



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion  
17 – The Prize and Call

10/29 @6:30

Grace Group at  
3513 Northpointe Dr

~~10/31 @6:00~~

~~Grace Group at  
2070 Corley Dr~~

~~10/31 @6:30~~

~~Grace Group at  
1710 Mariposa Dr~~

**ICE BREAKER:** What is the best thing that you have ever won?

**REVIEW:** Was there anything covered or said on Sunday that you had any questions or comments about?

**READ:** Philippians 3:12-16

Recently Jayden and I were talking about how school was going for him, in particular Spanish class, and he said, “it’s going good, the only problem is I keep messing up the little words.” I told him that he needs to work on that, because often the little words are the most important! We see that phenomenon happening in our passage for today. Lets start by looking at verse 14. In the ESV: “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” We often read this thought as if we have a prize *and* a call. But the beautiful point of the small words we actually read is that it is the prize *of* the call because in many ways, the prize *is* the call. And this is what I would like to talk about today!

In order to see that the call is our prize and that our prize is the call that we have, first we have to ask: what is the “upward call”? What we find as our answer here is that it falls squarely into the “easier to say than do” category. The upward call is simply perfection. Our first clue is in this text. In verse 12 Paul says “not that I have already obtained this or an *already perfect*.” But it is not just Paul that thinks this way. Peter reminds us that we are to “be holy for [God] is holy.” (1 Peter 1:16). The “upwards call” is the call to holiness, and by this we mean every thought that goes into holiness. It is to be set apart, it is to be righteous, free from the sin that entangles us. That’s our call, before we go further we should ask: how are you doing here?

**DISCUSS:** How does it feel to know that we are called to holiness? How can we maintain this “upward call” without becoming legalistic or judgemental?

Once we understand how high the upward call is, a different thought might creep in: how can we call such a huge responsibility and weight a “prize”? A prize is the reward, we might think, not the work that it takes to get there! And while I certainly sympathize with this thought, it misses the point completely. To try and help us understand this, let’s think about salvation and our standing before God. To start we can note this: there is no “middle ground” when it comes to God. You are either his child, or his enemy, and the “default position” is not his child! We know this to be true, since “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” If we think of a prize as the payoff for our work, then what is the prize that we are all working too? Well, the wages (prize!) of sin is death. But that is not the end of the story. Because we have been freed from sin (even though I am not perfect) and have been given an upward call. In other words, rather than working for the prize of death, I can now, because I am in Christ, participate in the second half of Romans 6:23 which tells us that “the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” It is a prize because the hard part was done by Jesus. Now I look to him, live for him, and know that “he who calls me is faithful, he will surely do it.”

**DISCUSS:** In what ways is the call the prize? What happens if we reverse the thought, and say the prize is that we are called, how does that help us think through all of this? How can we communicate the goodness of the call that we have with the world around us?