



**SERIES: Philippians (May / June) “Finding Joy in the Journey”**

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**Tuesday, June 8, 2021**

**Scripture: Philippians 3:12-13**

**NC0171**

**TITLE: Just Focus**

Have you ever remembered something you needed to do, so you walk out of the room and get moving, only to discover something else that takes your attention? For example, you need to rotate laundry so you head out, but there’s a piece of cheesecake calling your name - so you stop and get distracted. This happens every single day. It happens at home. It happens while grocery shopping. It happens here at work. That one thing I want to accomplish becomes number 10.

Paul is my hero when it comes to being focused. Listen to Paul’s ability to focus in Philippians 3:12-13 (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. <sup>13</sup> 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.”

Paul is a big fan of athletic metaphors, and so am I. They easily capture the idea. Paul has been talking about his Salvation as something not earned, but given as a gift. He longs for that future Resurrection when Christ returns. And that’s when Paul says, “I don’t mean to say that I have already achieved perfection.” Paul, though a model Christian, was not perfect. He wouldn’t be perfect until the time when Christ returns and gives us those new resurrected bodies and wills. We cannot possibly achieve it now and in our own power. It’s all through Christ.

So what do we do until then? Do we coast? Do we live life for ourselves? No way. Paul says, “I press on, like a sprinter, towards that future. I focus on one thing: forgetting the past and striving towards that future with Christ”. You’ve heard me say, “Rest in God’s grace.” I mean that. We are called to trust that what Christ has done is sufficient. But that doesn’t give us permission to sin, nor an excuse to coast in our Christian walk.

Paul was disciplined to live out a life pleasing to God. Paul compared the Christian life to labor and striving (Col. 1:29). He would call it “the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12). He would say that “through many tribulations, we must enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). We can’t coast in war. Paul’s focus was on one thing: becoming like Christ each day until we are made like Christ in glory.

So here’s my challenge for you today:

What is God asking you to do to become more like Christ? Is it doing something? Is it giving something up? Is it saying “no” to that frequent temptation? Is it providing care or help for someone in the body of Christ? There is no shortage of opportunities to become like Christ. The question is will we do it? When we focus on becoming like Christ, truly then, we will win the day.