

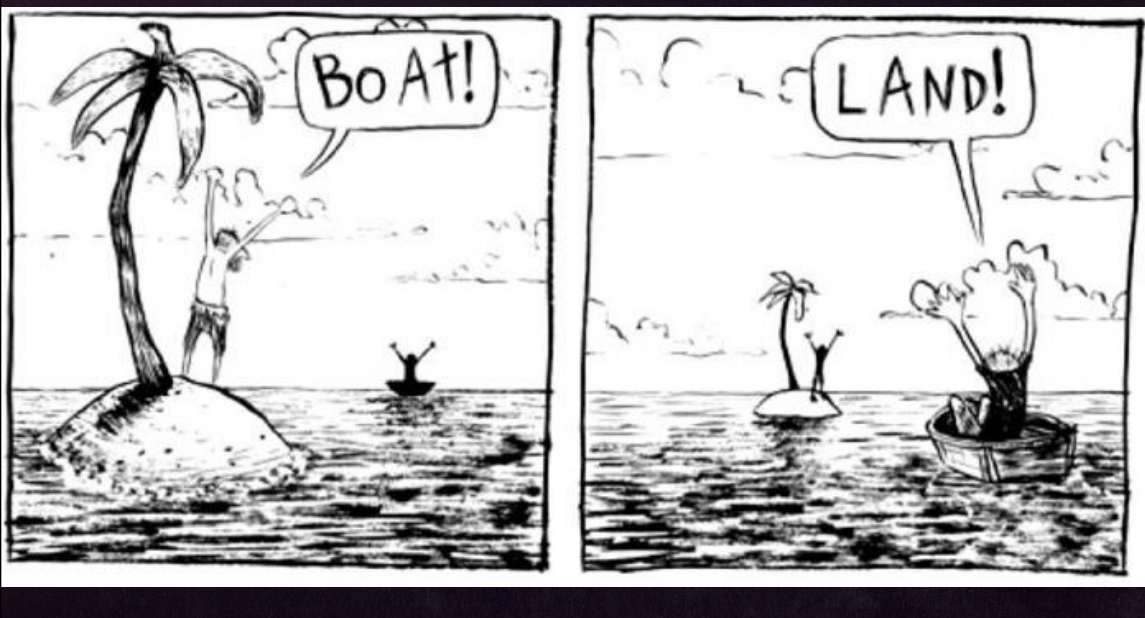


Good Morning Church!

Today we are continuing our study of the Book of Philippians.....and our Sermon Series is entitled **GLOW** because the Book of Philippians teaches us (believers) how to **GLOW** as Christians in a darkened world.

And what's ironic is that the Apostle Paul wrote this Epistle in a darkened place...prison. I don't know if you knew this but prison isn't necessarily the place people go to get inspired to write encouraging messages...but that is exactly what we see happen in Philippians.

And the reason why Paul can be exuberant while in chains is because he doesn't have his eyes fixed on temporary **GOALS**. Paul's **GOALS** (eyes/purposes) are focused on the glory to come.....Paul's faith GLOWS here in Philippians, and this is a model for us as well.



[Pause]

Speaking of GOALS...Raise your hand if you are currently working towards a GOAL in your life. **[Pause]** You know one of the challenging things about setting GOALS is that we often don't intuitively know what's best for us. Or even if we do know what's best, we don't know what route to take. We may think we have a great GOAL, and then once we achieve that (stated) GOAL we are often **still** left feeling unsatisfied. I'm going to contend that many times this happens because we have aimed too low.

Take a look at this comic.....here you have one guy who is stuck on an island and he's desperate for a boat. And on the other side you have a guy stranded on a boat desperate for dry land...when they meet...Will either of them be satisfied in the end? NO! Because the aim of their GOAL was too low...what they **both really** want is to be **saved, secure, found**.



And Church the same things happens in our lives. We aim too low. We think first and primarily of the GOAL of the promotion, or the new house, or our kids getting into the “right school” or you fill in the blank. Not that these things are bad in and of themselves.....but when we rely on temporal goals to fill us up, we always come back to the well thirsty. But friends the good news of the Gospel is that Jesus Christ purchased for us a well that will never run dry, and those who drink new life from His cup will never thirst again.

And that’s what we are going to talk about this morning from the context of Philippians chapter 3.....asking.....***How can I develop goals that will govern my life & GLOW INTO GLORY?***

And this morning Paul is going to exhort us to AIM AS HIGH AS POSSIBLE IN OUR CHRISTIAN LIVES with GLORY BOUND GOALS.



GOALS that will bring eternal satisfaction...rather than temporal fulfillment.

Because here's what's at stake...in scripture we see warning after warning against two extremes when it comes to GOAL setting: #1 never setting goals (*lackadaisical approach*) and the other extreme setting goals with no thought of God (where we sit in the driver's seat).

Most of us fall into one of those two categories, running ahead of God, or stalling before we get started.

And yet the Bible offers a balanced approach to setting goals that includes making plans (*because we need to do that*) but doing so with the Lord firmly in the driver's seat.

[Pause]

Philippians 3:12-14 (ESV)

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.

And so back in our text (Philippians 3 starting in verse 12) Paul helps us to glean a proper view of biblical GOAL setting.

Re - Read: 

Wow, there is a lot in these 3 verses...but notice with me first in verse 12...first Paul keys in on the obvious truth that he is far from perfect, but that in spite of his imperfections he PRESSES ON.

This is so important...WHY? Because I cannot tell you how many people struggle to get out of the blocks in their Christian walk because they feel unworthy to do so.

It's almost as if we think that God expects us to be perfect...and so we distance ourselves from Him with a constant sense of unworthiness hanging over our heads. Instead of leaning into the truth of the Gospel.

Philippians 3:12-14 (ESV)

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But Church you see, Paul knows intimately well HOW PRECISELY UNWORTHY HE IS.

But in spite of all of that he's determined to PRESS ON. And what's his reasoning? He says, ***BECAUSE JESUS HAS MADE ME HIS OWN. Church if you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.....He has made YOU his own as well.***

But friends, Satan will come and he will try to rob you of this joy, he will try to steal away the glory bound GOALS that God has purposed for your life.

Church, my suggestion is that when you feel unworthy.....remember that Christ has made you HIS own.....and PRESS ON.



Illus:

And you know in this way the Christian life is sort of like **learning to ride a bicycle**. When you learn to ride a bike what you begin to realize is that if you have forward momentum its easy to stay up and on your course. But if you lose speed (slow down/stand still) you most certainly will fall over.

In this analogy the forward momentum that drives our lives forward is us remembering that we are God's own...DAILY. And Church we must recognize that if we lose sight of who we truly are before God...we will fall over, we will get scrapes and bruises...but we need to get back on the bike again and again and PRESS ON.



I remember teaching Ella and Ethan to ride their bikes and I vividly recall getting nervous when they began to slow down too much...because I knew that if they didn't keep pedaling, they were going to fall over.

And so I'd say, "keep pedaling," "keep pedaling." Encouraging them to PRESS ON. Many of us probably remember doing that same thing with our own kids or with a niece or nephew.

And you see that's the role that Paul is playing here in Philippians...the encourager. He knows that we are prone to grow complacent in our Christian walk, we are prone to slow down, and aim too low.....Paul wants the Church to GLOW for Christ, and in order for that to happen we must PRESS ON.

In what areas of your life is God calling you to Press On?

- Marriage
- Parenting
- Addiction Recovery
- Patience
- Generosity
- Witnessing
- Empathy
- Being Quick to Listen/Slow to Speak
- Hospitality/Neighboring
- Humility
- Forgiveness/Conflict
- Trusting God
- Envy

In what areas of your life is God trying to encourage you to keep pedaling.....to PRESS ON?

- Marriage
- Parenting
- Addiction Recovery
- Patience
- Generosity
- Being Quick to Listen
- Hospitality/Neighboring
- Humility
- Forgiveness/Conflict
- Trusting God
- Envy

This list is by no means exhaustive, but it does represent a number of SPIRITUAL GOALS that we need to PRESS ON toward.

In what areas of your life is God calling you to Press On?

- Marriage
- Parenting
- Addiction
- Patience
- Generosity
- Witnessing
- Empathy
- Being Quick to Listen/Slow to Speak
- Hospitality/Neighboring
- Humility
- Forgiveness/Conflict
- Trusting God
- Envy

Friends, perhaps you already have GOALS outlined for yourself with regards to how you can keep pedaling for Jesus.

But if you have not targeted some strategic spiritual goals.....make today the day you commit to do so.

No you're not perfect, and that's not the point, but you belong to Christ and a distinguishing marker of those who are His is that we PRESS ON.

And as we move on in our text Paul is going to explain how he thinks about this process.

Philippians 3:12-14 (ESV)

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.

Because you see Paul believed that for him ***“satisfaction was the grave of progress.”*** Meaning that he never wanted to grow satisfied with the level of his spiritual growth. He wanted to maximize his effectiveness. He wanted to get every ounce out of his life for Christ.

And so, moving on in verse 13, Paul says, “I do not consider that I have made ***IT*** my own.” By ***IT*** Paul is referring to perfection (the perfection of the resurrection).

And so again, he’s acknowledging his imperfection basically saying.....***I don’t consider myself perfect***, and then moving on (*in the same verse*) he says, But one thing ***I do “consider”*** is that ***I forget what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead.***

And what lies ahead? THE GOAL

Philippians 3:12-14 (ESV)

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.

We are going to talk specifically about the exact nature of THE GOAL Paul's referring to here in a moment.

But first let's examine the attitude that Paul is applying to the pursuit of his GOAL.

He says that in order to press on he must forget what lies behind and strain forward to what lies ahead.

Friends how many of us allow our **PAST FAILURES** to cripple our FUTURE GOALS? (x2). We can focus on who we were so much that it prevents us from becoming who God calls us to be. Paul is says forget the past STRAIN FORWARD TO WHAT LIES AHEAD. How many of us need to be reminded of that.

On the flip side...

Philippians 3:12-14 (ESV)

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Friends how many of us allow our **PAST SUCCESSES** to linger in our minds, therefore removing the **URGENCY** to continue to **STRAIN FORWARD**. We rest on our laurels...when we need to PRESS ON.

And church this is where we must go inward with this teaching. Because I think we all KNOW we should be more focused on SPIRITUAL GOAL SETTING, but this isn't as much a knowledge thing...as it is a heart thing...how do we know?

Jesus himself tells us in Matthew chapter 6 that what we treasure most in life will rule our hearts. And what rules our hearts captures our GOALS.

Ask yourself. ***What are you straining forward most towards in your life right now? And is that GOAL in alignment with God?***



Because you see many of us are **straining**...but we are **straining** forward towards temporary GOALS that will only leave us temporarily satisfied.

And here Paul uses athletic terms to capture the essence of the Christian life. Paul lived a long time ago, but even in his day athletic competition was something very familiar.

[change slide here]

The Ancient Olympic Games were first initiated more than 700 years before the time of Christ. In Corinth (a city Paul was very familiar with) the Isthmian games were also held. Paul would have been familiar with both of these events...which is why we see him compare the Christian life to athletic endeavors in many of his letters. Paul was a sports fan... therefore sports are biblical 😊.



Here we see an Ancient depiction of runners straining toward their GOAL. This being a visual representation of what Paul is exhorting us to in the Christian life.

[Pause]

I don't know if you've ever run a race before but having run everything from a 5k up to a half marathon I can tell you that running a race well takes PREPARATION, DETERMINATION, and GRIT.

But there are also some intangible elements that aren't so obvious which make for a great runner.

And in modern times, everyone who follows road racing knows that East African runners (especially those from Kenya) possess many of those intangibles.



Here is a photo of a group of Kenyan men running in the Rift Valley.

A few years back RUNNER'S WORLD MAGAZINE did a scientific study to determine the factors that lead East African runners to unrivaled success while running 26.2 miles (the Marathon).

1. genetic predisposition



And here is what they came up with.....**#1** they have a ***genetic predisposition***; that enables them to RUN HARD AND ENDURE.

The pain most people feel at the end of a marathon race doesn't seem to bother East African runners too the same degree.

1. genetic predisposition
2. development of a high maximal oxygen uptake as a result of extensive walking and running at an early age

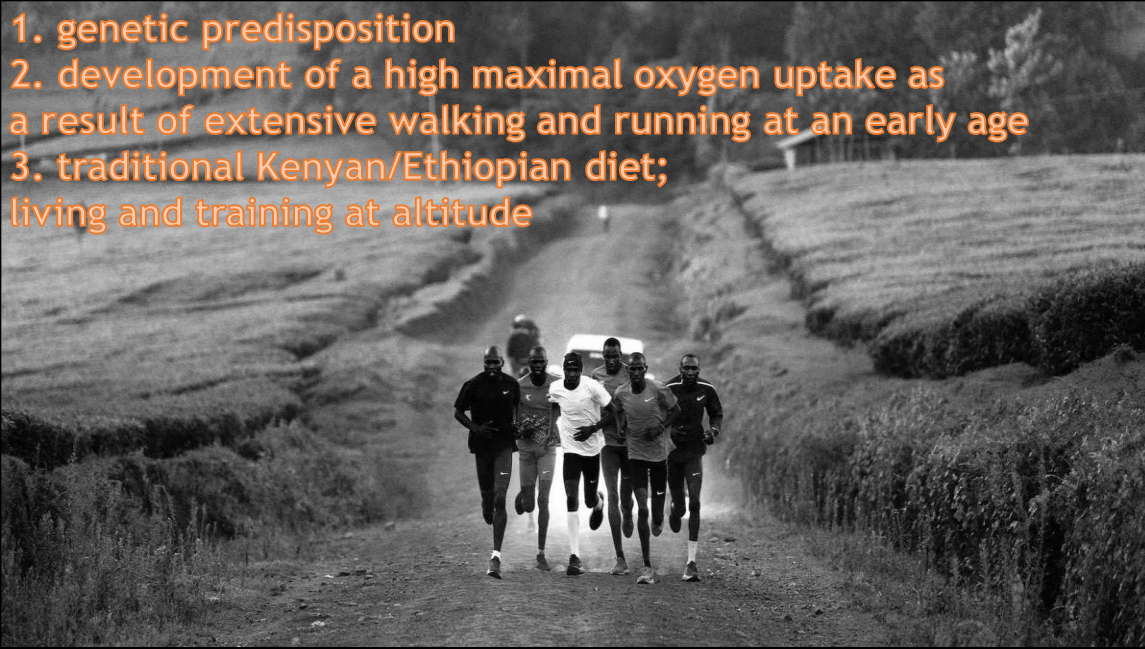


#2 they have *development of a high maximal oxygen uptake as a result of extensive walking and running at an early age*; each day the average East African child will walk/run 6 miles per day.

They are a culture that has grown accustomed to traveling long distances on foot.

Next time you are stuck in traffic or are running late for a meeting, be grateful you don't have to run everywhere 😊 because in some places your feet are the only mode of transportation...but this also has given them an advantage.

1. genetic predisposition
2. development of a high maximal oxygen uptake as a result of extensive walking and running at an early age
3. traditional Kenyan/Ethiopian diet;
living and training at altitude

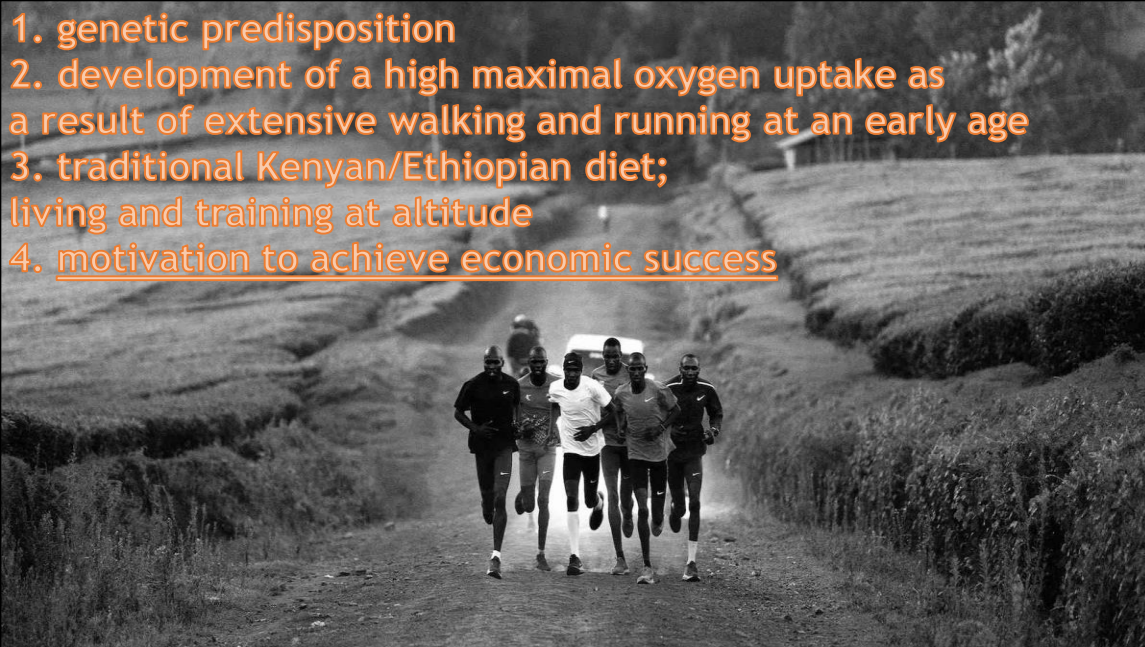


#3 The *traditional Kenyan/Ethiopian diet*; along with *living and training at altitude*; both contribute to athletic success

The East African diet is a relatively “clean” diet. By that I mean they aren’t eating McDonalds for lunch and finishing the night off with a bowl of ice cream.

Also training in the thin air of Kenya, allows them to be primed when they show up to race at sea level where oxygen is plentiful.

1. genetic predisposition
2. development of a high maximal oxygen uptake as a result of extensive walking and running at an early age
3. traditional Kenyan/Ethiopian diet; living and training at altitude
4. motivation to achieve economic success



And for the last characteristic the scientists throw us a curve ball....because they don't mention another physical trait but rather they mention a ***psychological one.***

The #4 trait East Africans have that makes them amazing 26.2 mile runners is.... the ***motivation to achieve economic success.***

You see running in a 26.2 mile race often turns into a WAR OF ATTRITION at the end.....WHO WANTS IT MORE.....WHO IS WILLING TO SUFFER THE LONGEST.

And while the American and European runners want to win really bad.....the EAST AFRICAN RUNNERS know that if they win...their lives and the lives of all their family and friends will be forever changed.



The male and female winners of the Boston Marathon win a \$100,000 prize each.....and while that is a nice retirement cushion for a Westerner.....it is absolutely life changing for the East African....and so the end of the RACE they PRESS ON, the STRAIN FORWARD toward their GOAL.

Pictured here is **Eliud Kipchoge** the greatest Marathon runner ever. Here he is pictured breaking the world record in the Marathon in a blazing time of 2:01:39.....to give you are frame of reference for what that means. That's running from [here] to Lincoln Financial Field in 2 hours.....going 13 mph non-stop.

But I want you to notice Eliud's face/body in this picture as he is finishing his race...he is **STRAINING FORWARD** toward his GOAL.



Now they didn't run the marathon in 2 hours in Paul's day...but I'm certain if Paul saw THIS RACE he would have said.....THAT'S IT!! THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT!!

In Eliud Kipchoge's eyes you see the intensity of someone who has pictured the GOAL set before him and has come MOTIVATED to claim his PRIZE. His career earnings/net worth estimated at 2.2 million dollars...not bad at all for a kid from the Rift Valley.

But guess what? As great as Eliud's GOAL of economic security for his family is...that too will fade.

Paul uses athletic endeavor as an example that points us to a GREATER PURPOSE.....A PURPOSE THAT WE AS BELIEVERS SHOULD BE MOTIVATED TO STRIVE TOWARD.

Philippians 3:12-14 (ESV)

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Back in our text Paul's says that we STRAIN FORWARD, WE PRESS ON TO THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE.....(and here's the key)... ***OF THE UPWARD CALL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.***

Well what does that mean, ***the upward call of God in Christ Jesus?***

In 2 Corinthians chapter 5, Paul references what is know as the ***Judgment Seat of Christ***.....and at this judgment Christians will be rewarded for the good deeds they have done while on Earth.

Vigorously and with concentration Paul sought to win the prize to which God had called him heavenward.



Paul imagines himself straining toward the GOAL of God calling him heavenward and hearing the words... ..
Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

Church this is what it looks like to GLOW INTO GLORY.



Illus:

I love testimonies, and I'd like to share with you the story of a man named Tom White who took what God gave him and GLOWED INTO GLORY. This is an except written in the Boston Globe in 2005.

"[quote] At 84, Tom White has almost achieved his life's goal—to give away his entire fortune. White is a Boston businessman who has given away \$75 million. When people ask him "why," he responds with "give me three reasons I shouldn't," and then proceeds to give three reasons he should: "I can't take it with me, my kids are okay, and my wife's taken care of." He'll also tell you, "I'm motivated a lot by what Jesus wants me to do...and I think he wants me to help make the world a better place."



Tom White has been on the boards of Harvard Divinity School, Boston College, the JFK Library, and the New England Patriots (his company built Foxboro Stadium). But his proudest relationship is with the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, Haiti. He's involved in health and justice projects there.

When his alma mater, Harvard University, calls for a donation, he says, "For God's sake, you've got \$15 billion over there, and I've got people over here starving to death. You tell me what should I do." Then with a chuckle he adds, "I still give \$1,000 a year so my classmates will talk to me."

Tom White's one regret? "I'm sorry I don't have more money to give away. [end quote]"



Tom White died 9 years ago, and as he entered his rest I am sure he received a “well done” by his savior.

Friends, I want you to realize you don’t have to be a multi-millionaire philanthropist in order to GLOW INTO GLORY.

But what Tom’s story does illustrate is a sensitivity to ***HEAR FROM GOD*** and ***RESPOND***.

Tom said his driving motivation, the center of his GOAL was what Jesus wanted him to do.....and for him that was Haiti.

But what about you, me....what about us?



You see, many of us sell ourselves and God short on what would be possible if we truly allowed Him to shine His light through our lives.

And this causes us to aim low...and what Paul is trying to call us to here in Philippians 3 is to aim HEAVENWARD with our GOALS.

[Pause]

As we begin to wind down, I want to highlight the 3 things you and I are going to need to remember as we aim HEAVENWARD with our GOALS.

How to Aim Heavenward with our Goals

#1 You need God's Spirit to empower you.

#1 You need God's Spirit to empower you.

God's Spirit can help you to make changes you can't make on your own. Remember...this is not something that is based on willpower; it's based on God power.

It's not based on trying; it's based on trusting.

Zechariah 4:6 says, "You will not succeed by your own strength or by your own power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord.

Get in a quiet place, listen for the Lord's direction.....and **then** PRESS ON.

How to Aim Heavenward with our Goals

#1 You need God's Spirit to empower you.

#2 You need God's Word to guide you.

#2 You need God's Word to guide you.

The Bible is the owner's manual for life. The more you read it, study it, memorize it, and meditate on it, the more successful and fulfilled you're going to be in life. When Joshua was given the great dream of taking over the Promised Land — a goal that was going to take him the rest of his life — God had these words for him: *"This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success"* (Joshua 1:8).

Biblically speaking there is no GOAL worth reaching that isn't aligned with scripture. The more of God's word we know.....the more intuitively we will recognize right priorities.

How to Aim Heavenward with our Goals

#1 You need God's Spirit to empower you.

#2 You need God's Word to guide you.

#3 You need God's people to support you.

#3 You need God's people to support you.

You will not be able to reach your GOALS on your own.
Teamwork makes the dream work!

A crowd can't support you, but a small group can. They know when you're sick, when you're having a tough time, when you need a break. You can share your GOALS and your successes and failures, and they will rejoice with you and encourage you to keep going. You're going to need that when you make the right kind of GOALS and pursue them wholeheartedly. Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

As you lean into biblical community...your GOALS receive much needed support.

Philippians 3:15, 16

Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

GLOWING TO GLORY

In Philippians 3:15-16 Paul says, *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.*

Meaning that a mark of Christian maturity is GLOWING TO GLORY.....remaining focused on the UPWARD CALL.....HOLDING TRUE TO WHAT WE HAVE ATTAINED.

Tomorrow at 10 am

Philippians 3:17-21; 4:1
Earthly mindset vs. Heavenly mindset

facebook
LIVE

In the remaining chapter Paul goes onto compare and contrast a Earthly mindset vs. a Heavenly mindset, and while we do not have time to examine that part of the text this morning we will be covering Philippians 3:17-21 and chapter 4 verse 1 on FB live tomorrow morning at 10 am.

Hope you can join us!

Give Online:

www.brandywine.church/give

Give By Mail:

**7 Mt. Lebanon Rd
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Before I pray and we transition to our closing worship song, I wanted to make you aware of how you can support our Church financially.

Giving Details