

"I Press Forward"

Introduction. The point of Philippians 3:12-14 is that we have not obtained the prize (or reward) yet -- we must press on! All of us are aware of the past, and we must always learn to press forward. "Pressing forward" means that we are focused on the goal of going to heaven.

Satan's devices will hinder us if we let them (2 Corinthians 2:11). They include false doctrine, a focus on past sins and error with pride, a focus on the past with despair, exaggerated self-righteousness and exaggerated self-condemnation. We lose our way because we lose our focus on heaven. We are going to discuss how to stay on the path and press forward in three areas: as an individual Christian, as a local church and as a family.

I. ***Pressing Forward As An Individual***

- A. This requires a sober self-examination.
 - 1. Paul did it of himself and encouraged others to do as well.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.
 - b) 2 Corinthians 13:5-6.
 - 2. One must first examine themselves, then admonish others (Romans 15:14).
- B. We must press on to draw closer to God.
 - 1. In Bible study, we listen to God (Psalm 19:7-11).
 - 2. In prayer, we talk to God (Philippians 4:6-7).
- C. We must press on to grow in godly character (2 Peter 1:5-7).
- D. We must press on to serve, not to be served (John 13:12-15).
- E. We must press on to be pure from the world.
 - 1. This is a part of pure religion (James 1:27).
 - 2. We are not to be conformed to the world (Romans 12:2).
- F. We must press on to teach others.
 - 1. This is commanded under the "great commission" (Matthew 28:19-20).
 - 2. This will require ceaseless efforts (Acts 5:42).
- G. We must press on and fight to the end (1 Timothy 6:12).
- H. As individuals, are we staying on the right path and pressing forward?

II. ***Pressing Forward As A Congregation***

- A. We must fulfill its mission.
 - 1. Proclaim the gospel of Christ (1 Timothy 3:15-16).
 - a) This congregation has done wonderfully in preaching the gospel in this country and in other countries, most notably the Philippines and El Salvador. However, we must press forward.
 - b) The written word, in the form of *The Gospel Teacher*, *The Peddler*, and our website, reach thousands of people each week.

- c) Gospel meetings, which have been a regular part of this work for years, will continue in the years to come. They are wonderful opportunities for us to invite those who have never heard or obeyed the gospel.
 - d) Although we often say that we need to be aggressive and militant when it comes to standing for the truth (as we will see later), we also need this stance regarding evangelism.
- 2. Worship God and edify the saints (Acts 2:42).
 - a) This can be accomplished through regular worship and classes.
 - b) This can be accomplished through special classes such as the men's classes and the ladies' classes. Training classes also teach how to worship and edify.
 - c) This can also be accomplished through the written word and gospel meetings.
- 3. Benevolence to needy saints (Acts 11:27-30).
 - a) We need to practice this among our own number.
 - b) We need to practice this among saints in other places.
- 4. All of these practices require members who give liberally (2 Corinthians 8:5; 9:6-7).
- B. We must practice discipline.
 - 1. To save the erring saint (1 Corinthians 5:4-5).
 - 2. To purify the church (1 Corinthians 5:6-7).
- C. We must take an uncompromising stand for truth.
 - 1. We need to use the examples in the Bible to help us.
 - a) We need to stand like Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3; Revelation 2:2).
 - b) We need to resist the compromise of Pergamos (Revelation 2:14-15).
 - 2. We must stand against both every false doctrine and for the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).
- D. As a congregation, are we staying on the right path and pressing forward?

III. ***Pressing Forward As A Family***

- A. We are united by God, and we must cultivate that union (Genesis 2:24).
- B. Husbands are to lead in the way of God.
 - 1. God knew that Abraham would lead his family (Genesis 18:19).
 - 2. Husbands, you need to treasure your wife like a piece of fine china (1 Peter 3:7).
- C. God's challenge to the whole family is that each must press on and act in the right way (Colossians 3:18-21).
- D. How can we press forward?

1. Prayer and Bible study (Psalm 19:7-11; Philippians 4:6-7).
 2. Assemble with the saints (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 16:13).
 3. Control your temper and tongue (Ephesians 4:26; James 3:8).
 4. Firm, loving discipline (Proverbs 19:18; Hebrews 12:5-11).
 5. Put spiritual needs first and provide physical needs (Matthew 6:33; 1 Timothy 5:8).
 6. Give your children time, attention, and training (Deuteronomy 6:7; Ephesians 6:4).
- E. As a family, are we staying on the right path and pressing forward?

Conclusion. Philippians 3:12-16 is a powerful passage! The mature mind will stay on the path and trust God to providentially direct our future course. However, we must first get on the right path. As an erring saint, you must repent, confess and pray (Acts 8:22; James 5:16). As an alien sinner, you must believe (John 8:24), repent (Acts 17:30), confess Christ (Matthew 10:32), and be baptized (Galatians 3:27).