



I press on
toward the goal to
win the prize for
which God has
called me
heavenward
in Christ
Jesus.

Philippians 3:14

Following the upward call through Philippians ...

Willing and Working

Sooner or later it is a battle of the wills. It is the will of God vs. the will of Satan. It is man's free will; which will he choose? For man, what seems to be a big choice or a big decision is actually the accumulation of all those little decisions that were made at each step along the way. Hence it is that the battle of the wills is going to be played out day by day in the mind of each person so long as he inhabits this earth. And where the will gets tested is when it comes time to do the work. Many a good intention and firm determination shipwreck on the coral reef of

the individual's having to engage in the intense and extended labor necessary to bring about the desired goal. May God help the Christian!

- **Strengthening the will** — The record of mankind's being able to have a strong will to do what is right is abjectly poor. The saint, then, still dripping wet with the waters of immersion, on the inside is a new creation, but on the outside is going to need a tremendous amount of reprogramming to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. The loving Father in heaven is intensely interested in the saint's success, and is willing to give the appropriate assistance for the disciple's growth. The apostle Paul thusly points out that "it is God who is at work in you." God is there, and He is not idle! The awesome power that created the universe, the mega-power that raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him at the right hand of power, is at work in each Christian. And one of the ways in which this power is at work is to strengthen the will of the saint. The follower of Christ needs a tremendous amount of will power to fight the good fight of faith to the finish, to finish his personal spiritual marathon triumphantly. These are simple statements, but they must not be taken lightly. The will to win — to keep fighting on through the dark moments, when all seems lost and hopeless — is a very prized quality, and great thanks needs to be given to the great God who works to produce that will power in His children.

**The will to win
and the will to
work are strength-
ened by God**

- **Power to work** — Another name for the indwelling Spirit is "times of refreshing" coming from the presence of the Lord (Acts 3:19). When the saint is involved in the work of the Lord, his stamina can be pressed almost to the breaking point, and he needs that extra which the Spirit of God provides. A sample of such saints shows up in Paul's closing comments to the church in Rome: "Greet Tryphana and Tryphosa," encouraged the apostle, "*workers in the Lord*. Greet Persis the beloved, who has *worked hard in the Lord*" (Romans 16:12). The work of the Lord is physically challenging; there are travel and transportation issues in simply getting to the lost to share the word of the Lord with them, or similarly in meeting the needs of the weaker Christians. In addition, the work of the Lord is emotionally challenging; a lot of seed has to be sown, and, since only a percentage of it falls on good soil, there are many emotional challenges over the fact that most reject the word of truth and secure their own place in the eternal fires of hell. There are also emotional challenges connected with concern for the saints' staying faithful. "Who is weak without my being weak?" queried the apostle Paul. "Who is led into sin without my intense concern?" (2 Corinthians 11:29). That intense concern can be emotionally draining as well. Hence, the disciple of Christ needs the power the Lord provides so that he can continue to do the work.

What encouragement these words from the apostle Paul bring: "It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure!!"

JAY WILSON