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PRESSING ON

Been to a track meet lately? How do those amazing athletes accomplish incredible feats and reach seemingly impossible goals?

You might be surprised to learn the apostle Paul has some insight on this, which he uses to encourage believers in Christ. Maybe his "driving principle" is just what you need to keep moving forward today!

In Philippians 3:12-16 Paul pens more memorable words. He's been talking about the futility of religious works. He had given up all of his truly remarkable religious achievements, and simply given in to Jesus Christ. Your works cannot save you. Only the work of Christ saves you. His crucifixion paid the penalty for sin. His resurrection gives His new life to all who receive Him. Eternal life begins the moment you trust in Christ, and extends to eternity future where believers live with Him forever in the fullness of life.

Meantime, Paul says, that perfection isn't something we have already obtained. It's something we look forward to. Verse 12, **"I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own."** Paul presses on, not in order to become saved, but because he has been saved by Christ.

Your salvation past-tense was accomplished on the cross of Calvary, and your salvation future-tense will be accomplished when you are with Him in heaven. That's tomorrow. But TODAY you are still a work in progress. Paul tells you how to work it out. Verse 13, **"one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."**

Jesus has won. He's already crossed the finish line. He's waiting there for you to join Him. You just have to finish the race. The better you do, the more glory for Him. So you press on. Listen to Paul, your coach. Feel the runner's rhythm...press on...one thing...forgetting...what's behind...straining...forward...to what lies ahead...press on...toward the goal...for the prize...of the upward call...of God...in Christ Jesus...

Get that rhythm in your mind. **"One thing"** - this focuses your mind and energy on completing your goal. **"Forgetting"** - Look ahead. You're in a long-distance marathon. **"What lies behind"** - It's not simply a muscle game but a mind game. Don't get distracted by past failures, or by milestones already achieved. Focus on the goal. **"Straining forward"** - keep on keeping on. **"To what lies ahead"** - It's hard, but you keep going. It takes effort, but the goal is in sight. There's the finish - lean into the tape.

Keep that one thing in mind. Focus, forget, and fly! **"Press on"** - straining, breathing, lift your legs. One foot after the other. Go. **"Toward the goal"** - don't get distracted. The goal is your goal. Go for it. **"For the prize"** - eyes on the prize, eternal fulfillment, the ecstasy of agony over.

You can apply Paul's driving principle to every aspect of your life, not just your walk with Christ. Your personal life. Your marriage or relationships. Your job. School. Health. Everything. Keep pressing on!

But for the Christian the prize is not a medal, not a ceremony, not fleeting fame. It's something that lasts forever. **"The upward call of God"** - heaven lies ahead...no more exasperation of earthly existence. **"In Christ Jesus"** - The ultimate prize is Jesus Himself. He's your Savior! He's won the contest, and you're on His team. And when you reach the goal then you'll join Him in the winner's circle. To be with Him, in Him, in perfection. Never-ending eternal glory with Christ.

Press on! Just as an athlete must focus on one thing, the goal, so the race of this life moves you toward the goal of Jesus. And His goal is beyond this life. Every activity of earthly life stays in the back of your mind as His one thing propels you to eternity.

As you strain, you focus forward, pressing on to the prize. Christ Himself. Press on!