

¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. – Philippians 3:12-14

The Apostle Paul wrote these words to the Church at Philippi to encourage them to press-on through difficulties and to stay focused on the goal that lies ahead. He had experienced plenty of trials and plenty of victories in his past but he knew that he hadn't "arrived" at the place where God was calling him.

The summer before we were married, my wife and I went on a canoe trip with two friends into the Quetico Wilderness. We had all been on canoe trips before but none of us had anticipated the difficulty of this particular area. The portages were long and hard. Our aluminum canoes were heavy and we didn't have proper footwear for hiking. Before long, we were exhausted and hungry. We wondered if we should turn back or settle for a less desirable campsite. But we were losing daylight so we chose to press-on.

As our muscles ached, we prayed and encouraged each other to keep going. Eventually, we arrived at our campsite just as the sun was setting. It was a beautiful, pristine lake that we had all to ourselves. It was a hard journey but we made it together.

Each of us is on a journey with Jesus. Sometimes the difficulties we face may make us want to abandon our journey or settle for something less than God's best plan. We choose comfort over sacrifice or prefer what is familiar to what is exceptional. The truth is we are not finished, nor is God finished with us, until he calls us heavenward. And even more so, Jesus is holding onto us as we press-on together! May God encourage you by his Holy Spirit and hold you in his grace. Amen.

What is something that you would be better off "forgetting" as you press-on into the future with Jesus?