

# DROP YOUR BACKPACK

## I RESOLVE

### THE TAKEAWAY

The best resolution you could make is to know God more.

### OPENING QUESTION

What's the hardest you've ever worked on something? How did you feel when you finished?

### WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT

**Ask:** Who's the fastest runner in here?

1. Time the student as they run a short distance.
2. Have other students fill a bag or backpack with heavy books or other heavy objects.
3. Put the backpack on the runner and fill his or her hands with books as well.
4. Time the runner as they re-run the same distance with the extra weight.

As fun as it was to make our friends run, we can all agree that extra weight makes running more difficult.

Paul showed that we can add extra weight in our pursuit of God, too. In his time, some people claimed that following Jesus meant obeying uber-detailed Old Testament laws as well. It was legalism at a high level. Imagine being a new Christ-follower in that situation: you were told that Jesus died for your sins, but then you were given a giant list of *extra* rules to follow. *Huh?* It's like running a race with a backpack.

It's tempting to make a list of "dos and don'ts" to help us follow Jesus. But Paul wrote that the simpler—and best—way to do it is to run hard after God himself. He never said that we shouldn't pay close attention to the "dos and don'ts"—those things show us how to live like Jesus and follow him. But our main goal must be knowing him.

We still resolve to run hard, but—instead of chasing good behavior—we chase after Jesus. He can change us from the inside out.

**Read Philippians 3:7–14.**

### DISCUSS:

- Paul is saying that no accomplishment or good thing compares to knowing Christ.
  - What good things or accomplishments in your life do you need to remind yourself aren't as important as knowing Jesus?
  - Is it easy or difficult for you to spend time getting to know Jesus? Why?
- Paul talks a lot about "pressing on" in knowing God. What does it look like to work hard on a relationship with God?

## APPLY IT

Think of one way you try to earn God's favor. What would it look like to refocus that time on knowing God better instead?

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

## MEMORY VERSE

"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 3:8 (ESV)

## ON YOUR OWN...

Prayer doesn't always come easily. Sometimes we need help to know when to pray, how to pray, and what to pray about. This week use the ACTS Prayer Method to spend time with God and learn about his character.

### ACTS PRAYER

The ACTS Prayer Method is a tool to guide you toward a complete process of prayer and away from the common wish list of things you want from God. Pray through the following:

**Adoration:** Praise God for who he is

**Confession:** Confess your sins before God

**Thanksgiving:** Offer thanks for God's gifts

**Supplication:** Present your requests to God