



LIVING THE GOSPEL TOGETHER
A STUDY IN PHILIPPIANS

SESSION 7

Pressing On as Citizens of Heaven

Text: Philippians 3:12–21

Focus: Living the gospel together begins with shared faith and prayer

Big Idea: Living the gospel together means pressing on in maturity, shaped by our heavenly citizenship and future hope.

Recap of Session 6

In Session 6, Paul called the church to **count everything as loss** compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ. We saw that true righteousness comes by faith alone, and that union with Christ reshapes both our present desires and our future hope.

Session 7 now addresses a vital tension in the Christian life:

If we are justified by faith, and Christ is our supreme treasure, how do we live faithfully while still unfinished?

Paul's answer is not complacency, but **perseverance**—a shared, forward-looking pursuit of Christ

Introduction: (Pastoral & Contextual)

Philippians 3:12–21 offers one of the clearest pictures of **sanctification** in the New Testament. Paul openly admits that he has not “arrived.” Spiritual maturity, in Paul's view, is not sinless perfection but **humble persistence**.

Living in a Roman colony, the Philippians understood citizenship deeply. Paul draws on this reality to remind believers that their **true homeland** is not Rome—but heaven. This heavenly identity reshapes how they live, suffer, and hope together on earth.

In-depth Exegesis of Philippians 3:12–21

Verses 12–14 – Pressing On Toward the Goal

“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect...”

- Paul rejects both perfectionism and passivity.
- “Press on” implies effort fueled by grace.
- The goal is not achievement, but Christ Himself.

Theological Insight: Grace does not end effort; it empowers lifelong pursuit of Christ.

Verses 15–16 – Mature Thinking and Shared Direction

“Let those of us who are mature think this way...”

- Spiritual maturity includes humility and teachability.
- Unity is preserved by holding fast to what has already been revealed.
- Growth happens best in shared commitment, not isolation.

Theological Insight: Maturity expresses itself in unity, not superiority.

Verses 17–19 – Two Ways to Live

Paul contrasts:

- Those who imitate Christ-centered examples
- Those whose minds are set on earthly things

Key warnings:

- Destruction as an end
- Appetite as a god
- Shame as glory

Theological Insight: What we set our minds on determines the direction of our lives.



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In-depth Exegesis of Philippians 3:12–21 Contd.

Verses 20–21 – Citizens of Heaven

“But our citizenship is in heaven...”

- Believers belong to a future kingdom now.
- Christ’s return is certain and transformative.
- Our bodies, like our hearts, will be made new.

Theological Insight: Future hope fuels present faithfulness.

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul emphasize that he has not “arrived” spiritually?

2. How does pressing on differ from striving for self-righteousness?

3. What does Paul identify as the true goal of the Christian life?

4. Why is humility essential to maturity?

5. How does community shape spiritual growth?

6. What dangers come with setting our minds on earthly things?

7. How does heavenly citizenship challenge cultural loyalties?

8. Why is the resurrection of the body important to Christian hope?

9. How does future glory shape present perseverance?

10. Where is God calling you to press on rather than give up?



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Key Doctrines Highlighted

- Sanctification
- Perseverance
- Christian maturity
- Heavenly citizenship
- Bodily resurrection

Personal Application

- Reflect honestly on areas of spiritual stagnation.
- Replace discouragement with renewed pursuit of Christ.
- Commit to walking alongside others in the journey of faith

Personal Challenge:

Are you pressing on toward Christ—or settling for spiritual comfort?

Reflective Practice

- Where have you confused maturity with arrival?
- What does pressing on look like in your current season?

Spiritual Exercise:

- Each morning this week, pray Philippians 3:14 aloud.
- Ask God to realign your desires toward Christ

Points for Prayer

Personal Prayer

- *Perseverance in faith*
- *Renewed hunger for Christ*

Church Prayer

- *Maturity marked by humility*
- *Unity in shared pursuit of Christ*

Mission Prayer

- *Hope-filled witness in a broken world*
- *Endurance for believers under pressure*

Closing Summary

Living the gospel together means pressing on with hope and humility, shaped by our heavenly citizenship and confident in Christ's coming glory.