

**2016: Week 44**

Sunday, October 30<sup>th</sup> 2016

*"Press On!"*

**Philippians 3:14**

"<sup>14</sup> I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (NASB).

---

Have ever felt like you're stuck in a spiritual rut? Perhaps you've felt like you have been faithfully serving the Lord, yet He isn't opening the doors you thought He might open. The satisfaction that you thought you'd feel, the progress that you thought would be visible, and the appreciation that you thought you'd receive for serving the Lord just isn't occurring. What do you do then? The apostle Paul provides encouragement for the believer who might be experiencing such discouragements from our passage this week from **Philippians 3:12-21**. Our God sees all! When it may seem like our faithfulness doesn't matter or it just goes unnoticed, remember this—God not only sees how we live, but He also cares how we live, and He will reward us for how we live now in His kingdom later. We are to be a future-oriented people. No matter what you encounter now, if you have Jesus, you can keep going. May this week's passage encourage you to press on in faithful service to our great God!

**1. READ Philippians 3:12-14**

- When Paul says he was "forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead" (3:13), what do you think he means?
- Sometimes it can be easy to focus so much on past decisions that we are unable to properly move forward in the present. Our poor decisions in the past might generate so much guilt and shame that we don't think the Lord can use us, and thus we make ourselves ineffective for His service. In a similar fashion, the good decisions we've made in the past might lead us towards developing pride in ourselves, so that we "rest on our accomplishments" (Charles Ryrie). Neither perspective is fruitful. Our motivation to serve the Lord in the present is greatly influenced by our interactions with God regarding the past and the future. God has accomplished so much for us in the past, and He also expects us to hope in Him with our future.

How does your lifestyle demonstrate that you are trusting in the Lord with regards to your present and your future?

What past decisions (whether good or bad) are limiting your faithful service to the Lord now? What do you think the Lord wants you to do about it?

- What is the believer's "prize" in Christ Jesus (3:14)?
- All believers receive the prize of eternal life with the Lord, but it seems that Paul is reminding the Philippian believers that there are more prizes to receive as well *after* you have been saved: spiritual rewards. Spiritual rewards, although often unseen, are granted by the Lord for faithful service done to Him.

What are decisions you've made for the Lord that are mostly (if not entirely) unseen by others?

How might knowing that God wants to reward your faithfulness impact your decisions this week?

**2. READ Philippians 3:15-21**

- In 3:20 Paul says that our citizenship as believers is "in heaven." How might reminding yourself that you are a citizen of heaven (and not of this world) help you in a situation this week at school or work?
- What stood out to you the most from our passage in **Philippians 3:12-21**? Why?

**FAMILY PRAYER:** Thank you, Lord, for seeing me and caring for me. Help me to honor You in my decisions. Help me to have the right attitude and perspective. Help me by the power of Your Holy Spirit to press on! May my faith be solely in You, and may my decisions be wholly faithful to You. Amen.