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# Pressing Onward

## Introduction

### Scripture Reading: Philippians 3:7-16

1. In our course of life, what really matters is what lies before us - not behind us.
  - A. Before starting an automobile race, the Italian driver ripped off his rear view mirror and while throwing it out of his car, turned to his passenger and said "What lies behind me is not important!"
  - B. It would be tough to go through life like a rear view mirror with nothing to look forward to.
2. In our lesson today I want us first to look at the two key verses of Philippians 3: and then look at four important principles.

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.

- A. **Four Important Principles:**
  - 1) Forgetting what lies behind.
  - 2) Reaching forward to what lies ahead.
  - 3) Press on toward the mark (or goal).
  - 4) A reward is waiting for the faithful.

## Forgetting What Lies Behind

1. **“Forgetting” - “forgotten, neglected, no longer cared for, leaving.”**
  - A. **The apostle Paul gives us an example of “leaving” the past.**  
**Philippians 3:4-9**
  - B. **Notice in Verse 8 he says “all things” - this represents a complete sacrifice, without reservations.**
  - C. **Others forgot what lied behind and sacrificed themselves for God.**
    - 1) **Abraham. (the 12th chapter of Genesis is the story of Abraham following God)**  
**Genesis 12:1, 4, 9**
      - a. **The Hebrew writer sums up Abraham’s faith.**

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.

- 2) **Lot did not look back.**  
**Genesis 19:17, 26**
  - a. **We are told to “remember Lot's wife” - we must follow Jesus!**  
**Luke 17:32-33**

Luke 9:62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

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**D. We must “forsake all.”**

Luke 14:33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

- 1) **This means to renounce or bid farewell.**
2. **We are told to “lay aside the old self.”**  
**Ephesians 4:22-24**
3. **There are things one may have to leave behind.**
  - A. **Such as the religious practices of our father, mother, or any other that is not according to God’s word.**

Matthew 15:9 AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME, **TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.**! "

- B. **The pleasures of sin.**  
**Hebrews 11:24-26**
- C. **The love of money.**  
**1 Timothy 6:9-10**
- D. **Our own family.**  
**Matthew 10:34-39**
- E. **Anything that stands between us and a life of service to the Lord!**

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

- 1) **We can learn from our experiences - then press onward!**

## Reaching Forward to What Lies Ahead

1. **“Reaching” - “to stretch forward, stretching out, to stretch one’s self toward, as a runner in a race” (verses drawing back).**

Hebrews 10:38-39 NOW THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; BUT IF ANYONE **DRAWS BACK**, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM." But we are not of those who **draw back to perdition**, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

2. **We are to “seek those things above.”**

Colossians 3:1-2 If then you were raised with Christ, **seek those things which are above**, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind **on things above**, not on things on the earth.

- A. **To “seek” is to strive for, by “patient continuance.”**

Romans 2:7 eternal life to those who by **patient continuance in doing good** seek for glory, honor, and immortality;

Hebrews 10:36 For you have need of **endurance**, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

3. **We should possess a “desire.”**

1 Peter 2:2 as newborn babes, **desire the pure milk of the word**, that you may grow thereby,

4. **We “hunger and thirst” for godliness.**

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness**, For they shall be filled.

## 5. We should run as though only one can win.

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one **receives the prize**? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, **but we for an imperishable crown.**

### A. As a further stressing of this point we should:

## Press on Toward the Mark (Goal)

1. **“Press” - “to pursue, speeding on earnestly, to run swiftly in order to catch some person or thing, to run after, to press on.”**
2. **“Mark” - “to set our eye on.”**

### A. It shows determination on our part. Look at Christ’s example:

Matthew 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this **rock I will build My church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

- 1) **Christ was determined to build His church and that death and hades would not prevent this from happening – He proved this when He overcame death and established His church (Acts 2).**

### B. We are to walk worthy of our calling. **Ephesians 4:1-3**

- 1) **Be diligent, be zealous.**

2 Peter 1:10 Therefore, brethren, be even more **diligent to make your call and election sure**, for if you do these things you will never stumble;

**C. We are to be living sacrifices for Him.**

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

**D. We belong to the Lord, both body and spirit.**

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

**E. We must yield ourselves completely to Him as Paul did in Romans 6:1-23.****F. We should possess one desire - "to gain (win) Christ!"**

Philippians 3:8-9 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;

**3. If we would simply forget about what lies behind, concentrate on what lies ahead, and press on toward that goal then we can receive:**

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## The Reward Awaiting the Faithful

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### 1. "Crown of righteousness."

2 Timothy 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

### 2. "Crown of life."

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

**A. This is promised to those that have been approved, or have passed the test. One has shown that through faith and perseverance that one is worthy to receive this crown of life.**

### 3. "Imperishable crown."

1 Corinthians 9:25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

# Invitation

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**Date**

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Richie Thetford, December 1993 – Reworked November 2023