



small groups

Discussion Guide



Next Steps

Php. 3:7-14

Ice Breaker

(10 minutes)

Discuss

- The last two weeks, we have heard from four IBC-sponsored missionaries from Kenya, India, and Haiti. Have you ever been on a mission trip? How did it affect you?
 - Andy's sermon and Paul's passage from Philippians share a theme of pressing forward and taking next steps. Have you ever been so tired that you felt that you couldn't take another step? Describe that experience.
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Lesson Review

(45 minutes)

Read Php. 3:7-14

Andy divided this passage into a series of steps:

Step 1 — v. 7-9 — Explode Out Of the Blocks — Know Jesus

This is the beginning of the Christian life: receiving God's gift of eternal salvation by faith.

Discuss

- Is there anyone in your group who hasn't taken this step of faith? If that's you, take the step of sharing that with your small group.
- If everyone in your group is already a Christ-follower, take a minute to pray for your friends and family who aren't.

Step 2 — v. 10 — Find Your Stride — Experience Jesus

Andy explained the Greek word "ginosko" in this passage means more than intellectual knowledge, but relational experience.

Several times, Andy quoted Barry Jones's new book *Dwell: Life With God For the World*. That book has much to say about this step of experiencing Jesus.

Christian spirituality is about sharing in God's dream of shalom and allowing that dream to pervade our lives...And it is the task to which we have been called as we seek to bring glimpses of the world to come into the world as we know it. As N.T. Wright has said, "We are called to be part of God's new creation, called to be agents of that new creation here and now. We are called to model and display that new creation in symphonies and family life, in restorative justice and poetry, in holiness and service to the poor, in politics and painting" (Dr. Barry Jones, *Dwell*, p. 47).

Christian spirituality lives from the end of the story, thinks from the end of the story, prays from the end of the story. It eats, drinks, laughs, loves, struggles, plays and dreams from the end of the story. And as it does, it lives into the story of the vision of God." (Dr. Barry Jones, *Dwell*, p. 47).

Discuss

- How are you experiencing Jesus lately? Where and when do you connect with God?

Step 3 — v. 12-13 — Don't Look Back

Here, Andy introduced the metaphor of Dachshund races. In these events, wiener dogs are set loose to run a course, but many don't run at all. Some get distracted by the crowd or other dogs. Often, Christians do the same. We get distracted or stagnated and take our eyes off of the finish line.

Discuss

- Are you stuck or distracted from your spiritual walk lately? How?
- Identify one thing you can do to get back on track. Commit to doing it until the next small group meeting.

Step 4 – v. 14 – Get Back In the Race

Jesus doesn't call us to walk with him for our own sakes. As Barry's book explains beautifully, we are called to a breathing in and breathing out: to live *with God for the world*. Andy outlined several initiatives that our church leaders want to tackle in 2015 as our next steps in life with God for the world.

- Building two homes for trafficked girls through My Refuge House
- Completing an audio version of the New Testament in Kutchi along with audio players so that the mostly-illiterate population there can hear the scriptures in their own language
- Funding scholarships and grants to Tapestry, the IBC-founded ministry to foster and adoptive parents
- Providing permanent counseling and day center facilities for homeless families through Family Promise
- Providing staffing and facility upgrades to the 2435 Medical Clinic
- Expanding IBC's kitchen and food pantry ministries
- Founding a church planting residency program to equip young leaders

All of these are outward-facing initiatives that IBC would like to take for the sake of our community and world. And with the retirement of mortgage debt coming soon, our church may be in the position to pull these off in the next year.

Discuss

- Which of these initiatives gets you most excited?
 - These are examples of what we dream about as a church body, but what "next steps for the world" would you most like to take as an individual or small group?
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Application

(5 minutes)

You've just shared ideas with your group about steps you can take to live closer to God for the sake of the world. Write them down. Make sure every member leaves the meeting with their next steps in writing, and an expectation that those will be a topic of discussion at your next meeting.