

PHILIPPINIANS

DAY 3

Philippians 3

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TODAY'S THEME: WHAT'S THE POINT OF ALL THIS?

Philippians 3:12-14 (ESV)

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. 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, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:12-14 (NLT)

I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

It's easy for us to make comparisons between pre-conversion Saul, and post-conversion Paul. If you're new to the Bible, they're the same person. Easy for us to think that Paul really used to be a bad guy. Think about this though - according to the religious standards of that day, Paul was actually a "good" person. Really good actually. I'm sure there would have been many that would have admired him and tried to emulate his way of life. He actually describes in some detail his religious "qualifications" in the opening verses of this chapter, making the point that he really did everything by the book. He followed the law, to the letter of it. He has since had this miraculous conversion experience (Acts 9) and is reminiscing on his past life. If anyone could take confidence in what they had done, it would be Paul. And here's the conclusion he arrives at: WHO CARES. It doesn't matter. Paul had spent much of his life making external expectations his focus, and it was all wrong. His new desire is simply to know Christ and be found in Him. Wow. When you consider the prominence that Paul would have had in the religious community, and the rigor with which he pursued righteousness through what he did, it really is a miraculous transformation.

When I read verse 13, where it speaks of forgetting what is behind, it's easiest to think of leaving our mistakes, shortcomings, and failures behind. What if Paul is actually telling us to leave it all behind, success included? Don't get me wrong. We undoubtedly learn from our successes and failures, but we neither take pride in them, or beat ourselves up for them. The singular focus of our lives is to know Jesus Christ. Think about that. You exist on planet earth, to know God and have a relationship with Him. It's what you were created for. Has He given you a purpose to accomplish during your time on earth? Absolutely yes. Is He going to equip you to do it? He certainly will. However, absolutely everything you ever do will come as a result of the relationship you share with Him. This is a beautiful passage of Scripture. Paul had been a converted Christian for about thirty years at this point, and this is still his attitude. Perhaps one of the reasons Paul tells us to forget the things that are behind, is because for as much you've done, and for as much as you know, there will always be more to do, and more to know. God is never done with any of us. This isn't about getting to a point where we can reminisce about the "good old days." The best is still yet to come.

What is God speaking to me about in today's reading?

MY PRAYER FOR TODAY:

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