

You're a Winner!

What's the vision of the church? To preach the Gospel and make disciples of Jesus - by loving Jesus and having a passion for those things that Jesus is passionate about and serving our community. To be Jesus in our neighbourhood. Passion is: zeal, commitment, focus, desire, enthusiasm, energy, tenacity.

Prayer is still the backbone for any church and will continue in 2018. Hence the Hour of Power on Sundays. We are focussing on 5 key elements this year: People coming to faith in Jesus; demonstration of God's power through miracles; youth coming; children and families coming and for people to be restored and healed of all manner of situations.

In any race preparation is key to winning and I believe this year we as a church are going to experience great things, so get ready! Passion for the kingdom comes from within. You have to get into it. How badly do you want to see the church advance and grow and people getting saved? How desperate are we to see God at work here and in our lives?

Hebrews 12:1-3 A huge cloud of witnesses is all around us, the pioneers of the faith, the veterans cheering us on, So let us throw off / strip off everything that stands in our way or slows us down. Let us throw off any sin that holds on to us so tightly. And let us keep on running the race marked out for us. 2 Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the one who started this journey of faith. And he is the one who completes the journey of faith. He paid no attention to the shame of the cross. He suffered there because of the joy he was looking forward to. Then he sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. You won't get tired, you won't lose hope.

This is what the writer to the Hebrews is telling us. Throw off, strip off everything that will hold us down or hinder our running and if that is sin our lives then we ought to strip ourselves of that too.

Some of us have been running and running but have never got anywhere because of all the baggage we are running with. Often we love to hold on to baggage even though we know we should not, we love to hold on our sinful life styles although we know should not.

One cannot keep doing the same old thing and expect a different outcome! The fact is that we are running a course that has been marked out for us. There are 4 requirements that I am going to talk about that if put into practice can help you run this race successfully.

- You have to run **looking unto/at Jesus**. The focus has to be Jesus - not any man;
- Having the **Right Mental Attitude** - you need a winners mind set. Paul said this in 1Cor 9:26-27 he said this: *I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No sloppy living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself.*
- You have to win this race in your mind first before you can work it out. You have to know who you believe in and be assured that He who has called you is well able to carry you through to the end. You need to know that you have been washed in the blood of Jesus

that His blood has once and for all paid the price for your sin and set you free from its effects. Our mental attitude needs to be “ I am reaching out, I am pressing on, I am pushing through”

- **Self Control / Discipline** - 1Cor 9:24-25 (NLT) *Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! 25 All athletes are **disciplined** in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize.*

Everything we do has an eternal significance - good or bad. Discipline is key is winning in 2018. Self control a fruit of the Holy Spirit is key to win (Gal5:23).

Self Control - ability to “control of one's feelings, desires or actions by one's own will; the power of controlling one's external reactions, emotions, the practice of learning to maintain control of the beast of one's own sinful passions. It means remaining master of your own domain not only in the hunky-dory, but also when faced with trial or temptation,

- There has to be the discipline of prayer, of reading the bible, of coming together as believers to encourage one another, of putting the kingdom of God and His righteousness first. No short cuts. A true athlete trains, eats carefully, controls his thoughts, thinks positively not negatively, believes he is a winner. So must we.

Sadly in many cases we have lost the discipline and self control needed to run the race. Many Christians fail to realise that self control is a key component of running to win. We are in a battle constantly and unless we are disciplined in reading the word and hearing the word of God and practising the word of God, the enemy will take us out. Many a Christian has been discouraged because of the lack of self control in their lives where due to spiritual neglect they have become victims of all the buffeting from Satan.

Jesus himself was disciplined and he spent time with His Father daily and so must we if we want to see a change in our lives. Jesus the very Son of God was himself tempted by Satan in the wilderness and the only way Jesus defeated those temptations was through the word where he said, “it is written” man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God, You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve, You shall not tempt the Lord your God (Luke4:4,812)

2Tim 1:7 God gave us his Spirit. And the Spirit doesn't make us weak and fearful. Instead, the Spirit gives us power and love. He helps us control ourselves. Titus 2:5-7 5 The younger women must control themselves and be pure. They must take good care of their homes. They must be kind. They must follow the lead of their husbands. Then no one will be able to speak evil things against God's word. 6 In the same way, help the young men to control themselves. 7 Do what is good. Set an example for them in everything. When you teach, be honest and serious.

We have to be self disciplined people of the word if we are to win in 2018. God's word has to be written in our hearts, God's word has to be obeyed and through that our faith activated. God's word is living and active and it has to be active in our lives. Many a time I have used God's word to overcome discouragement, to speak into negative situations the positive powerful word of God. True self control involves both control over one's behaviour

and impulses and emotions underlying it. On our own self control isn't easy but with Jesus Christ this can successfully achieved through His power.

Jesus Loves you and desires to have a relationship with you. He desires to give you a life full of joy and purpose.

Jesus can change the past you cannot change by walking into those places of sin and failure and wipe your slate clean, your past cleaned and removed. Jesus is the same today as he was yesterday and forever His love for you will never give up or run dry or fail you. Jesus knows the worst about you and yet he believes the best why? Because He sees you not as you are but as His child when he gets through with you. He is an amazing friend! Jesus has a great future for you. You can trust Him. His plans are for good and not for evil to give you a future and a hope (joyful expectation/ anticipation about the future) . Jesus listens to your every prayer. Do you want to know this Jesus? Are you willing to do what Jesus says just because He's said it?

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, I am sorry for the things I have done wrong in my life. I ask Your forgiveness. Thank you for dying on the cross for me to set me free from my sins. Come into my life Jesus. I believe you are Jesus my Lord and Saviour. Lord fill me with your Holy Spirit and be with me always . Amen