

Philippians Series

Lesson #077

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Dean Bible Ministries

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Forgetting the Past Things

Philippians 3:12–14



In Php. 3 the focus is on standing firm against error.

Two sources:

- 1. The Judaizers: added human works to justification and/or spiritual growth (sanctification).**
- 2. The enemies of the cross of Christ, Php. 3:17ff**

Php. 3:12, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected [arrived at maturity]; but I press on,

that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”

Php. 3:12, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”

Php. 3:13, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

Php. 3:14, “I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

διώκω *diōkō*

**1 sing pres act indic
to pursue, run after**

Php. 3:12, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”

**λαμβάνω *lambanō*
1 sing aor act
indic
to take, receive,
choose**

**τελειόω *teleioō* 1 sing perf mid indic
to finish, to complete or to become
complete, to finish, accomplish
something or become fully mature
[~HCSB]**

Php. 3:12, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”

**καταλαμβάνω *katalambanō*
1 sing aor act subj to
take, overtake, reach**

**καταλαμβάνω *katalambanō*
1 sing aor pass indic
to take, overtake, reach**

1 Cor. 9:24, “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain [lay hold of] *it*.”

**καταλαμβάνω *katalambanō*
2 Pl aor act subj to take,
overtake, reach**

**βραβεῖον *brabeion*
neut sing acc
prize**

Php. 3:14, “I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

1 Cor. 9:25, “And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*.”

**What the Bible Teaches
About**

Crowns and Rewards



For What Did Christ Lay Hold of Us?

- 1. For eternal life with Him,**
- 2. For the excellence of the knowledge of Christ (Php. 3:8, 10),**
- 3. Having the righteousness which is from God through faith (Php. 3:9),**
- 4. To know the power of His resurrection (Php. 3:10),**
- 5. To know the partnership with His sufferings (Php. 3:10b),**
- 6. To attain to the Rapture either before or after he died physically, he wasn't sure (Php. 3:11),**
- 7. Attaining eternal rewards (Php. 3:13–14),**
- 8. Paul sets these as Christ's goal for him and us, not the legalistic goals of the Judaizers.**

For What Did Christ Lay Hold of Us?

9. To be transformed (Rom. 12:2) and conformed to the character of Christ (Rom. 8:29).

Rom. 8:29, “For whom He foreknew, He also pre-appointed them to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

In Ephesians Lesson 17:

“... we know that He brings together for good all things, for those who love God and are called according to His purpose. For God knew His own before creation, and also pre-appointed them, that they should be spiritually shaped in the character of His Son, that He might be the first-born among a large family of brothers; and it is these, so appointed beforehand, whom He has also called. ...”

[Rom. 8:28–29, ~RD]

10. We are laid hold of to focus on Christ.

Heb. 12:2, “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Occupation with Christ: we love Christ and His mission for us more than we love our own lives.

11. We are laid hold of to serve the Lord, not just Paul, but each of us.

Rom. 1:9, “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers,”

**λατρεύω *latreuō*
1 sing pres act indic
to serve, worship**

**λατρεία *latreia*,
service or worship (of
God)**

Rom. 12:1, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.”

12. Paul's ministry was to serve Christ as an apostle to the Gentiles.

Gal. 1:15, “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,

Gal. 1:16, “to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,”

Php. 3:13, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,” [NKJV]

Php. 3:13, “Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead,” [HCSB]

λογίζομαι *logizomai*

1 sing pres mid indic

to count, think, calculate

Php. 3:12, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”

**καταλαμβάνω *katalambanō*
1 sing aor act subj to
take, overtake, reach**

**καταλαμβάνω *katalambanō*
1 sing aor pass indic
to take, overtake, reach**

Verse 13 has this phrase in it, “forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead.”

What are “those things”?

In Bible Study Technique we have three stages:

Observation: what does the text SAY?

Interpretation: what does the text MEAN?

Application: how does this relate to the way I think, talk, act, conduct my life?

Application at times can only mean one thing and can only be applied by one group. I know it seems like I am splitting hairs, but I'm not.

To correctly understand Php. 3:13 we must first:

Observe what is said

Understand the context

Determine the meaning

Php. 3:13, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting **those things which are behind and reaching forward to **those things** which are ahead,” [NKJV]**

Php. 3:13, “Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting **what is behind and reaching forward to **what** is ahead,” [HCSB]**

1. In Php. 3:13, “things” translates the neuter plural accusative of the article.

2. The verse uses a *men-de* construction.
On the one hand ... on the other hand ...

“Brethren, I do not count myself to have reached the goal, but one *thing* I do, **on the one hand**, forgetting what [article] is behind, **on the other hand** stretching out to what [article] *is* in front.”

This is frequently taken to mean several things:

- 1. The “things behind” is sin, some sin or failure in the near or distant past which I should forget, confess it, isolate the sin, leave it in the past and move on.**

This is frequently taken to mean several things:

2. The “things” relate to anything in the past, not just sins, but whatever he had already accomplished in the past.

“In order to realize the goal, Paul says in verse 13, he has to do several things. First of all, ‘forgetting those things which are behind.’ Paul has left behind him across the Roman world a string of established churches shining as lights in the darkness. The Roman world has the light of the Gospel through these believers, who stretch from Jerusalem all the way westward to Spain. Paul could become complacent, feeling his work is done because of the churches that have been established. Paul could look at that which he has suffered and conclude that he has suffered enough. The saints would agree with him. Over and over again companies of saints waited upon the Apostle Paul as he journeyed toward Jerusalem and urged him not to go to Jerusalem because they knew it would involve physical suffering. But Paul pressed on. Paul could look back on everything he has experienced and say, ‘It is enough. I will withdraw from the race.’ But Paul says, ‘I must forget the things that are behind.’ ”[1]

[1] Pentecost, J. Dwight. 1996. *The Joy of Living: A Study of Philippians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.

This is frequently taken to mean several things:

3. The “things” relate to the things Paul once counted on, things that were his accomplishments in the flesh.

Php. 3:7, “But **what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.**

Php. 3:8, “Yet indeed I also count **all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ”**

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The problem is that the Greek uses different ways to express what English consistently translates as “things.”

In Bible Study Technique we have three stages:

Observation: what does the text SAY?

Interpretation: what does the text MEAN?

Application: how does this relate to the way I think, talk, act, conduct my life?

Application at times can only mean one thing and can only be applied by one group. I know it seems like I am splitting hairs, but I'm not.

2. Often we and pastors jump over the interpretation step and get right into application. So do the sheep!

Example:

2 Chron. 7:14, “if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Observations:

Who is talking?

Who is being addressed?

Why is He talking to Solomon?

What is the context?

Solomon prayed to God and asked Him several things.

What did he ask God for?

2 Chron. 7:12, “Then the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: ‘I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.

2 Chron. 7:13, “ ‘When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people,’ ” [NKJV]

- 1. God heard Solomon’s prayer. What prayer? Where do we find it?**
- 2. What is “this place”?**

2 Chron. 7:15, “ ‘Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place.

2 Chron. 7:16, “ ‘For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.’ ” [NKJV]

**3. In 2 Chron. 7:13 He mentions
Shutting up heaven and there is no rain, or locusts
devouring the land, or pestilence.**

**When God mentions these disasters, it takes us back to
the cycles of discipline in Lev. 26 and Deut. 28.**

4. So why does God mention them?

Deut. 28:23, “And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron.”

Deut. 28:24, “The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.”

4. So why does God mention them?

Lev. 26:19, “I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze.

Lev. 26:20, “And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit.”

Lev. 26:25, “And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant; when you are gathered together within your cities I will send pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.”

1 Kings 17:1, “And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, ‘As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.’ ”

Solomon's Prayer

2 Chron. 6:26, “When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them,

2 Chron. 6:27, “then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance.

2 Chron. 6:28, “When there is famine in the land, pestilence or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers; when their enemies besiege them in the land of their cities; whatever plague or whatever sickness there is;”

The Context of the Prayer: Solomon's prayer of dedication.

2 Chron. 6:1, “Then Solomon spoke: ‘The LORD said He would dwell in the dark cloud.

2 Chron. 6:2, “ ‘I have surely built You an exalted house, and a place for You to dwell in forever.’ ”

2 Chron. 6:12, “Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands

2 Chron. 6:13, “(for Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and he stood on it, knelt down on his knees before all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven);

2 Chron. 6:14, “and he said: ‘LORD God of Israel, there is no God in heaven or on earth like You, who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts.’ ”

2 Chron. 6:15, “ ‘You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled it with Your hand, as it is this day.

2 Chron. 6:16, “ ‘Therefore, LORD God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, “You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk in My law as you have walked before Me.”

2 Chron. 6:17, “ ‘And now, O LORD God of Israel, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant David.’ ”

2 Chron. 6:19, “ ‘Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You:

2 Chron. 6:20, “ ‘that Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night, toward the place where You said You would put Your name, that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place.

2 Chron. 6:21, “ ‘And may You hear the supplications of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and when You hear, **forgive.’ ”**

2 Chron. 6:24, “ ‘Or if Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and return and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication before You in this temple,

2 Chron. 6:25, “ ‘then hear from heaven and **forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to them and their fathers.**

2 Chron. 6:26, “ ‘When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn [*shuv, i*] from their sin because You afflict them,

2 Chron. 6:27, “ ‘then hear in heaven, and **forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance.’ ”**

2 Chron. 6:37, “ ‘yet when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent [*shuv*, turn, NOT repent], and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, “We have sinned, we have done wrong, and have committed wickedness”;

2 Chron. 6:38, “ ‘and when they return [*shuv*, turn, NOT repent] to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been carried captive, and pray toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and toward the temple which I have built for Your name:

2 Chron. 6:39, “ ‘then hear from heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and **forgive Your people who have sinned against You.’ ”**

God's Answer

2 Chron. 7:12, “Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: ‘I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.

2 Chron. 7:13, “ ‘When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people,

2 Chron. 7:14, “ ‘if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

2 Chron. 7:15, “ ‘Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place.’ ”

My People

12 times, when God is speaking, God is the “My.”

In the New Testament:

6 times, all six are quotations from the Old Testament referring to the Jewish people.

Never, never, ever, ever, does God refer to Church Age believers as “My people.”

2 Chron. 7:14 promises to fulfill the blessing promises God made to Israel regarding the land and their restoration to the land in Lev. 26 and Deut. 30.

It has application to no one else. God did not make land promises to anyone else.

When God told Abraham:

Gen. 12:1, “Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you.’ ”

Only Abraham could obey, applying what God said.

Jer. 18:1, “The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying:

Jer. 18:2, “ ‘Arise and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause you to hear My words.’

Jer. 18:3, “Then I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, making something at the wheel.”

Jer. 18:4, “And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.

Jer. 18:5, “Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

Jer. 18:6, “ ‘O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?’ says the LORD. ‘Look, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!’ ”

Jer. 18:7, “The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it,

Jer. 18:8, “if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it.”

Jer. 18:9, “ ‘And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it,

Jer. 18:10, “ ‘if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.’ ”

Php. 3:13, “Brethren, I do not think myself to have reached it; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,” [RD]

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Perfect active infinitive
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