Victory in Christ (The Amazing Race)

Lesson 4: Pressing On

**Lessons in this series:** [1](http://www.teensundayschool.com/156/lesson/christian-partnership.php) [2](http://www.teensundayschool.com/163/lesson/having-the-right-attitude.php) [3](http://www.teensundayschool.com/165/lesson/finding-true-confidence.php) **4**[5](http://www.teensundayschool.com/173/lesson/the-ultimate-prize.php)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Goals

1. To understand that victory in the Amazing Race requires effort  
2. To understand that victory in the Amazing Race means trust  
3. To understand that victory in the Amazing Race demands contentment

Topics

Contentment, Endurance, Perseverance, Stand Firm, Trust

Scripture Memorization

Philippians 3:14

OPENING PRAYER (5 to 10 minutes)

GROUP BUILDING (15 minutes)

**Back Me Up (Game)**

Back Me Up

As the group grows larger and larger, it becomes more difficult to stand, but it can be done when everyone backs each other up.

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| Topics:  Cooperation, Perseverance, Teamwork, Unity, Boredom Buster,  Materials:  None  Duration:  Approximately 15 minutes | http://www.teensundayschool.com/tinymce/imagemanager/images/games/backtoback.jpg |

What you will do:

Arrange the room so you have a large empty space. Start by asking for two volunters. Have them sit on the floor, back to back and lock arms together. Then, at your command, tell them to stand up while keeping their arms in a tightly locked position.   
  
It will not be too easy, but they will succeed by each pressing against the other's back. When accomplished, ask for two additional volunteers to join. Have the four of them sit on the floor in a small circle, and lock arms with the one next to them. Again, at your command, have them stand up keeping their arms in the locked position.  
  
Continue to add additional volunteers by twos until the whole class is participating. For smaller classes, you can add only one additional volunteer at a time.  
  
You can also do this as a timed activity after demonstrating how it is done with the first two volunteers.

GETTING STARTED (5 minutes)

In our little game, pressing on each other made standing easier. Well, today, we want to look at another aspect about the Amazing Race to Victory in Christ: "pressing on."  
  
Everyone likes a good victory, and the Amazing Race is no different. As Paul begins to wrap up his letter to his friends the Philippians, he encourages them to "press on" towards victory. Something all of us need to do as well.

The fact that Paul wrote this letter from jail is significant, and it is particularly significant today.   
  
• What about you? Are you competitive?  
• How does competition affect the way you do something?

Some people believe that winning is the most important thing. Some people don’t. Instead they will say it’s not whether you win or lose, it’s how you play the game. Well, in the Christian life, it’s really both: how you play the game AND whether or not you win.   
  
Let’s explore this idea a little more in our scriptures today. We’re going to read 3 different passages, but each speak to the idea of completion, fulfillment, and victory.

DIGGING IN (25 minutes)

Today we want to explore 3 truths about what it means to achieve victory in the Amazing Race. There’s no better feeling than winning, and when it comes to victory in Jesus, that importance and excitement is multiplied over 10 times. But it takes something to win. In these passages, Paul points out three such things.

**Truth #1: Victory in Christ Requires Effort**

The first truth is that Victory Requires effort. Let’s figure out what that means by reading our first passage, who can read it for us?  
  
**Read Philippians 3:12-14**  
  
**Discussion Questions:**  
1. What is Paul trying to say here? *(Allow someone to summarize the passage in their own words.)*2. Is there anything confusing in this text? *(Paul says he has it, but is still pressing on to obtain it.)*  
3. What is the ultimate prize that Paul chases? *(Living in the fullness of Christ.)*  
4. When we read that Paul is “pressing on,” what images come to mind? What does it mean to “press on"? *(Endurance, overcoming obstacles, perseverance.)*

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| Optional Activity (10 minutes)  Let’s try to capture what it means to press on with a simple activity.  Everyone stand up and do exactly as I say:  1. Find a partner of equal strength. 2. We’re going to have a good old fashioned arm wrestling competition. 3. You and your partner should arm wrestle and see who wins, beginning when I say, "Go."   (Say, "Go," and let the fun begin. Allow it to go on for a while. Inevitably, one match will take a really long time, as people resist and press, etc. If some groups finish fast, it’s okay if they switch partners, do best 2 out of 3, etc.) |

Is the idea of pressing on clearer to you now? Pressing on is going for victory. But to achieve victory, it takes a lot of effort. Let’s face it: Life isn’t easy, and the Amazing Race with Jesus is not without obstacles. Paul, as you’ll recall, is writing these very words from jail. That’s an obstacle if I ever knew one!

We’ll experience first hand what it means to come up against challenges, obstacles, and tough times in the Amazing Race. Just remember to press on, because victory in Jesus awaits you.

**Truth #2: Victory in Christ Means Trust**

The second truth is that Victory means trust. Let’s move on to our second passage, who will read it?

**Read Philippians 4:4-8**

**Discussion Questions:**   
1. What do you think Paul is saying here? *(Allow someone else to summarize the passage in their own words.)*  
2. Is there anything confusing in this text? *(Allow for responses.)*  
3. When does Paul say we should worry or be anxious? *(Never.)* What should we do instead? *(Prayer and thanksgiving.)*4. According to the text, what will happen if we do that? *(Peace and contentment.)*

Trusting is hard because it means we release control to someone else. In this case, we’re talking about giving control to God. That is perhaps the hardest thing to do, especially if we don’t know God very well. Next week, we’ll talk more extensively about what it means to know Christ and have a relationship with Him, but to put it simply, it means trusting Him with everything.

The fact that Paul writes this from prison amplifies his level of trust. He had plenty to worry about, plenty to consider as great disadvantages, and yet, instead of complaining, he encourages the Philippians, and us, to trust God and allow His peace to transform us.

**Truth #3: Victory in Christ Demands Contentment**

The third truth is that Victory demands contentment. Who would like to read our last passage for today?  
  
**Read Philippians 4:10-13**

**Discussion Questions:**1. What do you think Paul is saying here? *(Allow someone else to summarize the passage in their own words.)*2.Is there anything confusing in this text? *(Allow for responses.)*  
3. What does Paul say specifically about his situation in life? *(He has learned the secret of being content.)*  
4. What does it mean to be content? *(Allow for discussion.)*

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| **Top 10 Richest People in the United States** (**Source Forbes.com 2011)**  1. Bill Gates, Microsoft, Estimated Net Worth (ENW) $56 Billion 2. Warren Buffet, Berkshire Hathaway, ENW $50 Billion 3. Lawrence Ellison, Oracle, ENW $39.5 Billion 4. Charles Koch, Diversified, ENW $31 Billion 5. David Koch, Diversified, ENW $31 Billion 6-9 are all Wal-Mart heirs. Individually their net worth is about $26 Billion. Combined, their net worth is higher than even Bill Gates, at $107 Billion 10 Michael Bloomberg, Bloomberg LP, ENW $25 Billion |

5. Do you think having great wealth leads to contentment? Why or why not?  
6. If wealth or power is not a source of contentment for Paul, what is?

Look at verse 13 again. Paul’s contentment comes from the One who gives him strength—Christ. Jesus is the only one in whom Paul places his confidence. And because he knows that God will not fail him, he is content.

MAKING IT REAL (15 minutes)

Now you have a completed outline for victory. It requires effort, that is to "press on". It also means to trust Jesus. Lastly, it demands contentment, knowing that God will give us what we need, when we need it.

We said at the beginning that it’s not whether or not you win, but how you play the game. In the Amazing Race, in a life lived for Jesus, that is simply not true. It’s important how you live, but it’s also important whether or not you experience victory in Christ.

• Which of the three truths we discussed do you struggle with most: Effort, Trust, or Contentment?  
  
Maybe you know the Truth about Jesus, but you’re not putting in the effort to belong to Him. It's too difficult. Or maybe there is a trust issue. You believe in God, but you find it difficult to turn everything over to Him. Perhaps being content with what you have is a struggle, you still want more.

Circle the truth that you think you struggle with the most. Go ahead. Take a minute or two to think about it, and then circle the toughest one.

CLOSING PRAYER (5 minutes)

What we’re going to do now is have prayer time together about the truths discussed today. I encourage you to spend some silent time in prayer about your own personal struggles. I also ask you to pray that you can experience victory through Jesus.

After a couple of minutes I will finish praying. If any of you want to jump in and pray for each other, go for it. Let’s begin now.