

Pressing on; Not there yet; Straining for the Prize: Glory is coming!
(Phil 3.12-21; 05-17-20am)

Central Thought: Embracing the need to keep growing in Christ

I. Run the race to get the prize (12-16)

Not a competition against others; not about who grows fastest; it's about enduring to become like Jesus.

A. Keep making progress (12-14) Four statements about spiritual progress (*pressing on*)

1. Spiritual progress is the expectation for every believer (12, 14) (cf. 17) *Press on in Christ* (2x)
2. Spiritual progress identifies us with Jesus (12) *Christ Jesus has made me His own* (cf. Lk 9.23)
3. Giving full effort to spiritual progress (*straining forward*) helps prevent lingering in the past (13)
forget what's behind (cf. v4-6)
4. *Pressing on* – pursuing spiritual progress is what it means to follow the *call of God* (14)

Six reasons why we must keep making progress

1. Because an Apostle of Christ models that lifestyle is great reason for us to do the same thing (12-14)
2. Because we're not yet fully mature in Christ (*perfect*) – *not consider I have made it my own* (12-13)
3. Because *perfection* is what Jesus is and we want to be like Jesus (12)
4. Because *perfection lies at the end* of our race – our *goal* is to finish (13-14)
5. Because the *goal* is to make it to the end and receive the *prize* (13-14)
6. Because God has *called us* to run the race so we will get the *prize* (14) (cf. 2 Tim 4.7-8)

B. Stay on the right course (15-16)

1. *Pressing on* for the *prize* is a sign of maturity (15) *those who are mature think this way*
2. Staying on the right track is critical to making it to the finish *hold true to what we have attained*
(1.27; 2.12-13)

II. Choose good models and follow their example (17-21)

A. God has given us examples to help us faithfully grow in Christ (17)

1. Godly models show us the right way to live (17) (2.5-8; 2.19-30; 3.4-11)
2. Not all models are good models (not all *walk according to Paul's example*)

B. Be careful to choose the right example (18-19)

1. Warning is obvious – don't look to unbelievers as models of faithful life (18) *enemies of the cross*
2. Extended warning in v19 – don't seek to imitate [those who live for] *earthly things* (19)
v19 reveals the danger of following *enemies of the cross*)

their end is destruction – that expression identifies them as separated from God
their god is their belly – not just about food; they seek to pursue every appetite or desire
they glory in their shame – not only pursue ungodly pleasures, they are proud of their ungodliness

Apply: Need to set up biblical filters to help us determine our friendships & our loyalties

Parents – in the home, you do the guiding; and you guide 'best' by modeling what you teach/expect

Get help – invite the counsel of others to help you choose your relationships

C. Good models demonstrate a longing for heaven and a desire to be like Jesus (20-21)

1. Set your mind on heaven (not on *earthly things*) (20) *citizenship is in heaven*

When Christ returns to call us home, we will see Him as He is (1 Cor 13.12)

Yet, even while we *await* Him, we are already *becoming like Him* (2 Cor 3.18)

And when He comes, He will *complete His work in us* (Phil 1.6); and we **WILL** *be like Him* (1 Jn 3.2)

2. Point your spiritual energies toward *becoming like Christ* (21) (cf. 10-11)

Here's Paul's promise:

Jesus is *Savior, Lord, Christ* (20); He is the One who will secure our resurrection

He is the omnipotent Son of God who will *transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body* (21)

He is the Reigning King over all creation who is *enabled even to subject all things to Himself* (21)