

Theme: Spiritually mature Christians focus on the PRESENT and the FUTURE, not the PAST.

Text: Philippians 3:12-16 (ESV)

Title: "Pursuing Your Upward Call"

## INTRODUCTION:

### **Philippians 3:12-16 (ESV)**

**12** 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. **13** 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, **14** I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. **15** Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. **16** Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

## OUTLINE:

- I. **Our PRESENT imPerfection - (vs. 12a & 13a)**
- II. **Our FUTURE Prize - (vs. 12b, 13b, & 14)**
- III. **Our PAST Progress - (vs. 15-16)**

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# I. Our PRESENT imPerfection - (vs. 12a & 13a)

ILLUSTRATION:

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**12a** Not that I have already obtained this

**12a** or am already perfect

**13a** Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own

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## II. Our FUTURE Prize - (vs. 12b, 13b, and 14)

ILLUSTRATION:

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**12b** but I press on to make it my own,

**12b** because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

**13b** But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead

**14** I press on toward the goal

**14** for the prize

**14** of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

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### **III. Our PAST Progress - (vs. 15-16)**

ILLUSTRATION:

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**15** Let those of us who are mature think this way,

**15** and if in anything you think otherwise,

**15** God will reveal that also to you.

**16** Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

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## CONCLUSION:

### **Personal Application**

1. Spend some time this week in personal assessment and prayer, asking God to show you areas in your own life where you are focusing on “self” and “past achievements” too much, rather than on the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ on your behalf.

### **Small Group Discussion**

1. Discuss some good things you have personally accomplished or done in your life as you’ve grown in your faith. Then, discuss why these are important and good for your progressive sanctification, but they don’t achieve the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ.
2. Discuss how the “pride of life” (trusting in achievements, deeds, works) often makes us think more highly of ourselves than we ought. Then, discuss how reflecting on “past performance” can be profitable for measuring spiritual growth, but that we are all far short of perfect Christlikeness.
3. In Philippians 3:13 the Apostle Paul said, “forgetting what lies behind” when explaining how we should live today in the present. Discuss what are both the POSITIVES (good things we have done) and the NEGATIVES (sins, depression, guilt, resentments, etc.) of the things we are told to forget.