

PRESSING FORWARD FOR GOD

Text: Philippians 3:10-14

Key Word: Pressing

Key Thought: There Are Fundamental Beliefs That We must all Have in Order to Advance in Our Christian Walk

Everyone in this room today is going to reach their goal in life. No one will miss it. That surprises some of you, doesn't it? You've been taught and believe that many people miss their goals in life. **What they actually miss are THOSE THINGS THAT ARE SECONDARY to everything else or those things that were too unrealistic to ever reach in the first place.** What we say; what do we do; places we go to; where we spend our money (etc.) all speaks of our goals in life.

If your goal is worthwhile reaching – can be reached and is on the top of your list – and as a Christian is guided by God, you will have every opportunity to reach your goal and even surpass it. Is the main goal we have in life really worth the effort? Are you focused on your goal?

Eye on the Ball

*** One time when Michigan State was playing UCLA in football, the score was tied at 14 with only seconds to play. Duffy Daugherty, Michigan State's coach, sent in place kicker Dave Kaiser who booted a field goal that won the game.

When the kicker returned to the bench, Daugherty said, "nice going, but you didn't watch the ball after you kicked it."

"That's right, Coach," Kaiser replied. "I was watching the referee instead to see how he'd signal it. I forgot my contact lenses, and I couldn't see the goal posts." ***

"Bits & Pieces"
September 15, 1994, pp. 7-8

What Must We Do to Reach Our Goals in Life?

I. TAKE HOLD OF WHAT'S CHRISTLIKE (Philippians 3:12)

II. STRAIN TOWARD WHAT IS AHEAD (Philippians 3:13)

III. PRESS ONTO WIN THE PRIZE (Philippians 3:14)

I. TAKE HOLD OF WHAT'S CHRISTLIKE (Philippians 3:12)

It is so easy to get distracted in our Christian walk. There are plenty of bright lights and loud voices to beckon our attention. They proclaim freedom and happiness. I've watched innocent people unknowingly turning to these self-proclaimed prophets for "answers" and for "true life" only to end up as another statistic.

This pathway seems "controllable" at the beginning. We seem to be able to turn off its luring power at the beginning. But as time progresses, so does its grip upon our will. We can play the game of "who is in control" for a little while, until reality sets in. It is then that we must admit to the fact that "it" has taken over. Is there a way to avoid the subtle dangers that constantly cross our pathway? Yes there is, and it is not complicated.

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me."

Philippians 3:12

A. An Attitude of Humility

Paul stood as a leader in his generation. Few people had ever or would ever reach the height of excellence that this man did (Philippians 3:4-6). He stood far ahead of the crowd in religious zealotry. It gave him plenty to boast about. Instead he chose the roadway of humility. He said . . .

"I am the least of the apostles." - 1 Corinthians 15:9

"I am the very least of all the saints." - Ephesians 3:8

"I am the foremost of sinners." - 1 Timothy 1:15

In our text he realized that he hadn't made it yet – he wasn't perfect. In other words he was admitting that had a long way to go. To put it in one word we would call it HUMILITY.

*** Alex Haley, the author of ROOTS, has a picture in his office, showing a turtle sitting atop a fence. The picture is there to remind him of a lesson he learned long ago: *"If you see a turtle on a fence post, you know he had some help."*

Says Alex, *"Any time I start thinking, WOW, isn't this marvelous what I've done! I look at that picture and remember how this turtle—me—got up on that post."* ***

Philip Barry Osborne

"Handbook of Magazine Article Writing"

I. TAKE HOLD OF WHAT'S CHRISTLIKE (Philippians 3:12) (Contd.)

B. An Attitude of Holding on

Not only are we to walk in humility but also in persistency. It is not easy serving the Lord in a secular world but it is a lot harder living for ourselves in a secular world.

None of us would argue that our world is being violently tossed about. There is little stability in placing our trust in this world and its mind set. Many people are wondering how we've lasted as long as we have. In our state of **HOLDING ON** we must also **STAND FIRM**. There is no need to panic.

God has a purpose for each and every one of us. He has "taken hold of us" for a specific reason. We are not just passing through life aimlessly. We need to find our "Christlike niche" and live it to the fullest. **Dr. G. Campbell Morgan said this about believers who are reluctant to commit themselves wholeheartedly to Christ:**

"When our convictions are yielded to Him completely, He is able to give Himself to us in all His fullness. Until that is so, He cannot trust us."

"Today in the Word"
April 1998, p. 23

II. STRAIN TOWARD WHAT IS AHEAD (Philippians 3:13)

We not only need to "**HOLD ON**" we also need to "**STRAIN AHEAD.**" Once again Paul uses a verb to indicate how Christians ought to live. He used the word "*strain*" or "*press*" which means "*to pursue; to follow after; to be given to.*"

Can I ask you a personal question today? What is it in life that captivates your heart? What makes it skip a beat? What puts life in your bones? I'll tell you what it is – it is your one main goal in life. Whatever that is, you will put all of yourself into it.

We all need to "*to pursue, follow after and be given to*" a goal that is pleasing to God. Is God happy with what you are doing with your life? When you someday stand before Him will He say that He is pleased with what you used your talents and resources towards?

II. STRAIN TOWARD WHAT IS AHEAD (Philippians 3:13) (Contd.)

A. Don't Strain for the Past

What is in the past – is in the past. We cannot change it. It is not worthy of your time, effort or emotions. It will drain you if you allow it to. It can bring out all kinds of unhealthy emotions if you allow it to.

The Past is a Place of Reference NOT a Place of Residence

B. Don't Strain for the Present

If you are the kind of person who gets all upset because things are “not just right” its time to give yourself a break in life. **Life is not perfect. It will throw you a few curve balls.** When it does, you need to keep your focus on the Christlike Goal that you have set **BEFORE** yourself. **Don't get caught up in the “here and now.”** One of my favorite verses years ago was

“And it came to pass . . .”

Luke 2:1

I know there are plenty of people who suggest that we should live our life - “*One Day at a Time.*” There is some truth to that thought, but there is also some danger. **A bad day can stifle our hope while thinking about tomorrow can offer hope.**

C. Strain for the Future

“Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,”

Philippians 3:13

“Never be afraid to trust an **unknown future** to a **known God**”

Corrie Ten Boom

The future is bright for everyone who places their hope in God and fulfills the one main goal that they have been born into this world for.

III. PRESS ONTO WIN THE PRIZE (Philippians 3:14)

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

Philippians 3:14

Paul puts everything into proper perspective when it comes to fulfilling our goal of life in this one simple verse. Notice that he did not say **GOALS** but rather **GOAL**. The Greek word used for “**goal**” which is ONLY used here in Paul’s letters means “***the mark on the race track at the finishing post to which every athlete would direct his/her eye.***” **There is not a competitive sport IN LIFE that has more than one goal for any athlete team or individual to cross over.** The same holds true in the competitive sport **OF Life**. **What Was the Goal That Came with a Prize That Paul Spent His Whole Life to Achieve?**

A. The Prize Coming from Serving Christ

1. Faithful Servant - *Matthew 23:21,23,34-36; Mark 10:42-45*

2. The Crowns

- i). **The Incorruptible Crown** - *I Corinthians 9:25* (getting to the finish)
- ii). **The Crown of Righteousness** - *II Timothy 4:8* (longing to see Jesus)
- iii). **The Crown of Life/Victor’s Crown** - *James 1:12; Revelation 2:10* (perseveres under trials)

B. The Prize Coming from Knowing Christ

*“I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, **becoming like him in his death**, 11. and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”*

Philippians 3:10,11

C. The Prize of Christ Himself

*“What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of **knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, **that I may gain Christ.**”*

Philippians 3:8

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Date: Feb 11/24

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Holy Forever - G

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A. Don't Strain for the Past

B. Don't Strain for the Present - Luke 2:1

C. Strain for the Future - Philippians 3:13

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