

Press on the for the Prize

April 7, 2019

Open: How have some of the goals you have aimed at in your life affected the course of your life?

Read: Philippians 3:1-14

Discuss:

1. What would the old Paul have been like as a friend (vv. 2-6)? Why is Paul so determined to warn the Philippians about those who currently think as he used to think (vv. 2-3)?
2. What are some ways that we as believers today might put "confidence in the flesh" (v. 4)? How does doing this get in the way of knowing Christ?
3. How is the new Paul different from the old Paul (vv. 7-11)? What are some of the differences between who you were before Christ and who you have become in Christ?
4. In verse 10 Paul says that he longs to know Christ. How might Paul's current knowledge of Christ be lacking? How can we progress in actually knowing Christ?
5. How do we share in the suffering and death of Christ in a way that better helps us know Jesus (vv. 10-11)? How have you experienced this in your own life?
6. In verses 12-14, Paul compares the Christian life to a race. How are they similar? How should this race perspective shape how we live?
7. When running, how can looking back distract us? What is it about our past that we need to forget (v. 13)? Are there things about our past that we should not forget? If so, what and why?
8. What is the prize that we are looking forward to (vv. 14)? What are some practical ways we can "strain forward to what lies ahead" (v. 13)? If Christ has already made us his own and secured this prize for us, why do we need to keep pressing forward toward this prize?

Apply: How would you rephrase verses 12-14 in your own words? What's one way that you can work at cultivating the same goal and commitment ?

Pray: Pray that we will be people who have this same attitude of Paul, who continually press forward to better know Christ and to become more like him.

Philippians 3:1-14

¹ Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

² Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. ³ For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— ⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ 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; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ 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 ⁹ 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— ¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹² 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. ¹³ 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, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (ESV)