

Sunday November 3, 2013

## ONWARD AND UPWARD

**Philippians 3:12-16** – Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. <sup>13</sup>Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. <sup>16</sup>Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

- “perfected” – matured to the point that no more maturity is possible.
  - **Illustration**: a corn seed is perfect; the first sprout is perfect; the stalk is perfect; when the ears are ripe and ready for harvest, it’s perfected!
- “press on” – to run after; to press on: figuratively of one who in a race runs swiftly to reach the goal; to seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavor to acquire.
- “lay hold” – to obtain, attain to, to make one’s own, to take into one’s self, appropriate; to lay hold of with the mind; to understand, perceive, learn, comprehend. [Subjunctive Mood: The action described may or may not occur, depending upon circumstances.]
- “laid hold” – same as above. [Passive Voice: the action happens to the subject]
  - **Note**: God had “laid hold” of Paul on the Damascus road. Now Paul was fully trying to become all that God made him to be.
- “apprehended” – same as “lay hold”. [Perfect Tense: an action that happened in the past, never needing to be repeated]
- “forgetting” – the idea of placing something where you can’t see it anymore. [An ongoing process is indicated]
  - **Illustration**: a runner must not turn around to see who or what is behind or he’ll slow down, use up strength and get out of stride.
- “reaching forward” – The imagery is that of a runner on the course straining every muscle as he runs toward the goal, his hand stretched out to grasp it. [**SFL Bible Note**]
- “press” – same as “press on” – vs. 12.
- “goal” – the distant mark looked at, the goal or end one has in view.
  - **What goal did Paul have in mind?** [**vs. 8-11**] (**NLT**) – Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ <sup>9</sup> and become one with him. I no longer count on my own goodness or my ability to obey God’s law, but I trust Christ to save me. For God’s way of making us right with himself depends on faith. <sup>10</sup> As a result, I can really know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I can learn what it

Sunday November 3, 2013

means to suffer with him, sharing in his death, <sup>11</sup> so that, somehow, I can experience the resurrection from the dead!

- **Review:** knowing Christ intimately; not counting on our own performance but fully trusting in righteousness from Christ; experiencing the power flowing from the resurrection; having the ability by God's grace to overcome sufferings [such as temptation, pressures of life or persecution]; and experiencing being dead in Christ and raised up with Him.
- “**prize**” – award to the victor. [**I Corinthians 9:24 [NLT]** – Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win.]
- “**upward call**” – the call from above (God) to step up to the purpose(s) you're called to.
  - **Believers Bible Commentary:** includes all the purposes that God had in mind in saving us. It includes salvation, conformity to Christ, joint-heirship with Him, a home in heaven, and numberless other spiritual blessings.

### **What should we take out of these verses?**

- We all have the need to continue to mature in Christ.
- God got hold of each of us for some particular purposes. We should be eagerly pursuing those purposes. [Find out what they are and go after them]
- In order to make progress in this pursuit, we must put out of mind all that lies behind.
- Our goals? Know our righteousness is from Christ; know what it means to be dead in Christ & raised with Him; experience to power that flows from His resurrection; be raised up out from among the dead even while here on earth.

**It takes a team, working together, to get it done. We need each other!**

**Philippians 1:3-6 [NLT]** – Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. <sup>4</sup> I always pray for you, and I make my requests with a heart full of joy <sup>5</sup> because you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. <sup>6</sup> And I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again.