

PRESS ON

A Study and Discussion Guide on Philippians 3:12-16

Sermon Text:	Philippians 3:12-16	Date Preached:	September 6, 2026
Location:	Cross Cultured Church, Mysore	Audience:	Small Groups

In the sermon "Press On" based on Philippians 3:12-16, we are invited to consider the lifelong disciplines of the Christian walk. Real, mature faith is never measured by the emotional intensity of an initial conversion, but by a daily, gritty discipline to press on toward the final prize of resurrection. This study guide is designed to help home groups and youth discipleship classes navigate the profound theological realities of Christ's sovereign possession of us and our responsibility to chase after Him with a focused, holy effort.

Scripture Focus: Philippians 3:12-16

"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained."

Sermon Discussion Questions

Question 1: What is the "rock-bottom certainty" that serves as the ultimate foundation for our perseverance?

The ultimate foundation of our perseverance is not our own effort, but the reality that **Christ Jesus has sovereignly captured and "laid hold" of us** (v. 12). The Greek term carries intense imagery of capture and seizure, suggesting that Jesus pursued, snatched, and secured us. Knowing that we are fully possessed and secured by Jesus is what actually motivates and fuels our daily, active discipline to press on, rather than leading us to passive inaction.

Question 2: How does the Greek word for "press on" connect to Paul's past life as a persecutor of the church?

The Greek word translated as "press on" (*diōkō*) carries vivid **hunting or chasing imagery** and is the exact same word translated as "persecute." Paul uses this deliberate wordplay to show that just as he once aggressively hunted down, seized, and jailed believers, he has now been tagged by Jesus and is passionately "hunting down" and trying to grab hold of Christ.

Question 3: Why does the path to our final glorification exclude spiritual complacency or passivity?

While we are justified by faith alone and can never earn our salvation, the biblical path to future glorification and resurrection requires **active, daily striving**. Our future salvation (final glorification) is the end-of-race prize, and running the race is the appointed path to reach it. Therefore, a Christian cannot remain complacent or disregard God's commands while simultaneously expecting the comfort and assurance of final glorification.

Question 4: What does it look like practically to have the attitude of "forgetting what lies behind"?

It means refusing to dwell on past failures, shame, and regrets, but also **letting go of past credentials, achievements, or spiritual successes** that might cause us to coast. Rather than being paralyzed by what is in the past, we are to practice a "holy amnesia" regarding both our defeats and our wins, straining forward with our eyes fixed completely on the final hope: the resurrection from the dead.

Question 5: What is our double responsibility as we live in the "not yet" zone of Christian perfection?

Since we have not yet arrived at complete perfection (v. 12), our responsibility is twofold: **we must hold fast to the gospel realities we have already attained** (such as our secure justification and forgiveness in Christ), while actively working on the obedience, virtue, and Christlike holiness we have yet to fully obtain. We live in the healthy tension of "not yet perfect, but actively pressing on."

PRACTICAL REFLECTION & SMALL GROUP APPLICATION

1. **Assessing Our Running:** Are you running the Christian race with high-energy "holy chase," or have you settled into passive complacency? How does knowing that Jesus has sovereignly captured you give you the courage to run harder?
2. **Practicing Holy Amnesia:** What past failures or past spiritual accomplishments are you dwelling on that currently hinder your progress? Spend time in prayer actively laying those behind you to strain forward for Christ.
3. **Faith and Reason Connection:** How do we balance resting 100% in our justification while working 100% in our sanctification? Discuss this dynamic of working out what God works in.