



Following the upward call through Philippians ...

Focused!!

The English language proverb says, "Do one thing; do it well!" In a competitive market place, a business or a company has to be near the top in order to continue to provide great sales and service. To accomplish that, the leadership has to focus on the one thing that they do well, better than or competitive with other entities in their niche or realm. Many a business or corporation has gone under because they became slack and didn't focus, or because they became too scattered and lost their focus. Or, as has also been said, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the

main thing." Such lessons should not be lost on the disciples of Christ.

- **Finish strong** — The scripture does not teach "once saved, always saved." What it does emphasize in a multiplicity of ways is the importance of finishing strong, "faithful until death" (Revelation 2:10). Paul states that his purpose in sharing in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and knowing the power of the Lord's resurrection is to know Christ and to "attain to the resurrection from the dead." He is conscious, obviously, that he has not "already obtained it," or, as he rephrases it, has "already become perfect." The apostle is really using a multiplicity of words to emphasize the significance of receiving the resurrection of the righteous, saying that he wants to "lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus." Again he states, "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet" (Philippians 3:13). But the drive to finish is clearly there!
- **"One thing I do"** — Having honed his words and fixed his focus the apostle states his determination and drive in these terms: "But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on ..." Remembrance of past mistakes or terrible trauma is a hindrance to present performance and progress. One of the sometimes seemingly brutal actions that the saint of God has to take is to forget what lies behind. Even if the past has some pleasant memories, those also have to be set aside so that the focus can be on what has to be done right now to attain to the goal of the resurrection of the dead. The mindset has to be to "reach for what lies ahead."
- **"I press on"** — Satan, like the Titanic, is going down. And as a large vessel creates a whirlpool as it sinks, so the god of this world has created a giant spiritual maelstrom as he is being sent on his way to an everlasting hell fire. This sucking power of this whirlpool is powerful, and pulls many a well-intentioned person into its center, one who did not seriously enough recognize its suction and take disciplined measures to get to the calm waters provided by Christ. The apostle Paul, then, puts tremendous emphasis on his mindset, and the mindset that is so necessary for victorious union with Christ, "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). The power of those words shakes the ground: I PRESS ON!

What a person is reaching for is a much more powerful long-term motivator than what he is running from! For those who understand the picture and plan of God, the most powerful of all is the reach for the prize — the positive resurrection from the dead — of what the apostle terms "the upward call of God." On one side is the sucking maw of Satan's careening downward; on the other is that beckoning voice of the Lord Jesus appealing for all mankind to leave this world behind to come and fellowship with Him for all eternity. "Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice," affirmed the Lord Jesus. "My sheep hear My voice," He averred, "and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:27,28). Keep listening, keep following! It is the upward call of God.

JAY WILSON

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Keep following! It
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