

I'd **like to speak** today – to Christians who *have the potential* to be Discouraged (so I'm going to need a mirror?)

**We all have** this potential don't we ?

**At times** we can be haunted by our past –  
drug down by failures or trauma long sense over

**At times** we can be Unclear of our Present –  
Why am I doing this again? How did I get here in my life?

**& At times** (if not always) – we are Uncertain about our future –  
What does tomorrow hold ?  
Where is this road taking me ?  
Am I headed where I'm supposed to be ?

And **what about** these **trials & difficulties**?  
Are they a sign that what I'm doing is wrong?  
Is this a sign that I'm supposed to Give Up?

**& then**, worst of all, comes the "grass is greener" syndrome . . .  
Wouldn't it be easier over there ?  
Wouldn't I be happier over there ?  
Maybe I wouldn't have these burdens  
Maybe things would go my way over there

**There's an old story** about the devil deciding to sell some of his tools.  
& a buyer came in & asked about a tool labeled "Not for sale."

**The devil answered**, "I can spare some of my other tools,  
but I cannot spare this one. It may be the most useful tool I have.

it's **called Discouragement**, and with it I can work my way into hearts  
that are otherwise inaccessible.

When I **get this tool** into a man's heart (*even a Godly man*),  
the way is open for me **to plant anything** I want in there"

& often – **the enemy** doesn't even have to work that hard - to get us so discouraged, our **defenses are down** against all kinds of attacks

**So today** - I want to talk to those who may feel the "sting" of discouragement

**which really** . . . is **ALL** of us at one time or another

---

**Abraham** – Even tho he believed God's promise – Became so discouraged when His wife Sarah couldn't bear children that he & Sarah resorted to their own fleshly efforts - & made a big mistake

**Moses** was repeatedly discouraged by the people of God constantly complaining & murmuring against him  
So discouraged – that he disobeyed God about striking a rock once - & his disobedience cost him the chance to see the promised land

**David** was so discouraged at one point in his grueling hiding & running from Saul that – for a time he faked insanity and literally "moved in" with the enemy to escape the pressures of his life

---

So – We who **have the potential** to be discouraged – take hope we are not alone

**thru-out the Bible** men & women of God have become discouraged

**BUT TODAY** – in our study of **Phil** – we come to one of the best texts I could think of . . .

to **combat, & overcome** discouragement in the Christian life

So – **if you are a discouraged** Christian – take hope – God has a Word for you **today**

& if you are **NOT** feeling **discouraged** today;  
then you either know someone who is discouraged  
or you need to save this msg for yourself – **For Later**

## **Let's Pray**

---

In **our previous msg** - Paul drove home the fact that we **CANNOT**  
have confidence in our **own efforts to reach God** . . .

& **we must willingly** forfeit (throw overboard) anything we think  
we've somehow earned to **stand** before God

& **we must Count** all that self effort as "Rubbish" -  
that we main gain Christ – & be found in His righteousness alone !

& **ultimately** (above all else) – WE MUST KNOW HIM –  
Know Jesus **personally, intimately, experientially** . .

---

**& then** - right at that point – Where **some might say**;  
“Great - all I have to do is go sit on a mountain somewhere  
and **KNOW CHRIST** . . .

**RIGHT at that point** – the Bible drives home  
the **REALITY** of true life with Christ

**The Reality strikes** in the very same Vs (**V.10**) –

**Right after** Paul says “*that I may know Him*” –  
he says; that We may also know;

**The Power** of His resurrection –

**The Fellowship** of His suffering - & even

**Be Conformed** unto His death . .

**WHOOAAA** – wait a minute – how we going to do all that  
sitting alone on a **mountain top** just knowing Jesus ?

**WE'RE NOT** – we **can't** – We're **NOT** supposed to

**There's only ONE WAY** to know Christ  
in the *power of His resurrection*

**There's only ONE WAY** to know Christ  
in the *fellowship of His suffering* . . . &

**There's only ONE WAY** to be *conformed even to His death*

**& THAT** – is by waking up *every morning* & living **with** Him -  
& living **for** Him – in the *MIDST of this world (& this life)*

**in the midst** of *whatever circumstances* He's allowing & using  
in our lives **right now** – **today** . . .

*to show us* **the Power** of His resurrection –  
*to show us* **the Fellowship** of His suffering - &  
*to conform us* into **His very Image**

Where **you find yourself** right now –  
*right in the midst* of your present circumstances . . .

**THAT** is where Jesus Christ wants you to **KNOW Him !**

& **THAT** is right *where He wants* you to **Experience** Him – **Fellowship**  
w/ Him - & Be **Conformed** to Him – right there – right now

---

& **so Paul continues** this incredible *“all encompassing goal”* of  
knowing Christ – right in *“The Next Verse”* . .

### **Phil 3:12**

**12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.**

**The word “perfected”** means – ***“to make ultimately complete”***

**Paul** starts by saying “look – I’m **NOT saying** I’ve arrived –  
I’m **NOT saying** that I know Jesus **completely** in all these ways

**in fact**, in these sinful bodies we will always be limited –  
in how perfectly (completely) we can **Know Jesus**

### **1Jn 3:2-3**

**2 . . . but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him,  
for we shall see Him as He is.**

**3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as  
He is pure.**

### **2Cor 3:18**

**18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the  
glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from  
glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

**We are** being transformed into the image of Christ – from glory to glory  
But we won’t completely arrive – until we see Him face to face

& **Paul’s saying** – I haven’t already attained that –  
I haven’t reached that ultimate knowledge. . .

He’s saying - ***I am in the process of knowing Christ at the most  
complete level***

& **that process** involves **KNOWING HIM** **right now** – **right here** –  
**right where** I’m at today –

**Remember** - **Paul is in prison** - - - Where are **YOU** Today . . . ?  
& are you willing to **KNOW CHRIST** – **right now** – **right there**

---

& so now – cont'g in v.12 – Paul writes our Key Words today –

### Phil 3:12 (B)

*... but I press on, ...*

The words “Press On” paint the picture of a Marathon Runner at the end of a race . . .

Leaning forward - stretching for the finish line –  
Pressing every muscle in his body to the extreme

Paul says - **“But I PRESS ON”**

& for what Paul – what are you Pressing On **FOR** ?

### Phil 3:12(B)

*... but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.*

If we are going to overcome discouragement in our own lives –  
we've got to see the Divine Power & Free Will  
working perfectly together in this Vs.

Paul says “I am pressing on – to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me”

The word here for “Lay Hold” is better “**SEIZED**” –

It's LIT – “a strangle-hold” – One translator says it's the picture of a football player being forcefully tackled

It's not just “get around to it” – it's “forcefully tackle” or “**Seize**” –  
**THAT** for which Christ Jesus has already “Seized” **ME!**

Jesus Christ has Already “Seized” you for a purpose –  
**NOW** – it's your turn . . .

Will you “Seize” that for which Christ Jesus has “Seized” you . . .

**Do you have a choice** – **YES** – you absolutely do !

**If you didn't** have a choice then **Paul wouldn't write**  
such a strong encouragement to **PRESS ON**

**We have got** to **Press-On** to become what Jesus Christ  
has "**Seized**" us to become

**& Ultimately that is** to KNOW Him – (right where we're at)  
& **the Power** of His resurrection -  
& **the Fellowship** of His suffering -  
& **being Conformed** even to His death –

**& we do that** right where **we're at** – right where **He has us** . . .

**As a Christian** - **Spouse, Mother, Father, Child, Employee, Minister**

that "**In Christ**" - we **would become** what Jesus "**Seized**" us to become

**Ultimately Knowing Him** - & **Walking w/ Him** –  
in **EVERY** area of our lives –

**being transformed** into His image **from Glory to Glory** –  
until that **Ultimate day** when we will be **like Him** –  
because we will see Him **face-to-face**

---

**So now** – Paul's going to **give us 3 steps** –  
to "**Lay Hold**" of that for which Christ Jesus has "**Laid Hold of US**"

In **Vs.13-14** – we find the "**3-Step Process**" . . .

**Phil 3:13-14** → →

## **Phil 3:13-14**

**13 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,**

**14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

**The words** – “but one thing I do” – indicate a “summing up” –  
**Paul says** - this sums up my entire life with Jesus Christ . . .

- #1) **Forgetting** those things which are behind
- #2) **Reaching** forward to those things which are ahead
- #3) **I Press** toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus

**Let's take** a closer look . . .

---

### **Step #1) Forgetting those things which are behind**

**Most often** in the Bible - the word “forget” **DOES NOT** mean  
“unable to remember”

In **Jer 31** - & in **Heb 10:17** – God says  
“their sins I will remember no more”  
that **doesn't mean** God **becomes** “unable to remember”

It means **LIT** – “I will no longer be influenced by their sins”

& **THAT** is the same concept here – **NOT** an inability to remember –  
**BUT** no longer being influenced by the past

**For some of us** this is the biggest healing there could ever be

**to NO LONGER** be influenced by the past –  
“forgetting those things which are behind”



**Pls hear me** – Whatever is in your past;

if you have **brought It** before God – **Completely Repented** -  
**& Attempted** to *make things right* with the other's involved . . .

Then **YOU CAN** leave it in the past –

*you no longer* have to be **INFLUENCED** by it

**We could talk** all day on this one subject

But **just know** – you **CANNOT** “*Press On*” until you

completely **deal with** & **let go** of those *things in the past*

---

**Step #1) - Forgetting those things which are behind**

**Step #2) - Reaching forward to those things which are ahead**

The **best way** to break the *power of the past* -

is **to start** living *for the future*

**Don't be drug** back into the *mire of the past* –

instead “*Reach Forward to those things which are ahead*”

**again, the picture** here - is that of *a runner* leaning into the race . . .

*leaning forward* . . **eyes** *intently focused* forward . . .

**Every muscle** in his body **straining** to drive himself *forward*

**& by the way** - I don't know if you've ever tried *running backwards* . . .

But **if you're obsessed** with the past –

that's like running a race *backwards* - - - **You WILL Lose**

**But God has** called you to *stop being influenced* by the past -

& to *Press On* – *Reach Forward* . . .

**Lean into** what Jesus Christ has *laid hold of you for*

**Give it your all** – right where you're at –  
right in the midst of your circumstances

**Because THAT** is where He wants you to **KNOW HIM**

& know the **power** of His resurrection -

& know the **fellowship** of His suffering -

& know that you are **being conformed** to His Image

---

But there's **ONE THING** – That's **CRITICAL** for you to remember . . .

**ONLY** the choice to Press On is **YOURS**

The **POWER** at work in you - to do it – **IS ALL GOD'S**

**Phil 2:12-13**

**12** . . . *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;*

**13** *for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

**Your part** is to "Press On" His part is to "Work In You"

---

**1Tim 4:7**

**7** . . . *exercise yourself toward godliness.*

**John 15:5**

**5** . . . *for without Me you can do nothing.*

**Your Part** is to "Press On" - "Exercise Yourself" to Godliness –

**HIS PART** is to do the "Everything" in you

**Yours is the CHOICE** to Press On !! –

**His is the POWER** to complete the good work in you !!

**Which** is the focus of **Step #3** . . .

---

Let's Re-Read Vs's 13-14 - & we'll see all 3 steps

### Phil 3:13-14

**13** *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, [#1] forgetting those things which are behind and [# 2] reaching forward to those things which are ahead,*

**14** [#3] *I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

There's that word "Press" again in V.14 –

it conveys exerting intense energy – striving against something –

"Pressing On" to **KNOW** Christ –

To **KNOW** His Power –

To **KNOW** His Suffering –

To be **Conformed** to His Image

Right Now – Right where you're at -

YOU can begin this "Pressing On" in your life - TODAY

Look at V.14 again -

*I press toward the goal – for the prize – of the upward call of God – IN CHRIST JESUS*

Wait a minute – Did you know there was an Upward Call of God on your life right now ?

There is a Call from the Heavenly Creator on your life -

& it is ALL encompassed - IN CHRIST JESUS

---

**This** "upward call of God in Christ Jesus" is **not limited to** what God has **called you to** do in this life . . .

**Altho it DOES** involve that – it's actually **BIGGER** that that

**The NLT translates V.14 this way;**

**14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.**

**The GOAL** – is Knowing Christ - & Laying hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also Laid hold of you

**The PRIZE** – is a Heavenly Prize

**God** – Who knows both heaven & earth;

He doesn't think too much of **earthly prizes** –

**because** your **time** on this earth may be up tomorrow

**But our God** – Because of His Great & Eternal Love for us

Has stored up for us a **Heavenly Prize** –

One that is **good** for all of eternity

**& as we Press On** – Knowing Christ until the end of the Race

There is waiting for us **a Heavenly Prize**

that our finite little minds cannot even imagine

**The Heavenly Creator** – Has reserved for us a Heavenly Prize –

**The biggest Prize** of which – comes from Knowing Christ -

& being found in HIS Righteousness

But **scattered thru-out** the **N.T.** are Vs's about God having Rewards waiting for us who Press On to the end

---

**So** – **If** you are going to *Press On today* -  
You *must be clear* on **one thing** . . .

What does your Race **LOOK LIKE** today – is it;  
**Raising Children** in the ways of the Lord  
**Loving your Spouse** as God has called you to  
**Being a Witness** for the Lord in your work-place  
**Ministering** to the person God has just put in front of you

**You must “Press On” to KNOW Christ RIGHT WHERE you ARE;**  
*To know* the **Power** of His resurrection  
*To know* the **Fellowship** of His suffering  
*To be conformed* into **His image**

**& the Prize** – is a *Heavenly Prize* - & it is *SOOOO worth it* –  
that *it is not worthy* to even be **compared** –  
with *whatever difficulty* you may be allowed to go thru

**SO - - - PRESS ON** – *to lay hold of that*  
*for which Christ Jesus has also Laid hold of you !!*

**Let's Pray**