

Press Toward the Goal
By Trey Sullins

We live in a world of waste. It is amazing (in a bad way) to see the things people spend money on. For example, a few years ago it was great news to hear that the United States government was no longer funding studies on the fighting habits of hamsters! It is without a doubt that the majority of taxpayers would not be pleased if they knew this is where a portion of their taxes went. Governments waste an incredible amount of money, but everyday people waste their money as well. Most people spend most of their day working, and then the rest of their day buying entertainment. It is disappointing to see how much time and effort is wasted by so many, but imagine a world where people focused on living for God instead of living for the weekend. Paul described this life to us in Philippians 3:13-16 so that we might be able to live proper lives before God.

Philippians 3:13 points out that Christians must look towards the future. The text says, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead.” The meaning here is there is a goal which Paul was reaching for which he had not yet obtained. This goal was the upward call of God as verse 14 shows. Paul knew that in order to make it to heaven he had to keep working hard in his life. The idea is like that of an athlete. Imagine a runner who is running a race, and while running their minds are focused on how they ran the last mile. This is likely going to cause the current mile to be run poorly as well. Christians everywhere should have this mindset where we do not focus on the past but focus on a future of serving God.

A Christian must also press toward the goal. Philippians 3:14 says, “I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” The word “press” signifies an earnest and eager desire to accomplish something. Pairing this with the previous verse, as we run this race of life, we ought to be eagerly looking to make it to that finish line. Our motivation is not just to finish, but to be with God and receive His reward. Think about some of the things that get you motivated in life. They are usually things that get you excited, and you are always ready to be involved with that thing. Now imagine how great would our race-for-God be if we had that kind of energy and motivation about the race itself!

During this race, all Christians have to be in unity. Philippians 3:15-16 says, “Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.” Those who are mature in the faith will understand the necessity of being one. This oneness is not in the things which we might think or feel, but in God and His word. Have you ever seen members of a sports team try and compete against each other in a game? If so, then almost certainly, you also saw them lose that game! We’re all running the same race that has been defined by God; therefore, we have to run by His rules and for His team. Doing this not only aligns us with our true citizenship (Philippians 3:20), but also sets us on a path to victory in heaven.

The goals we press towards and the things we focus our lives on say a lot about us as people. When we examine our own lives where do we line up? Are we looking towards the future, pressing for the goal, and having a unity with each other? This is the pattern set by God and only pattern by

which we can win. Like an athlete, we must make sure that every moment of our lives is focused on running with intensity and unwavering to the goal at the end of the track. Let us all “press towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”