

Lesson 5

Joy in Pressing Forward

Philippians 3:12-21

Since Paul's experience on the Damascus Road where he encountered Jesus Christ (Acts 9), all he wanted was to know more of Christ and to tell others about Him. That was Paul's passion for the remainder of his life. Paul knew that living this way would bring suffering, just as it did for Jesus. The spiritual reality is this: suffering is part of the life of every true believer, a fact that Paul wrote about frequently. The "fellowship of His sufferings" indicates an intimacy with Christ and this intimacy spurred Paul to press forward in his walk with the Lord. We, as Christians, are called to make his passion for Christ our own.

Read Philippians 3:12-21.

1. In verse 12, Paul states the incompleteness of his spiritual journey and admitted his own need to grow into maturity. What does Matthew 5:6 reveal about this state of dissatisfaction?
 - a. What do you think Paul means when he said "I press on"?
 - b. Do you long to know Christ better? If so, what practical steps can you take to "press on"?

2. Paul was passionate in his pursuit of a deeper knowledge and relationship with Christ. What does Revelation 3:14-16 reveal about how God feels concerning our zeal, or lack of zeal, for the things of God?

PERSONAL: On a scale of 1-10 (1=cold, 10=hot), how would you rate yourself regarding how hot or cold you are in your pursuit of and relationship with Christ? If you rated yourself on the lower end of the scale, what can you do to change that? If you rated yourself on the higher end of the scale, what are some things you can do to encourage and help others to develop a stronger desire to pursue the things of God?

3. In verse 13-14, you could say that Paul uses the metaphor of a foot race to describe his strategy for “pressing on.” What two strategies does the Apostle Paul mention in verse 13?

4. How can things that have happened in your past, good and bad, affect your current walk with the Lord?
 - a. How can looking ahead help you run the race that is set before you?
 - b. Describe how Hebrews 12:1-2 reinforce what Paul says in verses 13-14.

5. As Paul pressed forward, explain the goal on which his gaze was fixed. (Hint: 2 Timothy 4:7-8)

6. In verses 15-16, Paul urges the Philippian believers to again have the same mindset as him...this time regarding their spiritual maturity. But, if they believe otherwise, in Whom does Paul place his trust that they will be led to believe as he does?
 - a. What does John 14:26 reveal about the Holy Spirit?
 - b. How can this bring confidence to a Christian regarding his beliefs when there are so many different doctrines being taught today?
 - c. What is our responsibility in discovering the truth of the Scriptures? (Acts 17:10-11) Are you doing this to the best of your ability? What are some things you can do to increase your knowledge of the Word?

7. In previous verses in this book, Paul has been admonishing the Philippians to “stand firm” in their faith. In verse 17, what does Paul now commend in this matter of standing firm?
 - a. Is Paul being prideful when he admonishes the Philippians to follow his example? Why or why not?
 - b. Read 1 Corinthians 11:1. What does Paul tell us about the example he sets for all believers?
 - c. Who, other than Paul, were they to follow?

8. There were obviously some we weren't followers of Christ. How did Paul describe those he referred to as "enemies of the cross of Christ"?

9. In verse 19, how did Paul describe the destiny and character of these enemies?

1)

2)

3)

4)

- a. How does your lifestyle reveal the authenticity of your faith?
10. What marvelous truth does Paul state in verse 20?
- a. What are we Christians doing until that becomes a physical reality?
 - b. What does verse 21 say will be the outcome when the Savior comes?

PERSONAL: How do these verses encourage you today...especially if you are experiencing persecution or hardship? Is your focus on the glorious hope that is yours at the return of Christ? Ask the Lord to

renew this hope and promise in your heart so you can run your spiritual race with endurance.

Share one thing from this lesson that has ministered to you and how you will apply this lesson to your life.



