedicate yourself to those in the coming weeks.

My 4-D Growth Goals

Desire: _____

Discipline: _____

Dedication: _____

Destination: _____

Take-Away

Take a few minutes to jot a note or letter to God, sharing what has hit you during this "Get Focused" experience. Using notecards or paper provided by your leader, you might highlight decisions, commitments, insights, relationships, or whatever's important to you.

Paul ultimately offers this amazing message of hope...

Your life counts for something eternal. But that eternal life doesn't begin the day you die. It begins the day that you truly start to live - the day you accept Jesus as your Savior and embark on an amazing adventure with Him. Refocus your desires, discipline, and dedication on the right destination, and then hang on for the ride!

If you want to get to know Jesus personally the way Paul did, turn to page 1497 and review "More Than Winning." To go deeper, check out "The Starting Line" on page 1505 and "Training Time" on page 1363.

Bible Reference:

Philippians 3



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