



“Living On The Edge”

Pastor Tom Garasha | October 1, 2023

Shiloh Community Church

Philippians 3:15-21 NLT “Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”

I. PROGRESS

(Philippians 3:15-16)

Illustration: What does that look like? Healthy things grow, growing things change, change requires risk, risk requires faith, and faith makes you healthy.

Application: Are you showing evidence that you are growing in your faith? What kind of risks have you taken lately with your faith? Are you more in love with Jesus today than yesterday?

II. _____

(Philippians 3:17)

A. What Were Paul's Patterns?

1. He was a man after God's heart

Philippians 3:8 NLT “Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ”

2. An unashamed commitment to the gospel

Philippians 3:20 NLT “But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.”

3. Committed to authenticity and transparency; no pretense

1 Thessalonians 2:3 NLT “So you can see we were not preaching with any deceit or impure motives or trickery.”

4. Healthy self awareness

Philippians 3: 12-14 NLT “ 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. 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, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.”

5. Tremendous love for the church

6. Learned contentment in all circumstances.

Application : What is your legacy? Is your life worthy of being patterned after?

III. PERSPECTIVE

Philippians 3:20-21 NLT “But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. 21 He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.”

A. Living on the edge is living with a heavenly _____

1. Randy Alcorn describes it this way:

a. Do I reflect on my own mortality?

b. Do I daily realize there are only two destinations (heaven or hell) and that I and every person I know will go to one or the other?

c. Do I daily remind myself that this world is not my home and that everything in it will burn, leaving behind only what is eternal?

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 NLT “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ. Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.”

d. Do I realize that I don't own anything?

e. Do I daily recognize that my choices and actions have a direct influence on the world to come?

f. Do I daily realize that my life is being examined by God, the Audience of One, and that the only appraisal of my life that will ultimately matter is his?

Application: Is your perspective totally focused on the here and now or the eternal?

Hebrews 12:1 NLT “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.”

Conclusion: Living on the edge = progress + pattern + perspective

Challenge: It's time to say to the Lord, “Search me, oh God, and point out to me anything that offends you.”



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1. Familiarize Yourself With the Passage

- a. Read Philippians 3:12-4:1 several times
- b. Read the book of Philippians at least once
- c. Note Paul's argument throughout the book

2. Context

- a. Literary Context: NT letters are usually written in the following structure: Introduction, Body, and Conclusion. Paul begins the main body of the letter of Philippians by focusing on his present suffering for the gospel (1:12-26). In 1:27, Paul lays out a call to the Philippian believers to "let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ ..." As we continue through the letter, the lifestyle that exhibits this will allow God to bring suffering into one's life (1:29), have unity in Christian thinking derived from the mind of Christ in God's Word (2:2-5), work out their Christian life growing in sanctification (2:12-13), reject worldly pleasure and an image of godliness that has no authenticity (3:2,19), and will make knowing Jesus Christ the goal of their entire life (3:8-21). Throughout this book, Paul's goal is to help us understand and pursue at all costs the prize of our eternal life, namely Jesus Christ, and the resurrection of our bodies for our eternal home.
- b. Historical/Biblical Context: The phrase, "The prize of the upward call" has fascinating imagery. When Paul uses the word "prize," he has in mind the Roman Olympic games, in which runners would entrance their eyes on the post that marked the finish line of the race.¹ Paul has in mind the runner who is leading and refuses to look behind to see where his opponents are.² Each Christian should be running life with one purpose, to let go of worldly glory and prizes and seek Jesus to bring glory to Him.

3. Questions about the Passage

- a. What is Paul trying to obtain and make his own (3:12)?
(Consider all of chapter 3)
- b. In this section Paul is trying to obtain something (v. 12), but in v. 16, he says that he has already attained something. What has he already attained?
- c. What does it mean to forget what lies behind in 3:13?
- d. According to Paul in v. 12-14, how does a mature Christian mind think (v. 15)?

4. From the Passage to Life

- a. Do you have a vision or an idea of what God wants you to push toward in your spiritual development (i.e. "straining forward to what lies ahead" in v. 13)?
- b. Do you press on in the Christian life with the mindset to become someone that others could imitate (v. 17)?
- c. Do you have someone further along in the faith that you can imitate in order to grow in your maturity? If so, how is this person helping you? If not, who could be someone you could reach out to?
- d. What areas of your life do you walk as enemies of the cross of Christ (v. 18)?

¹ Clinton E. Arnold, ed. Romans to Philemon, ZIBBC, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 361.

² Gordon Fee, Paul's Letter to the Philippians, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 347.