

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Goal With Attitude

(Jerry Fite)

Do you set goals? Like many, you may not. Why go through the frustration and disappointment of not meeting a goal. Just don't set them, and you will not fail; right?

The problem is this kind of thinking will not get you to heaven. Heaven is a spiritual pursuit. You do not end up in heaven after meandering aimlessly through life. Since Jesus is the only way to the Father in heaven, you will have to consciously make Him your goal to follow after (*John 14:6, 8:12*). After you become a follower, you cannot haphazardly go through life thinking only of yourself and God; you must make it a goal to consider your brethren and help them in their time of need, or eternal punishment will be your experience, not eternal life in heaven (*Matthew 25:31-46*). The way to Heaven is not “getting along”; but “overcoming” Satan and the “deceitful lusts” he relies upon to derail us from heaven (*Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 3:5, 12, 21, Ephesians 4:22*).

Making heaven our goal, not only gives our life purpose and direction, it infuses it with attitude. Paul writes, “*Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*” (*Philippians 3:13-14*).

Notice the “intensity” in Paul as he speaks of heaven. He speaks in terms of a runner anticipating the finish line. Eyes are focused as he pursues the goal. Arms are outstretched, with hands grasping for the tape. Paul is “stretching” for heaven, and “presses” on to the goal.

The goal of heaven carries with it a healthy attitude of the Christian life. Paul saw it as the goal of “*the high calling*” of God. It is high because it comes from God in heaven, not from man on earth. It is a “*heavenly calling*” (*Hebrews 3:1*). The calling of God is through the gospel of Christ (*2 Thessalonians 2:14*).

Paul's heavenly pursuit carries with it an attitude that it must be a “lawful” pursuit. The Greek word translated “*prize*” is “brabeion” which is akin to “brabeus, an umpire” and “brabeuo, to decide or rule”. Paul exhorted Timothy with this thought of the crown in connection with running the race lawfully: “*And if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully*” (*2 Timothy 2:5*).

Paul's attitude whether at home with God in heaven, or still in this body on earth was to be “*well pleasing*” to God (*2 Cor. 5:9*). He says it was his “aim”. This word conveys the attitude of not only aiming for something honorable, but his “love” for such a mark. He loved pleasing God; it was not a chore. He loved to do so now, and will continue to love it in heaven.

Heaven should be our ultimate goal in life. With Paul we should pursue it lawfully with intensity and with a love for pleasing God.