

SERMON NOTES

Title: “Pressing Toward the Goal”

Text: [Philippians 3:13-14 \(NLT\)](#)

Introduction

Paul describes the spiritual journey as a race for a heavenly prize. The race requires focus. The race requires forgetting the past. And the race requires forging ahead in the strength that the Lord provides.

Point 1: The Race Requires Focus

Paul perceives of himself as a runner with one goal in mind: to finish the race and to win the prize. Paul presses toward the goal; that is, he pursues the goal with the intent of capturing it. Although the completion of the race will be when Jesus returns in the future, the eternal reward is worth every focused effort that Paul puts forth in the present. We who are in Christ can put our focus on the Lord and press through the trials and challenges of life with our heavenly goal always in sight.

Point 2: The Race Requires Forgetting the Past

The “past” could refer to life before Christ or to past experiences as a Christian. In either case, Paul cannot live or dwell in the past. He cannot allow regrets to hold him back; neither can he become too smug because of his past accomplishments. The Christian life is always in motion. We are ever learning, growing, and moving forward. We must avoid getting stuck in the past. We must press forward.

Point 3: The Race Requires Forging Ahead in the Lord’s Strength

In verse 14, Paul says, *“I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.”* The direction of the prize is upward. The prize is Jesus Christ himself. Compared to him, everything else is worthless (see [Philippians 3:8](#)).

Conclusion

Regardless of the challenges that we face, we can move forward into the great things that God has in store for our future. The Lord is with us and he will sustain us by his mighty wisdom and power.

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**WILFRED
GRAVES**
MINISTRIES

PO Box 2011
Artesia, CA 90702
United States

PHONE (626) 394-6779
FAX +1 (626) 470-9949
EMAIL wgraves@wilfredgraves.com
WEBSITE www.wilfredgraves.org