

Philippians 3:7-14

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

DIVERSION OR DISCIPLINE?

A man bought a hunting dog. The dog quickly picked up the trail of a bear. Suddenly he stopped, sniffed the ground, and headed in a new direction. He had caught the scent of a deer. A few moments later he halted again, this time smelling a rabbit that had crossed the path of the deer. And so, on and on it went until finally the breathless hunter caught up with his dog, only to find him barking triumphantly down the hole of a field mouse.

Sometimes Christians are like that. Although starting out with high resolve to keep Christ first in life, often attention is diverted to things of lesser importance until the believer is completely off track. To such Peter brings this fresh reminder: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Peter 1:13-15). Here God's Word points to the necessity of discipline to maintain a true course of godliness. Richard Taylor in "The Disciplined Life" offers a sound explanation: "*Gird up your mind,*" is the Biblical injunction. Gather up your mind, organize the loose ends, draw into service your wandering thoughts, just as an Oriental of Peter's day would quickly gather up his loose robes with a girdle when in a hurry or starting on a journey... For concentration to God carries with it the obligation to excel, not in competition with others, but in competition with oneself. God's work demands trained minds."

Where Peter challenges the believer to a disciplined mind, Paul calls for the disciplined body: "Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last for ever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize" (1 Corinthians 9 NIV).

Whether it be laziness, gluttony or sexual immorality, Scripture calls the believer to honour the Lord in the body as well as the spirit: "glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

The beauty of the true Christian life is that the very discipline required in mind, body and spirit is produced by the indwelling Spirit of God: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22 NIV).

The disciplined life is not found in determination nor deprivation, but in dependence upon a Spirit-disciplined life. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

What is my response:
