

# Philippians

## CHAPTER 3:12-16

### Lesson 11

In the previous portion of Philippians, Paul declared his dissatisfaction with attainments of the flesh and his heart's desire to attain only the things of Christ. Declarations like that often cause us to feel deficient as Christians. Paul seemed to have "arrived" spiritually. But Paul knew better. Thus, we have the following verses in which Paul shared that he knew he had not attained this goal. Nevertheless, it was his goal and he pressed towards it. Philippians 3:12-16 is, in a sense, the cheerleader that urges us on in this Christian race. It is the cup of water that says, "Press on. Don't look back. Look forward. You can make it. God will get you there!" As you study, be refreshed. Be encouraged and keep your sights on *the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*.

#### Observation: Read Philippians 3

1. Philippians 3 was titled by one commentator as "Learning How to Count". *Count* represented the way Paul thought. Read through chapter 3 and record how Paul considered his past life, his present life, and his future life.

Verses 8,13 (past)

Verse 12 (present)

Verse 20 (future)

2. Paul's life was all about Jesus Christ. He lived *for* Him and so desired to live *with* Him. Read Philippians 3 again and mark each reference to *Jesus Christ*. Be sure to include any references to Christ which use personal pronouns such as *Him, Himself, He, or His*.

- a. Make a list of what chapter 3 reveals about Jesus Christ (find each reference you marked and record what it says about Christ). Recording what Paul wrote about the Lord of His life will give you an understanding of why Paul *counted* his life as he did. As you list each point, use at least one word from the text. We have provided the first item in your list below.

1. We are to rejoice in Him (1)

3. Often in Scripture, it is hard to differentiate between God the Father and Jesus Christ. Most of the references in chapter 3 are clearly God the Father or Jesus Christ. However, some may not seem as obvious. To the best of your understanding, mark each reference to God and any related personal pronouns.

- a. Make a list of what chapter 3 declares about *God* the Father.

1. We are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit. (3)

4. There is one verse in chapter 3 that mentions the *Holy Spirit*. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the trinity. Often, we think a spirit is like a wind or an essence, but the Holy Spirit is a Person. Mark the reference and record what it says about Him.

5. From your lists, share something that is especially meaningful to you.

*God the Father chose you long ago, and the **Spirit** has made you holy.  
As a result, you have obeyed Jesus **Christ** and are cleansed by His blood.  
May you have more and more of God's special favor and wonderful peace.*

*- 1 Peter 1:2 NLT*

## Read Philippians 3:12-16

1. Paul began this section with the admission, *not that I have already attained, or am already perfected*. Read the verses in this paragraph division and record the things Paul did do.

Challenge: Look up and define the phrase *press on* (*follow after* in King James Version).

2. Summarize this section of Philippians by describing Paul's perspective of his Christian walk.

## Read Philippians 3:12

1. *I don't mean to say I am perfect. I haven't learned all I should even yet, but I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ saved me for and wants me to be* (Philippians 3:12 TLB). According to this verse, what was Paul's goal?
  - a. Paul wrote that he *pressed on toward this goal*. In practical terms, what would a person who desired to *press on* do?
2. Paul realized that Christ had *laid hold of* (apprehended) *him* for a purpose. Jesus told him part of that purpose in Acts 26:16-18. What was it?
  - a. God has called each one of us to Himself and has a definite purpose for our lives. Record what 2 Timothy 1:9 says about this.
    - 1.) Often we look at God's goal for us as long-term and neglect to look at what He desires for us each day. What do you think God's goal is for you today?

2.) What is your part in accomplishing God's goal for you today?

3. How does Paul's confession, that he was not all he desired to be as a Christian, encourage you?

a. How does his determination to *press on* inspire you?

“Many people neglect the task that lies at hand  
and are content with having wished to do the impossible.”

- Teresa of Avila

**Read Philippians 3:13,14**

1. Again, Paul reminded his readers that he did not consider himself to have *attained* or *apprehended* all that Christ had for him. Fill in the blanks to complete Philippians 3:13.

*But one thing I do, \_\_\_\_\_ those things which are \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_ to those things which are \_\_\_\_\_.*

2. *Forgetting* does not indicate that Paul no longer remembered his past. Philippians 3:5,6, Paul's own account of his past, reveals that he had not forgotten. This *forgetting* was an action taken by Paul. We cannot **choose** to forget. However, Paul **chose** not to let his past effect his present. Why is this so important?

3. Rather than dwell on the past, Paul chose to *reach forward to those things which are ahead*. Philippians 3:14 continues this thought. What does it say?

4. The actions described in Philippians 3:13,14 remind us of a race. What do the following Scriptures add to the analogy of the Christian life being like a race?

1 Corinthians 9:24,27

Hebrews 12:1,2

5. In what ways did Paul's spiritual life resemble the discipline of a runner?
  
6. How are you doing in your individual race? What hinders you from keeping your eye on the goal?

**Read Philippians 3:15,16**

1. Philippians 3:15 is directed to *mature* believers. He exhorts them to *have this mind*. Keeping in mind that this verse begins with the word *Therefore*, what *mind* (or attitude) do you think Paul was referring to?
  
2. Even the most mature Christians are subject to missing the truth and erring in their judgment. What encouragement does Paul give in verse 15b?
  - a. What is the promise of Proverbs 2:3-6?
  
  - b. According to Psalm 25:(8),9, who does God guide and teach?
    - 1.) Why is humility essential if we want to be teachable?
  
3. Write Philippians 3:16 in your own words.
  - a. Notice the word *same* is used twice in Philippians 3:16. How does this verse relate to Philippians 1:27 and 2:2?
  
  - b. Unity, working together in the church, is essential. Why can it be detrimental to "do your own thing" as a Christian?

4. What has personally impressed you as you have studied Philippians 3:15,16?

**Review: Philippians 3:12-16**

1. In what ways were you challenged by this lesson to:

*forget those things which are behind*

*reach forward to those things which are ahead*

*press toward the goal*

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

*- 2 Timothy 4:7*