

REJOICE!

How to Have a Joyful Life, Philippians 3:12-16

Admit There's Still Room to Grow

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

- Paul was well-educated, a great leader, preacher/teacher, powerful writer, church planter, and powerful man of God
- Despite all of his strengths, accomplishments, years of living for God and leading God's people, he doesn't feel he has arrived or is *perfect*
- Although Paul was strong in the Lord, there was still room for spiritual growth
- Paul was old now, near the end of his life, and if anyone could say they have arrived, it should have been Paul
- Instead saying I've arrived and I'm perfect, Paul is still growing
- To have a joyful life, we must admit *there's still room for growth*
- Paul was old, near the end of his life and in jail, but he was *still* growing
- Unfortunately, some Christians feel they have arrived and there are no opportunities for spiritual growth
- They display an image that they have it all together and nothing more needs to be done
- Spiritual maturity doesn't not happen all once, it happens progressively
- That's why Paul says, he *follows after* or presses on spiritual maturity like a runner in a race
- To be all that God wants us to be there can be no complacency, laziness, or turning back, but we must run on to perfection or spiritual maturity
- Paul says he wants to apprehend that for which he was apprehended for by Jesus Christ
- What Paul is saying I want to grab what Jesus grabbed me for

Focus

13 "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, ..."

- To have a joyful life, we must *focus*
- Paul says this *one thing* I do
- Paul has identified and is focusing on his God given purpose in life
- Paul realizes that Jesus saved him for a divine purpose, and he is focusing his life to achieve to goal of pleasing God with his life
- When Jesus saved you, He saved you for a purpose
- We then are to focus on that *one thing*, or purpose as believer, that ministry that gives God glory
- What is that *one thing* you are to be doing as a believer?
- In order to focus, we must concentrate our attention on the things God has purposed for us to do
- That will mean some things will not get the attention

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- We have to identify the things in our lives that are “distracting us” from our purpose **Hebrews 12:1 (KJV) *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,***
- There’s too much at stake not to live with a purpose, on purpose

Let Go of the Past

13 “...forgetting those things which are behind, ...”

- To have a joyful life, we must let go of the past
- Paul; realized in order to focus, he must unclutter his mind by letting go of the past
- If anyone had a past it was Paul
- Then God saved Paul and gave him a new life and purpose
- Paul had to forget those things
- Forgetting the past *does not* mean we have no memory of the past; it *does* mean we don’t let the past affect us anymore
- What do we need to forget?
- *Our failures*
 - We can’t continue beating ourselves up over past mistakes that God has forgiven
 - If we focus on the past we may miss what God has for us **Isaiah 43:18-19 (KJV) ¹⁸ “Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. ¹⁹ Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? ...”**
- *Our successes*
 - Success is wonderful *and* dangerous at the same time
 - Learn from success, but keep moving
- Forget past sins, past failures, past friends & relationships that didn’t work out, forget past trials, forget past delays, forget past decisions, and even past successes
- The devil knows if I can just keep you occupied in the past you will even think of anything better
- You can’t do anything about the past
- The past is a prison
- God is saying to you leave the past right where it is, and go forward

Focus on the Future

13 “... and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ...”

- To have a joyful life, we must focus on the *future*
- Paul said he was *forgetting* the past and *reaching* for the things that were before him
- Paul was *intentionally and purposefully* leaving his past and reaching for his future

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- The focus is on what's in front of you, not behind you
- Don't look back but focus on the future
- You make more progress looking forward than you do looking backward
- If you're running a race you don't spend your time looking backward
- When you look forward, you see what is yet to come
- As Christians, we don't live in the *past*, but live in the *present* with an eye to the *future*

Press On!

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. 16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

- To have a joyful life, we must *press on*
- To press is to overextend, to stretch, reach, strain, etc.
- With all that Paul had been through and all that he had accomplished, he did not say "I quit", nor did he say "I've done enough"
- He said, *I press!*
- Paul pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God
- The prize is the high calling of God
- The prize is the call itself
- This high call of God is only *in* Christ Jesus; not our flesh
- We are to live our lives pressing to live a life that fulfills God's purpose for our live
- How do we press on, how do we keep going even when the going gets tough?
 1. The mature in God will not give up, but will press on (vs. 15a)
 2. Remain teachable, stay open to God's teaching and direction (vs. 15b)
 3. Be persistent (vs. 16), now that you're on the right track stay on it