

Discussion Guide

Use this guide by yourself, with a friend, or in a group to help you pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus this week!

Open

In this week's message, Pastor Don encourages us to look forward in anticipation to all that God has for us - even if it comes in ways that we're not expecting! The Bible often talks about the need for us to stay aligned with God's purposes so that we can be fully prepared for what He places in our lives, and many times it uses the image of an athlete in training to help us understand the discipline it takes. Think of a major project or goal that required you to maintain your focus and energy to achieve it, and share with your group what happened. Were you successful? Why or why not? Is there anything you would have done differently if you could do it over?

BIG THOUGHT

If we want to experience all that God has for us, we will need to focus ourselves and persevere so that we can be ready - even for the unexpected!

Dig

1. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. Paul's mention of an athlete here is at the end of a longer passage where he's highlighting the things he's given up in order to share the Gospel more effectively. What are some things you can think of that high-level athletes have to give up while they're training? Have you ever had to make sacrifices to achieve something amazing? Share with the group...
2. What do you think Paul means when he says he wants the Christians in Corinth to "run to win" (v. 24)? What are the differences you see between training to *compete* and training to *win*? Explain your thoughts...

3. When Paul says that we're running for an "eternal prize," (v. 25) what do you think he could mean? Why?
4. When you think of putting "purpose in every step" of your walk with Christ (v. 26), what does that look like for you? Does that challenge excite you or make you nervous? Why?
5. What role does discipline play as we train for a difficult task (v. 27)? What are some things we can do to increase our discipline as we follow Christ?
6. Paul serves as an amazing example of someone who was ready for whatever God brought his way. Read Romans 8:28 - what was the source of Paul's ultimate confidence? Is it easy for you to share a similar outlook? Why or why not?

Take it Further

Talk to a friend who walks with Jesus with a sense of purpose and focus, and ask them for helpful ideas that can encourage you to do the same. Then pray and ask God to help you maintain an expectant outlook every day as you start this new year.

Daily Readings

Day 1: Hebrews 10:36
Day 2: Hebrews 12:1
Day 3: Psalm 27:14

Day 4: Philippians 4:13
Day 5: James 1:2-3
Day 6: Galatians 6:9

Memory Verse: Philippians 3:14



GATEWAY
BAPTIST CHURCH

1651 Dutch Fork Rd. Irmo, SC
www.gatewaybc.com