

One Thing (VFC, January 14, 2024)

Philippians 3:10-14 New Living Translation

¹⁰ I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, ¹¹ so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead! ¹² I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. ¹³ No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, 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.

If you could focus on one thing, what would it be? Here the Apostle Paul focused on one thing divided into two parts: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead.

1. Forgetting the past: One of the keys of the Christian Life is not allowing the failures of the past define you nor letting its successes limit you (Psalm 103:12).
 - Paul had to get beyond his persecution of the early Christians by responding to Christ's encounter on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-9).
 - Even though Paul still had failures, he learned that victory does not come from wallowing in guilt but in identifying with Christ (Romans 8:1-4).
2. Pressing on to what lies ahead certainly means eternity with God in heaven but it also means living the victorious Christian Life here on earth (Hebrews 12:1-3).
 - God planned out a destiny for each of us to fulfill (Ephesians 1:4).

- We have all been predestined, not to an eternity either in heaven or hell, but to be like Jesus (Romans 8:28-31).
3. But in between, is the present where we walk out this plan. The key to fulfillment is not to live for ourselves, but to live for Christ. Paul discovered this while chained between two guards in a Roman prison (Philippians 1:19-26).
 4. The theme of "one thing" is found in other places in Scripture.
 - David – "One thing I asked of the Lord ... that I may dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalm 27:4).
 - The Rich, Young Ruler – "And Jesus looking at him, loved him and said to him, 'You lack one thing, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, come follow me" (Mark 10:21).
 - Mary and Martha – "But he Lord answered her, 'Martha, you are anxious and troubled by many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 11:41, 42).
 - The Man Born Blind – "Whether He is a sinner, I do not know, one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25).

Epilogue: Five verses, one lesson: Knowing God is the heart of prayer (David), surrender (Rich Young Ruler), worship (Mary), witness (Blind Man), ambition (Paul). What is the one thing to which you wish to devote your life?