

Philippians Devotionals

Read Philippians 1

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:6

Moving through basic training feels pretty intimidating. After the first week, you miss your momma and wonder if you can really hit these physical and mental standards being set by these intimidating drill sergeants. But when graduation came along, nearly all of us made it. There were challenges along the way, and I didn't understand why we got in trouble for so many small infractions. Graduation day revealed a method to the madness. All the challenges, push-up punishments, and sleepless nights were used to make us stronger whether we knew it or not. Our instructors weren't trying to disqualify us; they were helping to bring our training to a successful completion.

What does this scripture mean to you? You might be tempted to interpret it only for a current difficult moment in your school or work life. While God has plans and purposes in our challenges, every moment is intended to build us more like Christ. Because there are millions of disciples, there are millions of stages of spiritual maturity represented in our lives. Run your race with Jesus. It's not about being ahead of spiritual slowpokes or behind the spiritual sprinters. Your call every day is to become more like Jesus in your thoughts, words, and actions. Some days you'll do that really well and other days not at all. But at the day of Christ Jesus (the second coming), we are brought across the finish line. Isn't that just like Him? His sacrifice covers our sins and establishes our complete sanctification as we enter Heaven. **Where are you trying to intentionally become more like Jesus? Don't try to live a Christian life of rules, but the example from Christ's life. Remember, any shortfall will be covered and brought to completion so accept every challenge as part of God's refining process in your life. Let's pray that way today: thanks for the trials, thanks for making me more like you, thanks for the complete victory to come!**

Read Philippians 2

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:8

One of the great frustrations of biblical counseling is the failure rate. Many people view counseling as an opportunity to sit and listen to a professional give them a list of problem-fixers to work on until the next session. Biblical counseling is a completely different perspective, where people are called to submit. A Christian dealing with money or marriage issues needs to examine what God has said on those subjects and then submit himself to that command. I've seen some tremendous victories in people's lives because they submitted themselves to God's best. I've also seen some unnecessary defeats because people refused God's will for their own.

There is no greater example of humility than Jesus Christ. The powerful Son of God deliberately took on human form and all the challenges and complications that go with it. He did so to serve

as an example for humanity and a sacrifice for sin. He humbled himself in the greatest way possible...by placing the lives of others before his own. We cannot live obediently to Jesus without humility and submission that places God and others before ourselves. **When you're confronted with scripture that contradicts who you are today, do you yield or simply count on the grace of Jesus to cover the places you refuse to change? How can I refuse Jesus anything after all he's offered me? As you read the scriptures, be sure to use them as prayer prompts. Today's passage has called me to not simply camp out in the areas I'm doing well for Jesus, but to take time to consider any places I'm refusing to submit and humble myself as his servant.**

Read Philippians 3

I press on toward the goal of the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:14

I had two simple goals for my first half-marathon. The first was to complete it in 2 hours 10 minutes, which I missed by 6 minutes (which still makes it my personal record). But I did hit my second goal: never stop running. Even when the hilly course began to take a toll over those last two miles, I never stopped running. Anyone who crosses that finish line should be proud and I always encourage everyone to run against themselves only. But I didn't go there to cross the finish line...I went there to push through the finish line.

Some people come to Christ and put all the expectations of their morality and service upon Jesus. He has provided us with an amazing salvation, but has also called us to honor that salvation in our service. Serving as a teacher in your church is just a title; the effectiveness is proved by how you tackle your ministry area. Do you diligently prep and pray over your area of service each week. I know it can be exhausting at times, but how can I offer Jesus anything less than pressing on toward the goal? He left Heaven for earth. He lived a poor, exhausted, and persecuted life. **Jesus gave us His best and demands nothing less. Jesus guaranteed that every believer will cross the finish line into eternity with Him in Heaven. How we cross that line is up to us! Where can you kick up your pace? What area of service to your family, friends, or church has a clear path for you to set a new personal record?**

Read Philippians 4

Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Philippians 4:8

This entire chapter serves as a prayer encouragement that my wife has often summed up as: "Are you praying or are you worrying?" We're encouraged to rejoice in who God is and as a result to drop anxiousness and pick up faith in our Father. When we try to pray over what makes us anxious, the struggle can be that we move from requests to simply talking or thinking about the situation. God is big enough for you to flesh out your thoughts with him, but it's a fine line that takes us from talking with God to merely moving into a conversation with ourselves.

Pastor Kent Hughes feels that today's verse is an important one to really consider in keeping a measured prayer life. Perhaps it's easier for you to consider the reciprocal: "Whatever is false, whatever is dishonorable, whatever is unjust, whatever is impure...don't think about these things." While I appreciate that thought, I think it's also helpful to use verse 8 like a prayer guide. I found myself prayer walking (a regular habit in my prayer life that helps me to focus more than sitting still) and thanking God for pictures of truth, honor, justice, purity, etc in my own life. As I thank Him, I'm more deeply reminded of how much He is working on my behalf. **So, if anxiousness seems hard to drop, and thankfulness and faith seems hard to pick up, try praying through this verse with the Holy Spirit today. Ask for reminders on each point of how He's working and how you should desire to see Him working. God's Word is tremendous prayer fuel, so take your opportunity today to pray God's own words and truth right back at Him. It's a very comforting and reassuring prayer experience.**