

Living in the Future

Key Verse:

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”
—Philippians 3:13,14

Selected Scripture:
Philippians 3:1-4:1

worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”—Phil. 3:1-4

The apostle then lists some of his former credentials that would be of little worth in comparison to his new life as a Christian following his conversion on the road to Damascus. “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which

PAUL’S CONTINUED EX-

hortation to the church at Philippi is for the brethren to rejoice in the Lord because of the special standing they have of discipleship. Nevertheless, he also warns them against false teachers. He describes as “dogs” a class of self-seeking individuals who would spread false doctrine among believers. He contrasts this group with the “circumcision,” not necessarily those who have been literally circumcised, but rather those whose hearts glory in their relationship to Christ as opposed to trusting in their own fleshly accomplishments. “We are the circumcision, which

is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”—vss. 5-11

Our Key Verses demonstrate the single-mindedness of purpose that Paul manifested and, using the figure of a runner in a race, he expresses the conviction that he needed to press down upon the mark for the prize of the High Calling in Christ Jesus to attain glory, honor, and immortality. He realized this mark of character development included perfect love for God, our brethren, all men, and a sympathetic love for even our enemies which would result in doing good to them wherever possible.

The joys of the Christian walk and the ultimate exaltation for those who are faithful are chronicled in this chapter. Nevertheless, these are also warnings for any of the consecrated who might abandon their righteous course along the narrow way. “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”—Heb. 10:38,39

“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” (Phil. 3:15) May this lesson provide us with a sense of focus as to the means by which we may attain the desire of our hearts! ■