

# Let's Worship God

23rd-28th September 2019  
Philippians





## Monday - Philippians 3:12-16: Press On With Joy

Healthy beings grow and mature. Parents will look for markers, every few weeks or months, that young children are growing; farmers look for it in their livestock; entrepreneurs look for it in their profit margins. The Christian life is no different: it is not about standing still, but about **pressing forward**, seeing growth. Paul is eager to see the Philippian believers mature, grow, press forward in their faith. But how do we know if this is happening in our Christian lives?

First of all, Paul says that maturing believers **know we're not "there" yet** - that is, we know we're not **as** mature as we will someday be. Paul said in chapter 3:10 that he wants to "know" Christ and to "become like him" in every way - but he says in verse 12 that he knows he's **not** there yet.

And so, secondly, Paul **presses on**, verse 14. Maybe you've seen the sprinters at the Olympics lean and stretch out at the end of the race in an effort to finish first. Paul is telling us that he presses on in his faith **with every fibre of his being** - it takes effort.

It is not "unspiritual" to say that the Christian life is often just about getting on with things: dishes need washed, rubbish bins need emptied, homework needs to be done. But as Christians we have the great assurance that our faithful plodding and pressing on is taking us somewhere: closer and closer to "the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (verse 14). We're going to be with our Saviour! We're going to be glorified in heaven with him and all his people! Does this not motivate us to stretch and strain, a little bit more, day by ordinary day?

Paul says in verse 15 that this mindset is a mark of maturity. If we don't have it, Paul says God can change us - or "reveal" our faulty thinking. God reveals things in his Word. If we don't find ourselves motivated to "press on", perhaps we should turn to the Scriptures, consider Christ in all his glory, and remind ourselves of the wonderful promises he has made for our glorious future with him.

### Questions

1. Why do you think Paul says he must "forget what lies behind" (verse 13)?

### Prayer Points

1. Ask for a spirit of perseverance to "press on" in your Christian life.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.  
Philippians 3:14

**Praise: Psalm 92B:10-13 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



## Tuesday - Philippians 3:17-21: Citizens of Heaven

We've seen Paul refer to the Philippians as "citizens" once already (chapter 1:27). He does so again in chapter 4:20. The people of Philippi (not just the church members) were very proud to be Roman citizens. They had privileges and an "identity" that others would like to have had. But Paul wants the Philippian church to be most thankful for their identity as "heavenly citizens".

First, Paul says citizens of heaven **look to their role models**. Rome was the trend-setting city of the ancient world; the city of Philippi was like a "Rome-wannabe", copying the fashion tastes and culture trends of the capital. Citizens of heaven should act like **other** citizens of heaven (verse 17). If there's a Christian couple who have shown you what a healthy marriage looks like, or a believer who is a great evangelist, or a great host, or a great youth leader, **imitate** them. One preacher says it's ok to be a copycat as long as you copy the right cat!

Secondly, Paul says heavenly citizens **look forward to their future**. Life for a citizen in a foreign country can be at best strange, at worst dangerous. Christians know we are citizens of heaven, only passing through a hostile world. Paul says there are "enemies" of the cross of Christ (verse 18) that we must watch out for. These may be false teachers in the church or opponents in the world. Whilst we cannot take them lightly, we know that they will not topple Christ and his church. And so, we can look forward to receiving what Jesus has promised us: **glorious resurrection** (verse 21)! Maybe right now you have a body full of aches and pains; maybe a horrible illness is threatening your life; maybe age or injury has slowed you down. One day, all of that will be different. We need to think about our future more often. It will be truly awesome: bodies that never grow weak or tired, a new world to explore, and a wonderful Saviour to enjoy. Our heavenly citizenship comes with a guarantee of a glorious future.

### Questions

1. Are there Christians you have read about or know whom you should imitate?

### Prayer Points

1. Pray that God would help you to imitate other godly believers - and that you might be an example to others.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.  
Philippians 3:14

**Praise: Psalm 16:7-10 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



### Wednesday - Philippians 4:1-7a: "In the Lord"

One of Paul's favourite descriptions of the Christian life is that we are "in the Lord". The description reminds us that once we are in God's family of faith, we can never be removed from it again: we are in Christ, and he is in us, an unbreakable bond.

Paul says that we are to **stand firm** in the Lord (chapter 4:1). This is a repeated command in Philippians (see chapter 1:27), and it is a firm command. Yet Paul says this with great affection: he calls the Philippians his "brothers"; he says he loves them and longs for them; he describes them as his "joy and crown". We should always remember that the commands Christ has given us, however challenging they may be, are given by the One who loves us with more affection and perfection than anyone else on earth.

Paul also tells the Philippians to **agree** in the Lord (verse 2): he instructs two women, Euodia and Syntyche to agree. For some reason, was a problem between them. Sadly, this can happen in the church, even among committed, godly men and women. Notice, however, that these women were not troublemakers; they were faithful servants of Christ (see verse 3) - but they had fallen out. It can happen in the church. When it does, **every effort must be made** for believers to **reconcile**, and **agree again**. Few things are worse for the witness of the local church than disagreement among her members.

Lastly, Paul tells the Philippians that they should **rejoice** in the Lord (verse 4). This doesn't mean keeping a fake smile on our faces at all times; but it means that we keep Christ in mind, and we take comfort from knowing that he will return (verse 5). When we are anxious or hurting, verse 6 tells us what to do: **take it to the Lord in prayer**. Doing regularly will produce a peace in our hearts (verse 7) that cannot be found anywhere else. The place of prayer is a place of reassurance, joy and peace.

#### Questions

1. What could cause division between you and your fellow church members? What should you do to guard against it?

#### Prayer Points

1. Pray that God would help you to turn worries into prayers - and that it will give you greater peace.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

#### Memory Verse

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.  
Philippians 3:14

**Praise: Psalm 91A:1-4 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



### Thursday - Philippians 4:7b-9: Think About Your Thoughts

Some people are fond of saying, "You are what you eat", emphasising the importance of a healthy diet. Today, Paul tells us that "You are what you think about". Our thoughts determine our actions and our priorities in life. So we need to think about what's going on in our minds.

Paul emphasises the importance of **guarding our hearts and minds** (see end of verse 7). In Scripture the heart is the **inner person**, the centre of who we really are. The word "heart" often refers to the same thing as "mind". Countless influences and experiences form that inner being. Many people in our culture do not realise how much their thinking is shaped by what they look at on their phones or TV screens. Some of these things might even have become idols in their lives.

We must therefore be careful about what we allow our eyes to look at, our ears to hear, our minds to think about. This leads to the **practice of godly thinking** (verse 8). Christians are often accused today of not being great thinkers - sometimes, that's a fair accusation. Ask the average Christian why the Old Testament matters, or what worship is or isn't, and they probably won't give a very good answer. But Christians should be thoughtful, careful, curious people. First and foremost, we should think about what is **true** (verse 8). The first thing we need to think about each day is God's Word - truth itself. There, we will see what is "honourable" and "just" and "lovely". Indeed, in **Jesus**, we will see all these things perfectly displayed. We may even find what is "honourable" or "commendable" in the world around us - an honourable way to farm, or work, or take care of money - but we must always sift the practices of the world through the sieve of Scripture. We must **think**: what does Jesus want from me in my work, my family, my church? What actions or words today will bring most glory to God? We must avoid filling our minds and hearts with the deceptions and vanities of the world.

### Questions

1. Are Christians "lazy thinkers" today? Why or why not?

### Prayer Points

1. Pray for godly discipline to think about God's truth, first and foremost, every day.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.  
Philippians 3:14

**Praise: Psalm 119:8A - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



### Friday - Philippians 4:10-13: Christian Contentment

Apparently, people in the UK are becoming happier: earlier this year we rose four place to the rank of 15th happiest country in the world, out of 156. But happiness isn't the same as contentment. True contentment is not about holidays or money or possessions; in fact, if you speak to those who have the most, by the world's standards, they'll often say they just want more, or that whatever they have doesn't make them truly happy. We need contentment, not just happiness. So, what's the secret?

Paul says that **contentment starts with gratitude**. For the remainder of this letter, Paul is expressing his profound gratitude for all that the Philippians have done for him during his imprisonment (see verses 10, 14, 18). Believers, saved by God's grace through Christ, always have something to be thankful for. Christians should be the most grateful people - and gratitude leads to contentment.

Paul also says that **contentment is something to learn** (see verse 12). There were times in Paul's life when things didn't go the way he'd hoped they would - to put it mildly (see 2 Corinthians 11:24-27). Paul had learned how to be content in both "abundance and need". Notice, by the way, there is such a thing as being content whilst having "an abundance". More and more money will not lead to more and more happiness; contentment is needed whether we are princes or paupers.

Lastly, Paul says that to be content requires **supernatural power**. He says in verse 13: "I can do all [these] things through him who strengthens me". Paul is speaking about Jesus, our mighty King. He's not saying that Jesus will take all the obstacles out of our lives; he's saying that Jesus **empowers us to be content in all circumstances**, whether pleasant or painful. We can grieve through him who strengthens us; we can go to the mission field, we can cope with unemployment, get married, go to prison, lead a Bible study, all through the power that Jesus Christ provides. He will never leave us nor forsake us. In that, we can rest content.

#### Questions

1. Why do we often feel a lack of contentment?

#### Prayer Points

1. Pray that God will teach you contentment.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

#### Memory Verse

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.  
Philippians 3:14

**Praise: Psalm 23A - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**





### **Saturday - Philippians 4:14-23: Joyful Generosity**

Paul began his letter giving thanks to God **for** the Philippians (see chapter 1:3). He does the same thing as he brings his letter to a close.

Paul speaks with great admiration and thankfulness for the **generosity** of the Philippian church. Acts 16 tells us about Paul's time in Philippi, and you can read on to see where he went next. As he travelled through the wider region, he says here in verse 15 that only the Philippians supported him financially. Wherever he was, the Philippians sent him practical help.

But not only were they generous to Paul, they were **sacrificially** generous - in verse 18 Paul says that he has received even more than he needed from them. He describes their generosity as a sacrifice pleasing to God. Paul, one of Jesus' greatest ever servants, was funded by the tiny but generous church of Philippi.

The Bible is very clear that generous giving is both commanded and rewarded by God (see Proverbs 11:17, Luke 6:38, 2 Corinthians 8:1-15). Generous giving shows a heart marked by appreciation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ - who generously gave his very **life** for us on the cross. This is one way that you might be able to serve God in a wonderful way. You may not be called to be a preacher or missionary, but you can partner with those who are by giving generously to their work.

As Paul closes his letter (verses 21-23), he gives us a fascinating glimpse of his situation: he says that "those of Caesar's household" send their greetings to the Philippians. God's Word was being preached to and believed by soldiers and Romans and even those who spent time with Caesar himself! What an encouragement for the Philippians: "every saint" in Philippi was contributing to the work of Jesus in the capital city of the world. Jesus the generous and gracious Saviour was building his church - and he still is today.

He deserves all that we can give him in return.

### **Questions**

1. Why does Paul describe the Philippians as his "partners" (verse 15)?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.  
Philippians 3:14

**Praise:** Psalm 145B:1-2 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that  
Ezra read from  
the book of the Law  
day after day  
and that  
the people of God  
were filled with joy!**

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