

QUESTION 6

- a) Paul's telling the Christians to keep the standard. To be consistent.
- b) To keep running and pressing forward. He wants them to get to the point where they can echo his words to Timothy in **2 Timothy 4:7-8**.
- c) At the foot of one of the majestic mountains in the Alps there is a famous gravestone. On that gravestone is the name of the individual and then one little statement. It says, 'He died climbing'.
- d) That has some spiritual implications for God's people. We should die climbing.
- e) When the time comes for us to go and to be with the Lord, we should be in the process of pursuing the prize.

GROUP LEADER'S NOTES – STUDY 13

QUESTION 1

- a) Paul was satisfied with Jesus, but not satisfied with his Christian life. He wanted to know Christ better and serve Him more faithfully.
- b) Paul is clear that he has not reached perfection.
- c) He is not perfect, but is confident that one day he knows that he will be made perfect (see **1:6**).
- d) Paul had been converted for at least 25 years when he wrote Philippians.
- e) The Christian life for him was a permanent pursuit. And it involved more and more, knowing Christ.
- f) Even if it meant suffering for Christ, he was aiming for the finishing line.

QUESTION 2

- a) The simple answer to this question is: 'Jesus Christ'.
- b) He is the centre of our faith and our focus.
- c) The term 'pressing on' is a hunting term, meaning to pursue. It implies earnest endeavour.
- d) Paul looks back to the time of his conversion, when Christ took hold of him; or pursued him.
- e) He made him His own.
- f) In the same way Christ made Paul His own; Paul wants to pursue the purpose for that salvation.

QUESTION 3

- a) Paul uses the imagery of athletics.
- b) He has covered some ground in the race. But he knows that he is not there yet.
- c) Notice that Paul talks about 'one thing'. We can be involved in 'many things'. Paul is focused.
- d) A runner must have one aim.
- e) Paul's 'one thing' implies focused concentration and effort. He sets aside any distractions, and works at keeping his mind on the goal of knowing Christ and becoming more like Him.

- f) Forgetting what is behind is a reference to his past. He's mentioned that back in verses 5-6.
- g) But this also can refer to the successes and failures; strengths and weaknesses of his life as an apostle.
- h) The goal here is not to be influenced or affected by them.
- i) We can't erase certain bad memories. But we can ensure that they do not continue to affect us.
- j) Looking back while running a race slows us down. We can lose our direction. It can be dangerous.
- k) In **Hebrews 10:17** we are told that God promises not to remember our sins. In other words, He will no longer hold them against us. They cannot affect our standing with Him.
- l) It's not always easy to forget the past and go forward. We can be held back as Christians by the past.
- m) This 'straining forward' comes from a Greek word 'ektenes'. It means to stretch to the limit of your capacity.
- n) It speaks of intense effort. The prospect of the winning post and the prize is what is in mind here.
- o) Am I consumed with one thing in my life; Jesus?

QUESTION 4

- a) Paul is not suggesting that we attain salvation or heaven by our own efforts. Simply that there is a reward at the end.
- b) The goal which is the upward call of Christ can be seen in two ways:
- c) He can refer to heaven; which is our ultimate goal. We need, however, to remember that heaven is not ours through increased effort.
- d) The other idea here is that God has a purpose in saving me and that should become my purpose now that I'm saved. My holiness.
- e) It's the purpose he outlines back in **Ephesians 1:4**.
- f) The prize therefore is Christ's likeness; His righteousness. My goal and the prize are the same; to know Christ so that I may be like Him.
- g) That will come when I receive the upward call of Christ to glory.

QUESTION 5

- a) Paul wants the believers to have the same goal that he has. To desire this same prize.
- b) Those who are maturing in the faith will have this aim, and will continually endeavour to reach it.
- c) His prayer is that those who do not share that desire will see the need and strain forward to it. That God will make it plain to them.
- d) Perhaps there are those in the church who were thinking differently.
- e) Those who thought that because Jesus had died on the cross for them, they were perfect here and now. No effort or growth was required.