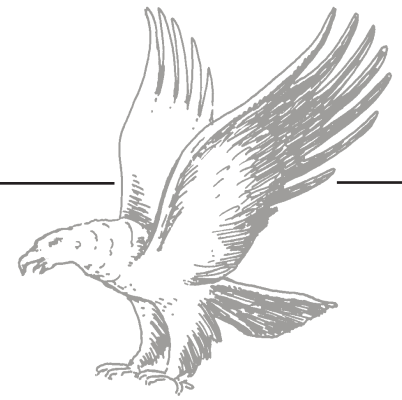


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



May 1, 2016

Eyes on the Prize

How we choose to use our time in our daily lives is determined by what we view as our ultimate goal in life. Paul's example shows us how powerful that vision can be.

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:12-14).



Few figures in the history of Christianity compare to Paul in sheer volume of work. His prodigious output as an apostle of Christ—his extensive travels, the letters, the prayers, the close personal relationships with people all across the Roman Empire—reveal a man who knew what he wanted to do with his life, and did it.

What motivation lay behind Paul's tireless labor? How was he able to harness his time and talents to such powerful effect?

This message to the Philippians reveals the secret to his work ethic. In short, his vision was fixed on “the prize

of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Paul knew that his life on this earth was limited, and he had only a few years to accomplish something worthwhile. So he threw himself into his work with the passion of a man who was living on borrowed time, determined to make every minute count.

Paul made his share of mistakes—some quite serious—but he never let those failures define him or his work. His forward-looking focus allowed him to move on from past regrets and concentrate on the opportunities ahead of him. “I press on” was not just a slogan; it was the guiding principle of his life, and his herculean production was the fruit of that mindset.

Paul's life puts most of us to shame. Many of us prefer to follow the model of the rich fool: “you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” We do not view life as a finite resource to be used wisely, but as a bottomless well from which we can draw an inexhaustible supply of time. If we waste a day on meaningless activities, so what? We have many,

many more where that one came from. So we become selfish, indifferent, unproductive, frittering away vast chunks of time watching television, playing video games, or reading mindless novels. We accomplish little, because we have allowed the trivial details of daily life to obscure our view of the greater goal before us.

But someday the well will run dry. Our time on earth will be used up, and only then—when it is too late—will we realize how foolishly we squandered our lives.

Paul achieved so much because he kept his eyes on the prize before him, and refused to let the cares of this world distract his attention from that goal. That single-minded vision shaped his daily work habits and drove him to attain all the things that we remember him for.

Each one of us is capable of similar levels of production. But it requires that we sweep away all the mental clutter that sidetracks us, and set our sights on heaven. When “I press on” becomes our operating principle, we'll see achievements that we never dreamed possible.

— David King