

Press on! Forget What is Behind!

Philippians 3:12-14

Theme: Christians are to press on to take hold of that for which Jesus took hold of them by forgetting what is behind them.

The Apostle Paul wrote about the glorious triplet, *cf.* 3:8c-11.

He was not saying he had reached perfection.

He shared his method for living the Christian life, *cf.* 3:12-14.

It involved **doing** something in practice

...

... as a result of **knowing** something in theory.

Paul used the **metaphor** of a race.

What Paul Knew in Theory

(3:12; 14)

Paul denied knowing Jesus perfectly (3:12). This will not take place until the Second Advent (3:21).

But He knew Jesus took hold of him for service and to know him perfectly (1:6; 3:10-11; John 10:27-28; Ephesians 2:10; Romans 8:28-30).

Paul was determined to take hold of Christ: to grow in his relationship with Him and serve Him.

Pressed on is the same word translated *persecute* in 3:6!

*Christian, Jesus has taken hold of **you***

...

*... to serve Him and for Him to make
you perfect.*

*With that knowledge, your goal in life
should be to serve Him and to be
perfectly found in Him.*

*Are **you** doing that? How do **you** press
on?*

What Paul Did in Practice - Part 'A': He Forgot What was Behind (3:13b)

He says *one thing!* (of 2 parts!)

The first part is **forgetting what is
behind.**

Glancing behind at other athletes can
harm an athlete's success.

Looking behind can harm a Christian's
progress.

What does Paul mean?

He is not saying:

- forget God's mercies in the past;
- become senile;
- obliterate, entirely, any memory of the past;
- deny the past;
- do not learn from the past, *cf.* 3:2-6.

He is saying:

- *Generally* do not let the past hold you back in the present.
- *Specifically*, forget past successes. The meaning in the context is don't rely on past successes.
- No spiritual preening! *Cf.* Matthew 5:6.

Other things in the past can also hinder in the present or the future:

- **past regrets** - *learn and move on!*
- **past sins** - *you are forgiven. Move on!* Cf. 1 John 1:9.
- **past events** - *accept God's providence and move on!* Romans 8:28; Genesis 50:19-20.

Conclusion— Learn from the Apostle!

*Christian, are there things you need to
forget?*

*Are they hindering your walk with the
Lord in the present?*

Past successes/regrets/sins/events?

*Forget what is behind and press on to
know Jesus more fully!*