



RUNNING WELL

THE PACE OF GRACE

Running Well #3: “Self-Emptying” in Philippians Jim Probst

Week One: Joy-Filling - “Joy is Jesus’ life in us with excess”

Week Two: Community-Surrounding - Biblical community provides the resources, examples, and Gospel for running well.

Week Three: Self-Emptying

Week Four: Gospel-Saturating

“Father, I want to know Thee, but my cowardly heart fears to give up its toys. I cannot part with them without inward bleeding, and I do not try to hide from Thee the terror of the parting. I come trembling, but I do come. Please root from my heart all those things which I have cherished so long and which have become a very part of my living self, so that Thou mayest enter and dwell there without a rival ...” -*The Pursuit of God*, A.W. Tozer, p. 30

Big Idea: RUNNING WELL IS ABOUT SELF-EMPTYING

MY ONLY SELF-IMPOSED SPIRITUAL REQUIREMENT was SELF-EMPTYING ... and I was in my favorite place on earth. How did it go?

JK, Charlie and I see “self-emptying” as one of the four major themes in Philippians!

- “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Philippians 1:21)
- “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ”. (Philippians 3:7-8)
- “Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.” (Philippians 4:11; written while in prison!)

JOY-FILLING and SELF-EMPTYING are two sides of the same coin!

- Ken Boa refers to this as the “Exchanged Life Spirituality”
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 reads, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”
- John the Baptist said of Jesus, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30)
- Paul writes of this in Galatians 2:20 – “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me ...”.
- Paul writes in Colossians 3:2-3 – “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU WERE INTENTIONAL ABOUT SELF-EMPTYING?

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED THAT THE PEOPLE WITH THE LEAST AMOUNT OF JOY ARE THE MOST SELF-CENTERED?



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SELF-EMPTYING is critical as you face outsiders and insiders. We have those who oppose our message and messenger, and those who embrace our message and messenger. In both cases we are called to a self-emptying that is counter-cultural.

FACING EXTERNAL CONFLICT: **Philippians 1:27-30**

- demonstrate unity (1:27; one spirit, one mind, striving side by side);
- demonstrate boldness (1:27; stand firm; 1:28 – not frightened; 1:30 – engaged in conflict)
- it has been “granted” to you ... to suffer for his sake! (vs. 29)

FACING INTERNAL CONFLICT: **Philippians 2:1-4**

- This might be more challenging than external conflict; just like loving and leading those closest to you is often more challenging than leading at work or church.
- Empty self or remove selfish ambition (2:3)
- Humble self (2:3)

VERSE 5 IS OUR FOCAL POINT:

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5)

OUR SUPREME EXAMPLE: **Philippians 2:6-11**

- Notice Jesus’ obedience
- Notice Jesus’ self-less ambition
- Notice Jesus’ humility

THE DIFFICULTY WITH SELF-EMPTYING

- There is a constant need to die to self / pour out (like crab grass)!
- It requires a daily examination

THE DIFFICULTY WITH AMBITION (vs. 3)

- It is a subtle seduction!
- We often do things “our way” and “in the name of Jesus”

THE DIFFICULTY WITH OBEDIENCE (vs. 8)

- Sacrifice is more convenient and often a cheap substitute
- **“Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.” (1 Samuel 15:22)**

Mark Edwards and the infamous relay.

If we are serious about RUNNING WELL, we need to be serious about SELF-EMPTYING.



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Discussion Questions

1. Select someone in your small group to re-read Philippians 1:27-2:11. Listen for examples and imagery of self-emptying. Do you find it more difficult to practice self-emptying during external conflict (with those in opposition to Christ), or internal conflict (with those in the household of faith)? Explain.
2. In his teaching, Jim mentioned that “Joy-filling and self-emptying are two sides of the same coin.” Do you recognize this in yourself and others?
3. So far, we’ve talked about “RUNNING WELL” as:
 - a. Joy – Filling
 - b. Community – Surrounding
 - c. Self – EmptyingWhich of these is most challenging for you in this season of life? Why?
4. Do you notice parallels or consistent themes with Philippians 2 and Hebrews 12:1-2? In both cases, we are instructed to look to our Savior as our supreme example of obedience and self-emptying. In what ways have you been encouraged by looking to His example?
5. Take another look at 1 Samuel 15:22. Do you find it easier to offer sacrifice rather than obedience to the Lord? When was the last time “obedience” required a costly self-emptying in your life?
6. Are you more self-emptying today than you were 5 years ago? Explain.
7. JK often prays, “Lord, un-self me.” Pray this over one another as you conclude your group discussion.