

## Philippians 3:12-21

12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. 16 Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

17 Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. 18 For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. 20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

### Community Group Study 13 Dec 2009

#### Introduction

In this scripture, Paul says that as Christians, our citizenship is in heaven. As citizens, we have tremendous privileges, duties and a great hope. We also have values and a worldview that we share as citizens of heaven.

Verses 12 to 14 talk about a great effort, a race that can only be run well with complete focus and dedication. The prize is Jesus Christ and we run to make him ours only because he has first made us his.

Our hope is in a returning Saviour. Like a homesick foreigner, eager to return to his homeland and family, so do we long for the transformation of our bodies and a blessed, eternal reunion with our father and brethren in heaven.

Finally, we must bear the perspective of heavenly citizens, always acting in the best interests of our homeland. We must remember that everything, everything except for our relationships with God and the souls of men will not cross the threshold into our heavenly realm. With that knowledge and the absolute certainty of our Lord's kingdom to come, let us "count everything as loss" and spend, trade and abandon our lives and their contents for the sake of the gospel.

#### Discussion

- >>What aspects of the Christian life mirror a race?
- >>How are we different from the "enemies of the cross"?
- >>What things in our lives challenge Christ for the title of our ultimate "prize"?

#### Explanation

- >>Why does Paul speak condemnation of the enemies of the cross "with tears"?
- >>What is "this way" that Paul talks about in verse 15?
- >>Read 1 Cor 9:24-27 and 2 Tim 2:4-7. Why should our lives be radically different from those who do not pursue Christ?

#### Application

- >>Who should we imitate and how should we imitate them?
- >>How can we make the reality of the new Jerusalem more tangible and immediate for ourselves?
- >>How can we best serve our true homeland in this life?