

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS – LESSON 9
PHILIPPIANS 3:12-21
WEEK OF NOVEMBER 10 – NOVEMBER 15
PRESSING ON TO CHRISTLIKENESS

Paul frequently used athletic metaphors in describing the Christian life. One of his favorite athletic references is that of a foot race. “It is that metaphor of the Christian life as a race, expressed in the familiar fourteenth verse. (“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”) that is the theme of **Philippians 3:12 - 21**. The passage reveals Paul's passionate concern for spiritual growth.”

MacArthur New Testament Commentary Philippians, John MacArthur, page 242.

Read Philippians 3:12-14 to answer the following:

1. In **3:12**, Paul was pressing on or striving that “I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.” How does **Romans 8:29** explain that goal of the believer?
2. How does Paul describe the zeal, effort and commitment to strive for growth in Christlikeness in **verses 12 through 14**?
3. From **verse 14**, how does Paul describe the reward for which believers focus and strive? Read also **1 John 3:2**.

Read **Philippians 3:15-16** where Paul refers to those “who are perfect”. He is not referring to practical perfection, but to those who are positionally perfect at the moment of salvation. Practical perfection occurs only at that time when believers enter heaven and are glorified.

In **Philippians 3:15** Paul instructs believers to “have this attitude” which means the same attitude as Paul to be relentlessly and strenuously pursuing the prize of Christlikeness. If a believer does not have that attitude, **vs 15** concludes “God will reveal that also to you.”

“Those who refuse to heed Paul's message will hear that same message from God. He will correct them through His Word, His Spirit or through chastening. God will do whatever it takes to make believers recognize their need to pursue the prize of Christlikeness. He will also provide the resources they need to do that.

(2 Peter 1:3)” MacArthur New Testament Commentary Philippians, John MacArthur, page 249.

4. What does Paul instruct in **vs. 16**?

In **verses 17 to 21**, Paul provides some very practical instruction for the pursuit of Christlikeness. Believers are to follow examples (**vs. 17**), flee from enemies of Christ (vs 18-19), and focus on heaven, the finish line of our pursuit of Christlikeness (**vs. 20-21**).

5. What command does Paul give in **vs.17** to aid in pursuing Christlikeness? What does this tell you about the importance of others in your spiritual growth?

6. How has a more mature believer provided a model for you as you are pursuing Christlikeness?

7. In **vs. 18** where Paul refers to the enemies of the cross, he is likely referring to the Judaizers or false teachers. How did Paul describe them in **vs 19**?

8. In contrast to those who set their minds on earthly things (**v.19**), how does Paul describe the focus of believers and the ultimate destiny of believers in **vs 20-21**?

9. In **vs. 20-21**, Paul provides an exhilarating picture of what awaits true believers, citizens of heaven.

a. What does Paul say about the believer's anticipation of the return of the Lord?

b. How does Paul describe the believer's transformation at His return?

10. What are your personal plans for daily action that will advance your spiritual maturity and steady growth in Christlikeness?

This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day. **John 6:39-40**.

Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. **Colossians 3:1-4**