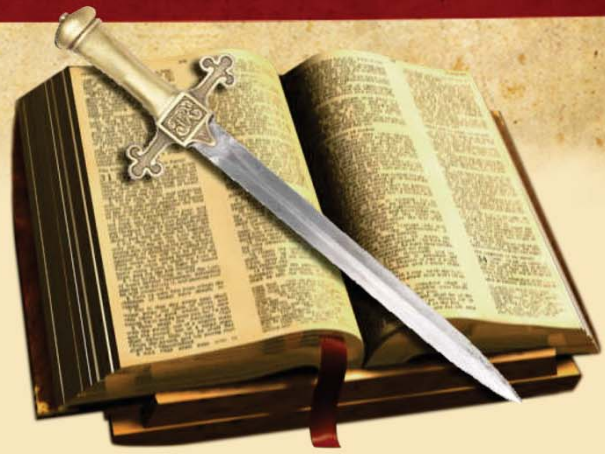


# Setting Your Heart

on the

# Kingdom



## PHILIPPIANS

### *Why Old Apostles Refuse to Die!*

*(The Principle of: An Unfinished Course)*

Philippians 1:21-26

Paul had a death sentence hanging over his head. That's what they do to apostles and prophets....they kill them! Yet this aging apostle didn't fear death, he welcomed it! Listen to Paul's words to the church in Philippi, *"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. I am hard-pressed from both directions,"* he continued, *"having the desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake!"* Paul knew his purpose on earth wasn't over. In four short years, he would die at Nero's hand. *But until then, God's Church needed the wisdom and revelation only he could give. Paul's course was unfinished...and he refused to die until it was completed!*

Twice Paul spoke of "finishing his course." Both times he was facing death...once at Jerusalem (*Acts 20:24*) and finally just before he was martyred (*2 Tim. 4:7*). The term he used came from the Greek athletic games...a race to the finish line. God had placed a "race" before him to complete. The course was long and dangerous. Many who began the race either gave up or were disqualified for breaking the rules (*1 Cor. 9:24-27*). The finish line was at the end of the race. And the final reward for running well was a three-fold crown...Righteousness (*2 Tim. 4:8*), Glory (*1 Pet. 5:4*) and Eternal Life (*Rev. 2:10*)! *No, Paul wasn't going to die...not until he had fulfilled the purpose for which he was born!*

Young Pastor, do you wonder why your aging senior pastor doesn't just retire at 65 or 70? Do you think he's selfishly keeping the church to himself? If you do, then you don't know a thing about God's Kingdom. If the "old apostle" quits before his mission is complete, he'll die in failure! Young Executive, are you questioning why the "old man" who founded the company still shows up at 7:00AM? If God birthed the business in his heart, he'll not give it up till he's run his full course. *An unfinished course is a sign of failure.* No matter who you are or how old you may be, don't prematurely quit the race God has set before you. Don't let age, persecution, pressure or sickness, stop you. *Tenaciously fight to finish your course. It's the purpose for which you were born!*

*Next: The Kingdom of God in Colossians - The Toughest Assignment of Them All!*

