



INGman 11

Focused Living Ministries

Marathon Man

Philippians 3:15-21

“Life is not a sprint, it’s a marathon.”

There are two ways to run a marathon. One is pole to pole. The other is with the prize in mind. Those who run fixed solely on the next telephone pole, mail box, or mile marker are easily discour-

aged, tend to give up or do just enough to get by. Those who run focused on the prize (Phil 3:14, 20) or rewards at the finish line run their race with far greater endurance, determination and delight. They understand that the pain they endure is nothing compared to the joyful reward of what awaits them at the finish. Paul **“pressed on”** (3:12, 14) in the marathon of life with his eyes riveted on both Who and what awaited him at the finish line. So he proclaimed, *“I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed”* (Rom 8:18; Phil 3:20). Isaiah was motivated to run with endurance because he knew that those with their eyes fixed Christ Who awaits them at the finish line will *“gain new strength...run and not get tired...walk and not become weary”* (Is 40:31). The author of Hebrews understood this dynamic principle and challenges **ING** men to *“run with endurance the race set before us fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith”* so that we will *“not grow weary or lose heart”* (Heb 12:2-3). **Would you describe yourself as a pole to pole or finish line focuser? Why?**

(Phil 3:15-21) A true INGman sees ‘ING’ as standing for **I’m Not Gonna** stop because I am convinced that Christ is waiting for me at the finish line and all the suffering, hassles, headaches and heartaches on this side of the grave are not even worthy to be compared to the glory He promises I will experience at the finish line of life. What phrases in this passage exhibit pole to pole running in life? What phrases support a finish line mindset?



(Phil 1:21-23; 3: 16-17, 20-21; Col 3:1-4; II Tim 1:8-12; 4:6-8; I Cor 9:14-27) What evidence do you see from these passages that Paul ran his life race focused on the finish line rather than from pole to pole?

(Heb 12:1-3) What was the secret of Jesus’ endurance as He ran His race for 33 years?

(3:18-19; 3:1; 4:4) Though the theme of Philippians is *joy* (mentioned 19x), why is Paul weeping (lit. wailing)? What is ripping up his heart? Would he be weeping for you? Why?

(1:6; 3:12; 15) Paul is committed to helping men become mature (teleos= complete/end. Telescope) or, as some translate it, *perfect*. He is not talking about perfection but referring to the process of maturing to the end. It is called ‘sanctification’ or growing in Christ.

(3:20-21) How can the finish line principles of these verses help you to endure and finish well the race set before you?

(3:17; I Cor 11:1) Why was Paul offering himself as an example of maturity? Was he being pride filled? Why or why not? In what specific way(s) has God helped you to mature this past year?

TAG TEAM DISCUSSION

Respond to the following life principles! 1. Whoever or whatever is at your finish line will determine how you will run your race. 2. How you finish life is more important than how you started.

