

LESSON 69

# Keep Your Eyes on the Prize

PHILIPPIANS 3:12-16



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**BIBLE TRUTH**

ALL OUR RELIGIOUS ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE NOTHING  
COMPARED WITH KNOWING CHRIST

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION . . . . . 5 MIN

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ trash can
- ✓ secular coloring book
- ✓ box of crayons
- ✓ dollar bill
- ✓ any small toy
- ✓ Bible

2. BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN

**SUPPLIES:** *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 147)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION . . . . . 5 MIN

**Where Is the Gospel?**

**SUPPLIES:** Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is the Gospel?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS . . . . . 10 MIN

**SUPPLIES:** snack food and beverage

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) . . . . . 20–30 MIN

**Coloring Activity**

**SUPPLIES:** coloring page for NT Lesson 69—one for each child; markers or crayons

**Running the Race**

**SUPPLIES:** four safety cones; one four-foot length of ribbon

**Pressing On**

**SUPPLIES:** a spool of thread or string; a roll of masking tape; lollipops—one for each child

7. CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN

**TOTAL 60–75 MIN**

**THE LESSON**

**OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION . . . . . 5 MIN**

In today’s lesson the children will learn that the greatest prize we can win in life is Jesus.

Gather and bring to class the following items: trash can, secular coloring book, box of crayons, a dollar bill, any small toy, and a Bible.

Lay all the items out on the table and ask the children to tell you what each item is and what it is used for. Then ask, “If you could only keep one of these items and you had to throw the rest of them in the trash can, which one would you keep?”

Then hold the items two at a time over the trash can and have the class choose which one to keep and which one to trash. Remind them that they can only keep one item. (Don’t start with the Bible.) Help them out with each decision. For instance, if you hold up the crayons with the coloring book, you might say that you can use crayons to draw on blank paper, but without crayons a coloring book is of little use.

When you get to the Bible, you should help them understand that it is the most important of all because it tells us about Jesus.

Finally, tell the children that you are going to read a Bible story today about the apostle Paul who said that he counted everything trash compared to Jesus. He said that because Jesus really was the most important thing of all to him. Paul meant that if he could only keep one thing, he would keep Jesus!

Take time to pray and thank God for the great treasure of Jesus. Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

**BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN**

Read story 147, “Keep Your Eyes on the Prize,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

**BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION . . . . . 5 MIN**

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **Why do people run races?**  
*(People run races to prove they're the fastest and to win the prize.)*
  
- **If there was a prize for winning a race, how fast would that make you want to run?**  
*(The more you wanted the prize, the faster you would run.)*
  
- **If you could have any prize for running a race, what prize would you want?**  
*(Accept any answer.)*
  
- **What prize did Paul want?**  
*(Paul wanted Jesus [Philippians 3:8].)*

**Where Is the Gospel? \_\_\_\_\_**

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Rather than complain at the end of his days, Paul saw his own struggle through the lens of the gospel. Knowing that Jesus suffered in his mission to live a righteous life, Paul realized he too would have to suffer in following Jesus. When we consider that the world of sin and the enemy opposed Jesus on his way to the cross, we should not be surprised when we find persecution and suffering in our lives as well. Jesus said. "If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20).

In thinking about his suffering, Paul identified with the suffering of Christ upon the cross (Philippians 3:10). Paul saw his suffering for the gospel as following Jesus in some small way and counted it a privilege to suffer for the cause of the one who gave his life for him. We, like Paul, should not be surprised at suffering. It is a part of the path of every Christian—some certainly greater than others.

**SNACK QUESTIONS . . . . . 10 MIN**

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **Have you ever been in a race?**  
*(Accept any answer.)*
  
- **Did you know we are all in a race?**  
*(Yes, we are all in a race to get to Jesus. The Bible says that if we seek him with all our heart we will find him [Deuteronomy 4:29]. That is what Paul is referring to—seeking after Christ and his will for our lives.)*
  
- **What is the best way to win a race?**  
*(Run with all your might [see Luke 10:27].)*

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5-10 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult.

**ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. . . . . 20-30 MIN**

**Coloring Activity**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 69—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **What are the people in the picture doing?**  
*(running in a race)*
  
- **Who is at the finish line of the race?**  
*(Jesus)*
  
- **Why would people run a race to win Jesus as their prize?**  
*(Jesus is the best prize because he died on the cross for our sins so that we can be forgiven. Jesus promises to come to those who believe in him and live in their hearts)*

*by his Holy Spirit. Those who understand how wonderful that is would gladly give everything up to have Jesus as their prize possession living inside of them.)*

## Running the Race

### SUPPLIES:

- ✓ four safety cones
- ✓ one four-foot length of ribbon

Move the tables and chairs of your classroom toward the center of the room and set up the cones to keep the children toward the outside perimeter of the room. Explain to them that you are going to run two races so you need six volunteers. Take the first three volunteers, and have them run around the room twice to see who finishes first. (If you have a very small classroom you may want to do this activity outside in the hall. In that case, simply race the length of the hall.)

Celebrate the winner. After you are done, explain that we are to live our lives like a race: running for Jesus, we win. Running for ourselves, we lose. Jesus is our prize in heaven, and we run the race by loving God and believing in Jesus and living for him. The person who runs the race to win is the one who wants to store up for himself treasure in heaven, not on earth.

## Pressing On

### SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a spool of thread or string
- ✓ a roll of masking tape
- ✓ lollipops—one for each child

Tape a line on the floor. Hang a lollipop from the ceiling by a string. (It would work best for the exercise if you run the string around a light or ceiling tile bracket so that you can raise and lower the lollipop.) Start the lollipop farther out and higher up than the tallest child can reach. Have the children try to reach for it without stepping across the line. Then, after all of the children have had a turn, lower the lollipop and try again. When someone is able to reach the lollipop, let him have it and try again until they all have been able to reach for a treat.

Then ask the following questions:

- Was it hard to reach the lollipop?  
*(yes)*
- Did you have to strain forward (Philippians 3:13) to be able to reach it?  
*(yes)*
- Why did you want to strain so much to get the lollipop?  
*(Because I really wanted it.)*
- Read Philippians 3:13–14. Why do you think Paul tells us in the book of Philippians that we should strain forward to win the prize?  
*(God has given each of us a job and calls us to complete it as we follow Jesus. Read Hebrews 12:1–2 and talk to the children about keeping our eyes on the prize, which in the end is Jesus!)*

**CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN**

Take time at the end of class to thank God for what you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as a way for the children to remember today's lesson.

