

PRESS ON!!!

Jonathan Landis

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Philippians 3:7-14 (NASB)

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. [8] More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, [9] and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, [10] that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; [11] in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. [12] Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. [13] Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

1. ALL THINGS ARE LOSS COMPARED TO KNOWING CHRIST Vs.7-9

All things are loss compared to knowing Christ Jesus our Lord!!! That means that nothing no matter how good the cause, or how important it may seem is worth neglecting our walks with Christ. He is meant to be all in all, the very center of our lives. Paul said that he counts everything else as garbage, rubbish, (KJV calls it DUNG) that he may gain CHRIST and be found in Him. (Vs. 7-8)

Read vs. 9. Paul makes it clear that no amount of good works can make us righteous. He was once the Pharisee of Pharisees, a man of great recognition. Paul knew the scriptures like you know the buttons on your remote control. He had followed all the law, all of his life, but when He found Christ he realized that all of that means NOTHING compared to knowing Christ. He realized the power of righteousness which can only be gained through FAITH in CHRIST, verses all of the works, and all of the labors, which can never make you righteous in the eyes of God. None of our works can gain one ounce of righteousness for us in the eyes of God.

It doesn't matter if you're a deacon (or youth pastor) in the church and you serve God every day of the week... Do you KNOW Christ... do you have fellowship with Him. That is the beginning, the foundation of everything else. PRESS ON THAT YOU MAY KNOW CHRIST!!!

2. LAY DOWN YOUR LIFE Vs. 10-11

How can we share in the power of Christ's resurrection until we first die. Nothing can be resurrected that is not first dead. We must first conform to His death, before we can experience total life. Our own death must be embraced if we are to experience a coming alive in us. I'm **not** speaking of our physical death. What I'm referring to is what Paul spoke of in **Galatians 2:20** (NASB)

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

This kind of death is a death to our own desires. It is death to our ambitions that we may embrace the will of God for us. This death is a death to our sinful lusts, to our worldly passions, to our empty riches. Death to yourself brings life and freedom. It is through this death to your own empty pursuits that you find the LIFE and freedom that is found in Christ Jesus. So I challenge you lay down your life!!! PRESS ON THAT YOU MAY GAIN LIFE!!!

3. TAKE THE KINGDOM BY FORCE Vs. 12-14

Paul admits, "I don't have it yet, I haven't got there yet, but ain't nothin' gonna' stop me!!!" I pursue, seek after, press toward Jesus Christ.

Press = dioko (greek) -literally "pursueing" (as one would a calling)

We truly must PURSUE after the goal and reach for the prize. Paul wasn't some mamby-pamby, wussy man of a Christian who just sat quietly in church and kept his mouth shut the rest of the week. NO, he was invading the known world with the Gospel. Not only did he preach Christ everywhere he went, but he PURSUED after Christ constantly. He would always PRESS ON (even when he was beaten, shipwrecked, stoned, and the list goes on).

Matthew 11:12

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force."

John the Baptist wasn't some weakling Christian either. I've never heard of a wimp living in the desert, eating locusts, and wearing camel's hair. It's definitely not the comfortable or popular thing to do. In fact John was so bold that he called out King Herod's sin. That boldness came from his relationship with God. His communion with the Holy Spirit inspired him to speak out, to live violently/forcefully. The same is still true of those that will make a difference in the Kingdom of God. It must be taken by force!!!

I like what Matthew Henry's Commentary says about taking the Kingdom by Force. (parts of pg. 879) "And those strove for a place..."

This kind of ferocious tenacity, this unwillingness to let go or to give in, this is what makes the heroes of the Kingdom. This determination must be carried into our **relationship with Christ**. If truly we believe it to be the most important thing, as Paul believed, then we **MUST** pursue our relationship with Christ with all our might and let nothing hold us back. **WE** must **PRESS ON** in our walk with **HIM**.

Most of us know how to build our relationship with Christ. It is through the word and prayer. Many of us (me included at times) neglect these things all too often. How can we expect to know Him deeply if we do not invest our best time and efforts into seeking Him through the Word of God and through our time of prayer??? We must hear from and talk to God on a daily basis. It's essential to spiritual life. **WE** must **PRESS ON** in our walk with Him. Let nothing hold you back people of God!!! **PRESS ON**.

Challenge:

The challenge is this:

1. Lie down your own life (desires, ambitions, goals)
2. Take the Kingdom (Especially grab hold of Christ and don't let go...)