

THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG

STEP 6 OF THE TWELVE STEPS

Were entirely ready to have God remove all of these defects of character.

PHILIPPIANS 3

If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 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 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. (4-11)

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (12-14)

EXCERPT FROM: ROHR, RICHARD. "BREATHING UNDER WATER."

It struggles with—and resolves—the old paradox of the chicken and the egg. It first recognizes that we have to work to see our many resistances, excuses, and blockages, but then we have to fully acknowledge that God alone can do the "removing"! But which should come first, grace or responsibility? The answer is that both come first.

WHAT LIES BEHIND

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

We can too often, like Paul illustrates, believe that we have ample reason for boasting. Our life's accomplishments surely merit us righteousness. When we boast in our flesh, we don't really have much need for God to remove our sin.

On August 7, 1954 the "miracle mile" took place between Roger Bannister and John Landy, the only two sub-four-minute milers in the world. Bannister strategized that he would relax during the third lap and save everything for his finishing drive. But as they began the third lap, Landy poured it on, stretching his already substantial lead. Bannister adjusted his strategy, increasing his pace and gaining on Landy.

The lead was quickly cut in half, and at the bell for the final lap they were even. Then came the famous moment as at the last stride before the homestretch the crowds roared. Landy couldn't hear Bannister's footfall and looked back, a fatal lapse of concentration. Bannister launched his attack and won the race that day by five yards.

WHAT LIES AHEAD

FUTURE GLORY

When we forget our past accomplishments, we're freed up to have God work in our lives. He can remove sin from our hearts. We're left without distractions, able to focus on the prize before us of knowing and seeing our Savior.

OUR HOPE

JESUS

This is only possible because Jesus bought a way for us. Because Jesus lived the life of perfect righteousness in our place, we're freed up to run to God as well, by the Holy Spirit. Sharing in his sufferings, we attain the resurrection of the dead.