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(Graduation Recognition)  
Pressing On In Life  
Philippians 3:12-14

INTRO: This is the season of graduations and marriages. This is a time when it will do each of us well to consider our ways, to consider our paths, to consider our direction.

We need Divine direction as we pass through this world. To follow the way that we think right will lead us astray: "There is a way that seemeth right to a man..." To acknowledge the Lord Jesus, to seek His will and way will lead us not only to heaven but to abundant life (Prov 3:5-6; John 10:10).

As we press on in life, there are some things we need to remember.

I. PUT JESUS FIRST (MATT 6:33)

- A. Nothing will be right in life if we do not put Jesus first.
- B. We must put Jesus first.
  - 1. First in love+ we are to love the Lord with all our heart. "Jesus said unto him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt 22:37).
    - a) We cannot love God and not hate evil. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil" (Psalm 97:10).
    - b) If we love Christ, we will keep His commandments. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).
  - 2. First at home.
    - a) Psalm 127:1 "Except the Lord build the house, thy labor in vain that build it..."
    - b) Those who are new graduates and those who are soon to marry need to be told to put Jesus first in your home life.
    - c) Some of you will be leaving good, godly Christian homes to go to college or to establish a home of your own. In each and every case put Jesus first.
  - 3. First in relationships.
    - a) The scriptures admonish us to surround ourselves with good people. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise" (Prov 13:20).
    - b) Relationships will help you or hinder you.
      - (1) Prov 11:4 "In a multitude of counselors there is safety.
      - (2) Be sure that your close associates are godly people.
      - (3) Remember, if you run with the dogs, you will get the fleas.

- (4) Be careful who you allow into your innermost circle of friends. Your close friends should be folks that you respect, folks you trust, folks who are diligent.
- (5) "My best friend is the one who brings out the best in me" (Henry Ford).
- c) The most important relationship a man will ever have is his relationship with God.
  - (1) To have this relationship, we must first know God through His Son.
  - (2) John 14:6- Jesus is the way to the Father.
  - (3) We draw close to God by:
    - (a) Spending time with God in prayer.
    - (b) Spending time with God's Word.
    - (c) Spending time with His people at church.

## II. PRESS ON IN LIFE WITH DILIGENCE

- A. We are to be good soldiers. We are to be diligent: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Tim 2:3).
- B. "At some time, nearly everyone must live through a storm of some kind. Perhaps it is a broken heart, loss of a job, break up of a marriage. Sooner or later, adversity comes to all of us. That is the time we wonder if life is worth living. We wonder, 'Is the dream worth the price?' I say, 'Yes! It is!' The time when many people throw up their hands in despair, give up, and quit is the best time to go for it" (Crouch 182).
- C. Life is a struggle; it is a battle; it is a fight. But we can win. In I Cor 9:25-27, Paul reminds us that we are in a race, in a struggle, in a fight.
- D. Don't Quit!

## III. PRESS ON IN LIFE WITH VISION

- A. Proverbs 29:18 says: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." You need to have a vision for life; you need goals.
  - 1. Goals in life provide direction. Without a goal, without a vision, you don't know where you are going.
  - 2. To achieve in life, you must have a goal. You must have an idea of what you want to accomplish.
- B. Make it a goal in your life to serve God, to stay in church, to raise your family in church.
  - 1. When you are in college, don't forget God.
  - 2. In your marriage, don't forget God (Heb 10:25).
- C. Have a purpose, a goal in life.
  - 1. People without vision, without purpose, never get anywhere.
  - 2. Purpose to be the best you can. It was T. J. Stonewall Jackson who said: "You can be anything you want to be."
- D. Folks with a goal, with a vision, are motivated.
  - 1. People without a vision perish.

2. You have seen it and so have I. When a person has no reason to live, they die fairly quickly.
3. “Many people die on the inside before their bodies die. They rust out before they wear out” (Crouch 177). This is why Proverbs 29:18 says what it does.
4. Far too many people just drift through life without purpose, without a goal.
  - a) Goals give you a specific direction to work toward.
  - b) Goals will keep you from wasting time and effort.
  - c) Pray, ask God to reveal to you what you are to do. Now, we know that we are to do one thing for sure. The chief end of man is to glorify God with our lives and to enjoy His fellowship forever (I Cor 10:31).
5. All of us face disappointments, we face the death of visions or goals; but God is able to give beauty for ashes, victory for defeat. Joseph and Abraham both saw their visions die, then they saw God resurrect them. It is better when God fulfills our dreams, our visions. The Bible says: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit”(John 12:24).
6. Job 4:21 is a very interesting verse. It says: “... they die, even without wisdom.”
  - a) So many people are dead while they live because they have no wisdom.
  - b) Do you know what wisdom is? Wisdom is seeing life as God sees it. Seeing it from His perspective, from His point of view.
    - (1) You’ll never have wisdom without fearing God for the Bible says: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...” (Prov 9:10).
    - (2) Your life will never be what it ought to be nor your goals clear and certain, unless you fear God.

CONCLUSION: I like what someone said years ago: “Your past is the fertilizer for the future.”