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# Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks Baptist Church**  
Grand Prairie, Texas

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## Press On in Christ Philippians 3:7-14

### Lesson Background and Introduction

Many circumstances had come together to create disunity in the Philippian church. We can surmise that personal differences and rivalries played a role. Certainly the selfishness to which all people are vulnerable was the fertile ground in which the problem grew. But another factor was the influence of those who advocated that Jewish people have a place of preeminence in the church. As in other churches founded by Paul, the Philippian church was troubled by those whom we identify as Judaizers. These insisted that to belong to God's people, believers in Jesus must toe the line with regard to the Law of Moses, especially the requirement for circumcision (Philippians 3:2, 3). Paul understood, however, that Christ had brought the fulfillment of the Law of Moses. This meant that God accepted non-Jews as they were. Paul understood that the division between Jew and Gentile had been taken away, making one body of anyone who accepted Christ (Acts 2:37-39; 15:1-31; Ephesians 2:11-22; Colossians 3:11). What faith produces is an identity marker of the people of God in Christ, not the keeping of the Law of Moses. If Christ came as the lowly servant of all (last week's lesson), then no follower of his can look upon another Christian as a second-class citizen of the kingdom of God. In Christ, all Christians are first-class citizens of that kingdom. Christ must be the standard that the church pursues in unity, not score-keeping regarding adherence to a set of laws. In the context preceding our text, Paul had used himself as an example of this contrast. Others may make the claim to be the true, first-class people of God because of their observance of the Law of Moses, but Paul could make a greater claim. He was in all respects highly observant of all the laws that marked Israel as a distinctive people (Philippians 3:4-6). As our text begins, Paul declares what faith in Christ demands that he say regarding his attainments as a faithful observer of the law.

*(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)*

**Paul's Past Life** - The apostle Paul had every reason to be proud of his past religious accomplishments, but he put them all aside. Paul realized all his prior activities he could have boasted about amounted to an attempt to please God in the flesh, and empty pride.

**Paul's Present Life** - Paul counted his previous deeds as useless in comparison to truly understanding Christ. If he had continued with his past life and never become a Christian, he would not be suffering as a criminal. In spite of his adverse circumstances, Paul concluded that attempting to be righteous by his own merit and keeping the law were not what God wanted. Now Paul focused on the resurrected Christ. He wanted to experience the same power that raised Christ from the dead surging through him so he could imitate Christ's attitude and actions while on earth. But Paul realized this also meant sharing in Christ's sufferings. Paul knew martyrdom probably awaited him as he sat in prison.

**Paul Pressed Forward** - Paul viewed death as the final stepping stone to the Father. He did not wish to die, but he also looked forward to living eternally in heaven. Whatever the Lord had planned for him, it was His will, and Paul wanted to be in His will. So that is the way he prayed: "Let me know Jesus. Let me be less, let Him be more."

**Imitate Paul** - How many believers today are praying like Paul? Are you willing to put aside selfish desires, or even staying busy in ministry, for an opportunity to truly know Christ?

Have you ever prayed for God to completely erase old thinking patterns, habitual behaviors, and anything in your life that hinders you from getting to know Christ better each day? It's a radical prayer, but it's the beginning of experiencing a revitalized, invigorating, Christian life.

*(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)*

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:**

Only God's grace can help us to be strong finishers in the Christian life

**COMMENT FOR THE WEEK:**

Despite our past failures or successes, let us keep pressing on toward the ultimate goal of becoming more like Jesus. We are not racing for an earthly prize, but for the ultimate reward of enjoying Him forever

**SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:**

*I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*  
(Phil 3:14 NKJV)

**Series: Our Love For God**

**UNIT: Songs that Glorify the God of Love**

**NEXT WEEK**

**Our Loving God**

(Psalms 40:1-3, 9-14)

## NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

### **Press on by Counting the Cost (Phil 3:7-9)**

#### *Determine what is important (7-8)*

- It should not be possessions (Luke 18:22)
- It should not be pride in our faith or knowledge (1 Cor. 8:13)
- It should be living according to the leadership of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:13)
- It should be to follow Jesus (Luke 5:27-28)
- It should be to be a disciple of God (Luke 14:33)

#### *Determine source of righteousness (9)*

- The source of righteousness is Jesus and Jesus only (Isaiah 45:24)
- Jesus is more than righteousness, He is also our redeemer and source of holiness (1 Cor. 1:30)
- Righteousness is gained through belief (Romans 10:4)
- Jesus provided righteousness through reconciliation (Col. 1:21-22)

### **Press on by Setting the Goals (Phil 3:10-12)**

#### *Goal of resurrection (10-11)*

- Because being resurrected means we will be with God (Psalm 49:15)
- Because all will be resurrected, some to heaven others to hell (John 5:28-29)
- Because resurrection of the saints is God's will (John 6:40)
- Because resurrection is done by the power of God (1 Cor. 6:14)
- Because resurrection is a key element of our faith (2 Cor. 4:13-14)
- Because through spiritual resurrection we can live a new life (Romans 6:4)

#### *Seeking to obtain what God has purposed for us (12)*

- Seeking God's purposes because they always works in conformity with His will (Eph 1:11-12)
- Seeking God's purposes because they are fulfilled in His people (Ps 57:2)
- Seeking God's purposes because they are eternal (Isa 46:10)
- Seeking God's purposes because they work for the good of those who love Him (Rom 8:28)
- Seeking God's purposes because they work in His people for His good purpose (Phil 2:13)
- Seeking God's purposes because they are unchanging (Heb 6:17)

### **Press on by Pressing Forward (Phil 3:13-14)**

#### *Pressing forward by forgetting the past (13-14)*

- Forget the past because we are a new creation and the old should be gone (2 Cor 5:17)
- Forget the past because anyone who looks back is not fit for the service of God (Luke 9:62)
- Forget the past because life is nothing if we don't complete the task God has assigned us (Acts 20:24)
- Forget the past, but don't forsake the zeal for God we had in the beginning (Rev 2:4)
- Forget the past because the future has a surpassing glory (2 Cor 3:10-11)

#### *Pressing forward by seeking a mature faith (14)*

- Mature faith starts by learning about godly doctrines (Heb 6:1)
- Mature faith is being built up in unity, knowledge of God, and attaining the full measure of the fullness of Jesus (Eph 4:11-13)
- Mature faith is progressing in the practice of using God's Word (Heb 5:14)
- Mature faith is growing and acting more like Jesus into holiness (2 Cor 7:1)
- Mature faith is being patient and waiting on God and His perfect purposes to work in our life (James 1:4)
- Mature faith is growing in the Divine grace and gifts that God provides (2 Peter 1:3-8)

#### *Pressing forward by committing to Growth (14)*

- Committing to growth in our salvation (Phil 2:12)
- Committing to throw off hindrances (Heb 12:1-2)
- Committing to let our light shine (Proverbs 4:18)
- Committing to add to our biblical learning (Proverbs 9:9)
- Committing to the work of the saints (Ephes. 4:16)
- Committing to follow the instructions of God (1 Thes. 4:1)