

The Prize

Scripture Reading — Philippians 3:12-14

*I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.
— Philippians 3:14*

Many of us know what it takes to win prizes in this world. People who win medals at the Olympics, for example, do not achieve that by sheer grace or because someone decided to be nice to them. No, they practice many hours a day for years to get stronger and faster than anyone else.

Paul uses competitive athletic imagery in this passage, and the ancient world knew as well as we do what it takes to -attain athletic prowess. But how do these verses align with the message of God's grace? Earlier in this chapter Paul deemed his human achievements as "-garbage," so how does this prize image fit with that?

Well, for Paul, the grace--granted knowledge of Jesus' amazing work of salvation for us motivated him to give his all in grateful service to the Savior. Paul knew full well that we cannot earn salvation. But he also knew that once we receive salvation by grace, we should have all the determination of an Olympic athlete to do our best for God's glory.

When God the Father looks at how we have lived after encountering Jesus and responding to the Spirit's work in us, won't it be a joy to hear him say, "You remind me of my Son"? That's a goal we should all pursue with the zeal of a world-class athlete!

Prayer

By the beauty of the holy gospel, dear God, move and motivate us to seek to be transformed more and more every day after the image of Jesus Christ. In his name, Amen.

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