
"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. (Philippians 3:12)

I. Passionate Pursuit of a Single Objective

- a. What was Paul's goal in life? Paul was keenly aware of Christ *laying hold* of him. He was blinded on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9:1-9)
 1. *Laying hold* is an appropriate term. Paul was seized with the strong, unbreakable grip of the risen Christ.
- b. What was the ultimate reason for Christ to *lay hold* of people? Was it for him to be an apostle? Was it for the cause of planting churches? Paul stated the ultimate reason in v. 10, "that I may know Him."
- c. Secondly, the goal was to realize *the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*. (v. 14)
 1. The *upward call* is a call from heaven that will finally take us to heaven. It calls us to keep moving forward and upward in the knowledge of Christ.
- d. What is needed to reach the goal? We must let go of the past and press toward the future. (v.13)
- e. Often our lives are not integrated around a single, unifying purpose. We want to try a little bit of everything, and we do not want to miss out on anything.
- f. We may not all have a sensational experience like Paul, but we all have been *laid hold* of by God.
- g. Our pattern of life is to be lived out by keeping our focus on the future. We all have a goal, in Christ, to be attained. Passion fuels priorities.

II. Paul's Passion

- a. Regardless of the peril and circumstance, Paul responded by passionately holding on to what Christ had purposed for him to do. The circumstances are connected to the *call*.
- b. Here is a picture for every Christian. We must approach the Christians life by not looking back to our failures or successes. Our daily goal is to know Christ better and to accomplish what God has called us to.
- c. Paul's single focus was to learn the Lord's will and doing it whole heartedly.
- d. Paul's success in ministry was that he never stopped seeking to know the Lord better. When we know the Lord better, we understand ourselves and our purposes. (Matthew 6:33)
- e. Think about all the experiences Paul had in churches and towns. He preached and saw the power of God work in many lives, yet he said, *Not that I have already obtained...*
- f. We marvel at the discipline, achievements, talent and skill of athletes, but we do not have the same celebration for Christians who achieve what God has called.
- g. What are you truly passionate about? Is God in it? Is God fueling that passion?

III. Word Reflection and Application

- a. Is it possible for Christians to increase in the knowledge of God? (Jer 9:23-24; Col 1:9-10)
- b. The three main enemies that believers face, that hinder us from knowing God are: the world, the flesh and the devil.
- c. Self-control and a careful focus are needed to live a godly life. In what specific areas of life do you think knowing Christ more would benefit you: lifestyles; relationships, financial stewardship, etc.?
- d. What are five things *you know* about Christ? What are five things you desire to know about Christ?