

Pressing On in 2023

Philippians 3:7-16

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- *What is your goal in life?*
- **Before his conversion, Saul or Paul's goal was to be the best Pharisee, the top of his class.**
 - Galatians 1:13-14-- *"For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers."*
- **After his conversion...**
 - **Paul devalued his past accomplishments**
 - Philippians 3:7-9-- *"But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith."*
 - **Paul established a new goal**
 - Philippians 3:10-11-- *"that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."*
 - Long-term goal: Graduate at the head of his class-- *"may attain to the resurrection from the dead"*
 - Intermediate goals
 - *"To know Him" personally and experientially*
 - *To know "the power of His resurrection"*
 - *To experience the "fellowship of His suffering"*
 - *"Being made conformable unto His death"*
 - Summary: Paul's goal was to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He wanted to be found in Christ, clothed in His righteousness. Christlikeness. Spiritual maturity.
 - Romans 8:29-- *"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."*
 - **Thirty years after his conversion, Paul's assessment is that he has not arrived.**
 - Philippians 3:12-- *"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me."*
 - If Paul hasn't arrived, neither have we! All of us have unfinished business!
 - *So, if we have not arrived, what should be our stance? Hot Pursuit.* Pressing on to maturity!
 - Question: *How? How do we press on in developing Christlikeness or spiritual maturity?*

Pressing On in 2023

- Philippians 3:13-16-- *"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think*

otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind."

A. We must admit to ourselves, "I have not arrived"!

1. First step to a teachable spirit
2. Even those who are spiritually mature need to have the same attitude
 - Philippians 3:15-- "Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you."
3. The need to come to church with a teachable attitude
4. Practicing the personal, spiritual disciplines

B. We must be single-minded.

- Philippians 3:13a-- "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; **but one thing I do.**"
1. Maximum effort without focused concentration is useless.
 2. The need to keep our eyes on Jesus
 - Hebrews 12:2-- "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."
 3. Case study: Jesus' encounter with two sisters, Martha and Mary
 - Luke 10:39-42-- "And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."
 - a. Martha was distracted with much serving, and thus worried and troubled about many things.
 - b. Mary chose to focus on the One-- Jesus Christ. It was the one thing needed.
 4. The opposite of single-minded is double-minded.
 - James 1:8-- "double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

C. We must forget our past.

- Philippians 3:13-- "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, **forgetting those things which are behind** and reaching forward to those things which are ahead."
1. We can become discouraged by our past failures and sins.--
 - Hebrews 12:1-- "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."
 - a. We must deal with the "weights" or "baggage" of our past.
 - b. We must deal with the "sin that so easily entangles us"
 - c. Our adversary never forgets our weaknesses nor sin, and he constantly casts them up to us to discourage us in our spiritual journey.
 2. We can become self-satisfied and complacent by past accomplishments.

D. We must press on to reach our goal.

- Philippians 3:13-14-- " Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and **reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**"
1. "Reaching forward" means to stretch and strain every muscle to reach the finish line. All-out effort!
 2. What to do if you find yourself to be on a plateau.
 - Philippians 3:16-- "Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. "