

Keeping Our Eyes on the Prize

Phil. 3:7-18.

–Hypothetical ministry/church situation...

•When **everything began to be settled**, the **leaders** began to **"perfectly"** lead those who said they were onboard into the fullness of purpose.

–**Personally**, it was taught that **Christlikeness and training our lives to be connected to Him for His glory was our individual purpose.**

–**Corporately**, it was taught that **ministry was first to Him**, and then being **covenantly joined together to become a habitation for His presence (the TOD)** was God's purpose for the body of Christ.

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–Hypothetical ministry/church situation...

•**True goal was eventually abandoned by many who allowed personal ambitions, offenses and temporary goals to grip their lives.**

–**The result:** eyes and hearts were veiled to Him and His purpose and pride, ambition, self-seeking and offenses came in.

–**James 3:15-16:** "This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there."

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Phil. 3:7-18.

–Hypothetical ministry/church situation...

•The **principle of embracing the INWARD CROSS and living only to please Him was abandoned.**

–**Example:** The **books and teaching material from here have helped establish Bible and Ministry Training Schools in Uganda and India.**

–**When personal or temporal goals precede or take the place of living solely for His delight, pleasure and purpose (both individually and corporately), everything begins to go into a tailspin of lukewarmness, boredom and eventually rebellion.**

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The Example of Abraham:

–Abraham was ***called to be an extension of God*** – he was to be a ***FATHER of a whole new nation*** that would be ***based in trusting God alone and not the works of the flesh.***

–After ***25 years of waiting*** and the subsequent testing, failure and arising again before Isaac was born, it was ***only after obeying God in a supreme personal and corporate surrender with Isaac that old Abe's eyes were opened to God's true plan.***

- Abe's plan was Isaac, fulfilling his desire.***
- God's plan was Jesus and His body, fulfilling His desire!***

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The Example of Paul:

–After meeting Jesus on the Damascus Road, Ananias ***prophesied his calling over him.***

–But it was in following his calling that he realized his ***PURPOSE*** of ***embracing an inward cross*** and ***putting Jesus' resurrection life on display*** in his mortal body, and being ***conformed to His image, all for His glory alone.***

–He was ***concerned for ONE THING***, and not just for himself...for ***the entire body of Christ.***

- Phil. 3:13-15 is the measuring stick.***

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The Example of the Church:

–***The church's one purpose is to be the extended body of the Head*** – an ***extension of Himself that expresses HIM and releases His life, glory and power into creation*** (Rom. 8:17-26).

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How do we fulfill this purpose?

–*Embracing the inward principle of the cross on a daily, minute-by-minute basis until His presence fills every part of our lives and His image is formed in us, thus becoming His literal body and presence affecting creation around us (the Tabernacle of David).*

- The key to this is maintaining a thankful heart.



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How do we fulfill this purpose?

–**Psalm 100:4**: “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.”

- A thankful heart opens the way to His manifest presence, whether we feel it or not!



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How do we fulfill this purpose?

–**Phil. 4:4-7** (NLT): “Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again-- rejoice!.. Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”

- A thankful, rejoicing heart is the key to staying in His presence.

- JOY is the sign of maturity (fruit).



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How do we fulfill this purpose?

–The *loss of a thankful heart* means the *loss of intimacy, the veiling of His presence, and our thinking and reasoning turns dark and foolish.*

– Pride is never thankful – it always thinks it deserves for than it has.

–The *difficulties we face are not necessarily God's will, but our being thankful and rejoicing in them is His will.*



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How do we fulfill this purpose?

–*When we have less than we desire, it's not because God is teaching us poverty.*

•*He is teaching us to have a thankful heart.*

•This is the *essence of humility and humility draws and maintains His presence.*

–Can we joy in Him alone in the midst of lack, unfulfilled desire, confusion, persecution?


