

It Is Written

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Champion Marksman

By Richie Thetford

Matt Emmons, Olympic gold medalist in rifle shooting in 2004, was set to win another event at Athens. He had a commanding lead and hoped to make a direct bullseye on his last shot. But something went wrong — he hit the target, but he was aiming at the wrong one! That wrong focus dropped him to eighth place and cost him another medal.

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he expressed the importance of focusing on the right target in our Christian life. Please take a moment and meditate on these words of God delivered by the apostle Paul: "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 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" (Philippians 3:7-14).

Paul used "goal" in an illustration of an athlete running a race. The same word was also used of a target for shooting arrows. In both cases, the prospect of winning depends on being focused. For the believer, that focus should be a lifetime pursuit of becoming more like our Savior Jesus Christ (Romans 8:28-29; Galatians 5:22-23).

What is your focus today? The believer's target to be focused on should be Jesus — to be more like Him everyday. "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18). May we all ensure that we are aiming at the right target — following Jesus!

Why I Go To Every Assembly

Anonymous

1. I go to every assembly of the church because Jesus is there. When the disciples agree on earth with the heaven-inspired doctrine, Jesus is with them. Matthew 18:20 promised, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." He promised to be with us as long as we do His will (Matthew 28:20). Jesus has never forsaken an assembly, and I want to be like him.

2. I go to every assembly of the church because I'm made stronger. Power is given in worship to live a nobler life. There one is fortified against failing away. Worship assemblies contain the sweetest fellowship on earth. Worship assemblies make souls fit for heaven. We're better able to have strength to bear the burdens of life. Why should I want to miss any service?

3. I go to every assembly of the church because God wants the church to grow. The church always grows when members put God first by loyal faithfulness. Since the church is the saved, the growth of the church means salvation of the lost. Here's a way we can all help in the finest work on earth.

4. I go to every assembly of the church to set a good example. Many are looking my way and following in my steps. Influence is either good or bad — there's no middle ground. Any hour the church meets, my influence is with or against Christ. If I attend it's for the Lord. When I neglect a service, my influence is for Satan.

5. I go to every assembly of the church to prove my love and gratitude. The love of Jesus was so boundless for the church, that He gave His life for it. If I want to be His disciple, I have to prove my love. Since God has given me a multitude of blessings I don't deserve, it's indeed a small sacrifice to return a few hours in public worship. One who truly loves God doesn't ask if he has to attend all services. His love compels him to! If I show love to God by attendance, I show lack of love by absence.

6. I go to every assembly of the church to obey God. The Bible says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together ..." (Hebrews 10:25). The first Christians met weekly and often daily (Acts 20:7; 2:46; 19:9). Any service where the Bible is taught, prayer is offered, and God is worshiped, is good. James 4:17 says, "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin." If it's good to be present for all assemblies, it's bad to be absent from any.

7. I go to every assembly of the church to put first things first. Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). Jesus said the church must be first to the Christian even BEFORE seeking food, clothing, and drink. Nothing could be so important as being a faithful member of the Lord's church.

8. I go to every assembly of the church to abound in the Lord's work. A true Christian wants to do all he can not as little as he can. Even after doing all possible, I'm still an unprofitable servant (Luke 17:10). Since the assemblies of the church are vital in the Lord's work, I must abound in attendance. Paul exhorted, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Godly Breadcrumbs

By Kyle Campbell

Everywhere Abraham went he built an altar to God and confessed his faith in Him (Genesis 12:7-8; 13:4, 18). In this way, Abraham left "godly breadcrumbs" that dotted the landscape and attested to his devotion to God. Of course, the greatest altar that Abraham built was the one that contained the greatest sacrifice any man has ever been asked to make: his only son Isaac (Genesis 22:9). In faith, he offered up his son and forever earned a right to be preached among the faithful (Hebrews 11:17-19).

What would be written of your life? What would be said of your faith? Have you left any "godly breadcrumbs" on the earth that would attest to your devotion? Having recently attending the funeral of a godly saint, I am reminded about the importance of influence and the memory others will have of me when I am gone. I pray that I will live worthy, and I pray that you will too.