



Philippians 3:12-21 – Striving Towards Maturity.

ADAM LONG | Week of December 9th, 2018s

SERMON OVERVIEW // After sharing his deep desire to know Christ more and to experience the resurrection in Christ at any cost – Paul moves his attention to the topic of Christian maturity.

SERMON TEXT // Philippians 3:12-21 English Standard Version

Paul provides an inspiring and instructive path for growing in Christian maturity by using the illustration of a runner in a race. With terms used like **pressing on** and **straining towards** Paul aims to encourage the church to continue in the work Christ has done in their lives. Paul points to three areas in which we are to press on:

*Striving toward maturity means pressing on in **our attitude**.* (vv.12-13a)

Paul never advocates for a “do better” or “do more” lifestyle. He is constantly looking to the example of Christ - seeing the completed work and striving to be more Christ-like in his personal walk. Striving for the same will allow Jesus to become the mirror we look upon to take inventory. Christ reflects and reinforces the **attitude** Paul has that says “*I am not done running - I will not give up - I will finish the race.*” For us, this is not about a work we must accomplish – but the work that has already been accomplished on the cross and the life we live is a response.

*Striving toward maturity means pressing on in **our posture**.* (vv.13b-14)

Physical posture matters when we run. The same is true for our spiritual posture. Paul has not claimed to be finished but says one thing he does is **forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead**. It may actually sound like two things but to Paul – these are exclusive statements – they are **one thing**.

*Striving toward maturity means pressing on in **our mindset**.* (vv.15-16)

Paul points to the truth that we are not running this race for ourselves. We are running this race for God - in Christ so if we begin to let our minds drift to worldly things which cause our feet, hands, and eyes to drift as well – then He will correct and direct our path. The truth of the matter is: we drift. The problem is we will never drift toward holiness. But with a mind unified with Christ - God is able to reveal our driftings and bring us back on course. We are not running to gain anything – we are running because we have already gained everything! Striving toward maturity means pressing on in our **mindset**.

The race we are running is the victory lap. The greatest temptation when looking at a passage like this is the pressure we can feel to win at any cost – but Jesus has already paid the ultimate cost to secure our victory. We are running in the victory lap.

REFLECT. || POINT. || MAKE.



Discussion Questions – Striving Towards Maturity.

COMMUNITYGROUPS | Week of December 9th, 2018

Question 1

What was something you wrote down or a truth that resonated with you from listening to the sermon, looking at the overview, or reading this particular passage in Philippians?

Question 2

Spend time reading **Philippians 3:12-21** together.

Twice in the opening verses here Paul shares and honest look into his **attitude** towards his continued need for growth in personal Christian maturity.

Why is it necessary to have a sanctified dissatisfaction when it comes to our attitude toward maturing as a believe and ultimately toward total maturity? *Share thoughts as a the group.*

Question 3

In verses thirteen and fourteen Paul points to **one thing** he does in regards to growing in maturity: **forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead**. To Paul, this is **one thing**. This is a matter of **posture**. The **posture** of our heart matters.

If you were to describe the posture of your heart towards the Lord and your personal growth towards maturity - how would you describe it? *It is easy to say 'depends on the day' - so pick three days: an average day, a day when stress is building, and a Sunday.*

Question 4

Looking at the entire third chapter as a whole - Paul walks the thin line of balance between God's sovereignty and the believers response. Between our faith (*our response to Christ's work*) and our works (*our response to the faith we have been given*). **How do we fight the, at times, gravitational pull towards a "works-based" mindset while also showing our faith by our works, as James says in his letter?** (James 2:14-26)

What is one thing you will do over the next seven days to strive towards maturity while allowing the Lord to strengthen your faith through the reality we have already won? *Take time to share your answer as a group so you are able to pray for one another as well as keep in contact throughout the week to encourage one another in this particular area.*