

FINDING YOUR VERTICAL PURPOSE

Philippians 3:12-16; Hebrews 3:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 1 Peter 5:10; Philippians 2:5; Ephesians 4:22-23; Matthew 5:48; 1 Corinthians 13:9-11; 1 Corinthians 14:20; Hebrews 5:13-14; Matthew 16:16-17; Ephesians 1:16-19; 1 Corinthians 9:24

Tags

focus, vertical purpose, God's call, Philippians 3, forgetting, straining, pressing on, moving forward, the goal, upward call, Jesus, thinking, maturity, holding true, perfection, progress, persistence, consistency, the prize, one thing

Introduction

2022 is here, and every year we find ourselves wondering what the new year will bring. In our horizontal world, it's easy to get lost in mundane tasks, get distracted by trivial things, and forget what's important. But there is another way to live—with Vertical Purpose.

In April 1987, Greg joined a turkey hunt on his uncle's California ranch. A companion mistook him for game and fired during the hunt, spraying him with buckshot. About 60 pellets hit his body, and he lost about one-third of his blood before rescuers arrived, and his life was saved by emergency surgery. Greg's life had changed after he burst onto the world stage, becoming the first American to win the Tour de France.

It seemed his star would fall as quickly as it rose. Doctors wondered whether LeMond would live, let alone ride or compete again. But once he began to recover, he never really stopped. He returned to competition in the fall of 1987, entering races he couldn't finish, then finishing races he couldn't win. He lagged at the rear of the peloton through the 1988 season and into 1989.

Greg struggled to return to professional cycling, leaving a successful team in 1988 and joining the relatively small team. His team was not considered strong enough to help him during stage races, and the team's financial troubles meant that his team had not paid him in 1989 before the Tour started. Even the fee for late entry into the Tour was secured when Greg arranged additional sponsorship.

The 1989 Tour de France consisted of 21 stages and was over 2,000 miles long. Cyclists sometimes race for eight continuous hours—sometimes in freezing rain or burning sun as they climb to the clouds in the Alps and hit speeds of 60 mph on winding descents. The race began on July 1st and ended in Paris on July 23rd. Over three weeks of competition, the yellow jersey passed back and forth between LeMond and Laurent Fignon, the last great French cyclist of his generation. It was a contest of narrow leads, and as the Tour approached Paris for the final stage, Fignon held a 50-second advantage.

LeMond was not expected to make up this deficit and opted not to receive communication from his team and focus on finishing the race. He completed the 15.2-mile stage at an average speed of almost 34 mph, the fastest individual time trial ever ridden in the Tour de France up to that point, and won his second Tour title by a margin of only eight seconds.

Vertical Purpose is pursuing an upward call with God at the center of all you do for His glory. When you become more intentional about living with Vertical Purpose, it will change how you see yourself and the world around you. When we orient our lives around God, everything has a new meaning. Let's live with VERTICAL PURPOSE.

Outline

Everybody has work to do.

Jesus saves, not works, and not religion.

Living with Vertical Purpose takes passion and discipline.

Application

Be honest about where you are.

Look to Jesus no matter where you are.

Pursue Vertical Purpose.

Press On. Hold On. Repeat.

Questions

1. If someone had asked you, "How do I live the Christian life?" what would you say?
2. At what speed are you running toward the finish line? What is slowing you down, and how will you speed up?
3. How does the gospel humble you?
4. What is the prize that Paul pursues in verse 14?
5. Why do we need passion and discipline to grow in spiritual maturity?

6. Do you use past victories and successes as an excuse not to make every effort in the present? Pause and ask the Lord for freedom from this sin.
7. Paul was a "one-thing" guy (v. 13). What would people who know you well say is your "one thing"?
8. What one change could you make to pursue the one thing that matters the most?