

# CONVERSATION GUIDE:

## OPENING QUESTIONS:

- When you look back at photos of yourself from years ago (like the examples in the sermon), what's your usual reaction? Why do you think we often feel differently about our past selves?
- Have you ever had an experience that completely changed how you viewed your past? What happened and how did your perspective shift?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Read Philippians 3:12-16 together. What does Paul mean when he says he hasn't yet "obtained this" or become "perfect"?
- Why does Paul share his worst sins openly?
- How does the Gospel allow us to be honest about our past failures?
- Paul talks about "forgetting what lies behind" yet spends significant time describing his past. What does "forgetting" actually mean for Paul? How is this different from denying or hiding the past?
- What's the difference between "pressing on" out of love for Christ versus striving to earn God's approval? How can we tell which motivation is driving our spiritual disciplines?

## PERSONAL APPLICATION:

- Reflect on a past mistake or failure that still troubles you. How might seeing it through the lens of the Gospel change your perspective?
- Paul interprets everything through Christ, even his worst sins. Identify one area of your life where you struggle to apply this "Gospel" filter. What would it look like to see that area differently?

## GROUP FOCUS:

- As a community group, discuss how you can create an environment where people feel safe sharing their struggles and past mistakes without fear.
- Close your time by praying for one another.



## WEEK 23 THE JOY OF PRESSING ON (PHILIPPIANS 3:12-16)

## TODAY'S VERSES:

Philippians 3:12-16    Philippians 1:7  
Philippians 3:4-8    Philippians 2:2 & 5  
Ephesians 1:19-21

**JULY 6, 2025**



## WEEK 23

# THE JOY OF PRESSING ON

Philippians 3:12-16 explores Paul's understanding of what truly matters in the Christian life. Paul teaches that we should not focus on externals (appearance, possessions, status, etc.) but on knowing Christ deeply. Paul openly shares his past - including his religious credentials and even his persecution of Christians - but views it through the lens of the Gospel.

---

---

---

The greatest power Paul can imagine is God's resurrection power. Resurrection is the greatest possible power imaginable as it brings life out of death. Paul will speak of the power of resurrection because not only can God create good stuff out of nothing, but He is able to create good things out of our sin. God brought life out of death and He can also bring life to the deadest parts of our life. Paul says he wants to know that today and into eternity.

---

---

---

A few weeks ago we talked about different views of our lives and the world.

- **Ego-centric view of our lives** – My desires, my wants, my identity. Everyone has to accept what I say because I am the most important.
- **Ethno-centric view of our lives** – You move beyond yourself to look at the tribe or community you are in and you live for that community.
- **World-centric view** – We look beyond ourselves and our tribes to what is good for the world.

When people only live in a tribal understanding, they get stuck. If we don't move from ego-centric to ethno-centric to world-centric we can start to think that destroying the "other" is noble. Paul says he was so committed an ethno-centric idea that he made sure (before being in Christ) those who were not part of his tribe were killed.

---

---

---

Paul says now that he has met Jesus and understands the good news, he sees everything differently. Everything about his past he would once hide from others, he now tells them in detail as a way of saying, *"Look at how massive God's grace is. Look at how great is the healing that Jesus has brought into my life."* Paul says this so we all can know that our past does not have dominion over our relationship with Christ or our standing before God.

---

---

---

**Phronesis** – We can now have the same mind. Phronesis is a pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting that Paul wants believers to develop. Paul emphasizes that no Christian has "arrived" at perfection; rather, true maturity recognizes we must keep "pressing on" toward the goal of Christ-likeness. The "upward call" Paul mentions isn't about going to heaven but about experiencing resurrection life in Christ, where our past sins and struggles are reinterpreted through Jesus' grace. Paul's pursuit of holiness isn't to earn God's favor, but his loving response to what Christ has already done.

---

---

---

It is never Paul's unaided effort to do something that will make God be pleased with him; it all takes place within the context of God's grace. All that Paul does now is a matter of responding in love to Jesus.

---

---

---