



## PRESSING ON

September 2016

*I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 3:12-14

Do you have things in your past you'd rather forget about? I think we all do. The apostle Paul, writer of this letter to the Philippians sure did. In earlier times, when his name was Saul, he did some terrible things. The memories of how he persecuted the early Christians could have haunted him. But he knew that his many sins were forgiven when Christ came into his life and he was able to leave them all in the past. Besides, he had a future to think of.

The same could be true for us. Through Christ we have been forgiven our sins. And the good we do as we follow Christ today—*straining toward what is ahead*—can gradually

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make yesterday's bad memories fade away. When we ask Him, God will give us the strength we need to reach out for the goal Paul speaks of here.

If it weren't for Christ, Paul might have dwelt on his many setbacks: the pain of being hated, whipped and beaten, his many imprisonments. But Paul chose to put his past suffering behind him. He chose to press on to what God had called him to—to be like Jesus.

I believe that God calls all of us to follow Paul's example. He encourages us to strive and strain towards what's ahead—to become transformed into Christ-like individuals working for the Kingdom. Holding onto bad memories would become like an anchor. And anchors weigh us down, keeping us from moving ahead.

I have often become lazy, failing to press forward. And so, it's wonderful when God wakes me up and speaks to me through writers like Paul. At times like that these verses have greatly energized me, moving me to action, encouraging me to focus on what God wants me to do.

Through God, and with Paul's encouragement, we can bring a passionate spirit to our lives too. We too can forget the past and approach each day as a new beginning. Allow Paul's inspiring words to sink in:

*But one thing I do," "Straining toward," "Pressing on."*

Would you like to live with such energy? Would you like to reach out to become more like Christ and join with God in what He's doing?

Talk to God about it. He will show you what he'd like you to do. Ask God for strength and courage. I bet that's a prayer he would love to answer.

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