**PHILIPPIANS**

Leader Notes - 3:12-4:1

1. 3:12 How is the Christian life like running a race? As Christians how can we be best prepared for running this race?

**When believers are brought to faith, they become possessors of eternal life. As long as they are in the world, they are like people who hold title to property in a distant land. The title makes the property theirs, but the owners are not yet physically in possession of it. Similarly believers, though they are possessors of eternal life by faith and have the righteousness of Christ, are still also sinners living in a sinful world. They have not yet arrived at the full, physical possession of the perfection of eternal life. Therefore our Christian lives of growing in Christ and living for him ought to be a constant striving for perfection, with the goal and prize of eternal life kept ever before our eyes of faith.**

1. 3:13 “forgetting” does not mean losing all memory. It means leaving the past behind and focusing on what is ahead. Why is “forgetting” the past so very important in a Christian life?

**Looking back, while running forward, is a dangerous procedure for the athlete in a race. It can only result in a loss of speed and direction. In the race of his Christian life Paul did not look back either. He did not look back with pride on past accomplishments. He knew these could not earn him anything in God’s sight. Paul did look back in regretful brooding over past sins which had been washed away by Jesus’ blood.**

1. 3:14 This is like a runner making an extra effort as he nears the finish line. Compare that to our Christian race in life.

**When a runner is nearing the end of the race he bends forward. He exerts himself to the utmost and he stretches forward toward the finish line. His one thought is to reach the end, the fulfillment, and the victory. He wants to do this as quickly as is possible. He does not forget what he has gained in Christian faith. Those are not things lightly forgotten, because they have not been lightly gained.**

1. 3:15 3:15 How do mature Christians show their maturity in their lives?

**All mature believers should understand their lack of perfection and they should never stop striving for perfection. They should never lose sight of the eternal goal that the Lord has set before them. These are the general principles that should govern a believer’s life.**

1. 3:16 According this verse, what is Paul expecting the Philippians to do?

**They are to put into practice the truth of their salvation that they have already comprehended. We, too, are responsible for the truth we currently possess.**

1. 3:17 Why is it important to have good models? Why was Paul a good example to follow for the Philippians? What can we learn from Paul?

**It was important that the Philippians take note of the principles of Christian living that Paul explains to them here. It was also important for them to choose the right kind of examples to follow as they worked to put these principles into practice.**

1. 3:18 Why is Paul so sad?

**They had once believed. Now they had fallen into unbelief. They had digressed to the point that Paul openly declares them the enemies of the cross of Christ. The latter expression intimates the nature of their sin. By their outward conduct these people show that they are ashamed of the cross of Christ. They refuse to suffer for Christ’s sake. In their daily life they now live like the children of this world.**

1. 3:19 What do you think this verse is trying teach us? How can we avoid falling into those sins?

**They live to satisfy the lower instincts of life. They regard providing for the cravings of their belly as the main purpose of their existence. Instead of finding their delight in the Lord and glorifying in His name, they seek their delight and glory in the gratification of their basic desires of the flesh.**

**If we Christians do not continually check these evil continued evil desires of our flesh, we will fall into mortal sin and eternal destruction will be our end.**

1. What are the “helps” we have in this life that are mentioned in these verses? How can we use them to help us to mature in our Christian faith?

**Knowing that heaven is our home gives us courage to work through difficult times. Knowing that Jesus has the power to control everything should give us great confidence to live our lives here on earth.**

**The Philippian’s heavenly citizenship should be reflected in the way believers live their lives here on earth. Citizens of heaven should not regard this world as a place to put down permanent roots. The Philippians should consider themselves strangers and pilgrims on earth, and their greatest concern should be with heavenly, spiritual things.**