

RUNNING FOR THE REAL GOAL IN THE RACE OF LIFE
Sermon Outline & Devotional Guide
Philippians 3:12-16
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How Do We Dream, Pursue And Run The Race For Spiritual Freedom Here?

1. Remember that Christ's plan for us is _____, not _____ (vs. 12).

- † *Matthew 5:48*, Jesus said, "But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (NLT)
- † The word Jesus uses here for "perfect" is the Greek New Testament word [τέλειος; teleios] and this word means "to strive for spiritual _____"
- In verse 12, Paul refers to "it." What is the "it" — _____.

2. Remember that Christ's plan for us is for us to forget the _____ and move into the _____ (vs. 13).

- † *Philippians 3:5-10*, "I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. ⁶ I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault. ⁷ I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. ⁸ Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ ⁹ and become one with Him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with Himself depends on faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead" (NLT).
- In verse 13, Paul uses the word "forgetting." This is the Greek New Testament word [ἐπιλανθάνομαι; epilanthanomai]. This was a Greek word that was used in two ways:
 - To refer _____ to complete _____. We would use this word today to refer to people with dementia or Alzheimer's or those with brain damage who literally forget memories and no longer have the ability to even retrieve them. It means to forget as if you never learned it or remember it or no longer even have that memory.
 - It was an _____ word that was used to express a runner who outran another in the same race: Once he got into the lead, he would never turn and look back; he would forget about the other runner. The one in the lead focused on the _____ before him rather than the other runners behind him.

What Should We Forget From Our Past?

- (a) Great personal accomplishments and attainments that could make us _____.
- (b) Great personal failures and defeats that would make us feel _____, _____, and _____.

3. Remember to embrace the future with _____ in and from the Lord (vs. 13).

- † *Exodus 14:11-12*, "Why did you bring us out here to die in the wilderness? Weren't there enough graves for us in Egypt? What have you done to us? Why did you make us leave Egypt? ¹² Didn't we tell you this would happen while we were still in Egypt? We said, 'Leave us alone! We had it better in Egypt than out here Let us be slaves to the Egyptians. It's better to be a slave in Egypt than a corpse in the wilderness!'" (PAR).

4. Remember the secret is to maintain a determined _____ (vs. 14-16.)

- † *Philippians 3:14*, "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (NASB).

- † *Philippians 3:15, "Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you" (NASB).*
- † *Luke 9:63, Jesus said, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (NASB).*
- † *Luke 17:31-32, Jesus said, "On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. ³² Remember Lot's wife" (NASB).*

There Are Two Dangers Paul Is Refuting In the Local Church

(a) It is easy for us to elevate ourselves as being more mature than others while at the same time _____ on them.

- † *1 Corinthians 9:24, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize?" (NASB).*

(b) It is easy for us to think it is due to _____ that we are spiritually mature rather than by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

- † *Philippians 2:13, "For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (NASB).*

***** Next Steps Devotional Questions *****

1. What are you pressing on in life to get spiritually? Or, are you pressing at all anymore? Or have you just quit, given up, and are settling for where you are in life spiritually right now?
2. Would the Lord Himself say you are progressing or regressing spiritually?
3. Nowhere in the Bible are we told to live a coexistent life with the enemy or our past failures and sins. Instead, we are told that once we have received God's grace for our sins and failures, do not keep looking back. Instead, look forward. Do you do this? Why or why not?
4. How far would you get if you drove your car only by looking in the rearview mirror before you drove off the road or hit something. If you keep basking in the past of the way things used to be, then you diminish your hope of what might be possible today. Why is this true?
5. There are two things we should forget from our past. What are you doing with these two? Are you making some progress with your life today in spite of your past? Are you passionately pursuing God's dream for your life today or are you choosing to live in the nightmare of your past?
6. Studies have shown that as we age, the more we strive for new exciting things rather than living in the past, we will feel younger. We will laugh more and have joy. Why do you think this is true?
7. We learned about two dangers in the church that Paul is refuting and challenging. Which of these do you see more and how could you make a difference with them yourself? Who are you pressing on in your walk with Christ to win them to Christ and to help disciple them in Christ?