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## SLIDE 1: GOAL VIDEO!

### ME: NOT AN ATHLETE

Ooooooh that is so dramatic!! What an entrance opportunity for me! No seriously, it is unlikely that THAT kind of event is ever going to be a part of my story so I had to take advantage today!

I'm going to be frank, I don't care for sports. This shocks you I know, because I look like such an athlete but...I DO like the idea of annual gatherings for special snacks. Truthfully though, well, I like books, and I see **reading** as the closest thing to my sport.

### FEEL IT

Having said that, it is impossible to watch that video and not feel it! The joy on everyone's faces, the feeling that everyone is the game, the excitement in the air because they got the goooooooooal!!!!!! Even the obnoxious screaming! You actually feel like you were part of the celebration in some way, even if like me, you're not sure what direction they are supposed to be running in!

### WE: SPORTS/CHECKLISTS/NEED FOR CLARITY

Maybe it IS sports for you. You know what it's like to strain your body, to train your muscles and brain to anticipate the next move. To have such a clearly defined goal, a single focus.

Or maybe, it's a task list in front of you, there is something so satisfying about checking off that next thing with that fancy new pen, ripping off those post it notes as you accomplish each thing on your desk.

Driven? Purpose. Certainty. Expectation. Clarity. We need it as humans, without it we slouch like a **couch potato**, filling our face with chips and dip and watching the next season, in one day, on Netflix, and as pleasurable as that can be, it is empty and leaves a horrible longing behind it.

### TRANSITION- WHAT IS THE GOAL?

Today we get to ask the question together, what **is** the goal, what is the prize that Paul is talking about in Philippians 3? Before we start- let's pray.

## PRAY!!

Let's read the Pastor Verner Drost Version of Philippians 3:12-15 here in front of us today.

### SLIDE 2: Passage

#### GOD

##### Philippians 3:12-15

"I press on, that I may **LAY HOLD** of that for which Christ Jesus has also **LAI D HOLD** of me. I do not consider myself to have apprehended it yet; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore, let us who are mature think this way. And if anyone of you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you."

#### WHAT PART?

A month or so ago when the Pastors were sitting around in Pastor Verner's office, he asked us the question we've each been asking these last few weeks- "What part of this passage grabs your heart?" For me, it was "But I press on-- in order that I may **lay hold of that** for which I also I was **laid hold** of by Christ Jesus."

#### BUBBLES

I don't know about you, but I get a picture in my head when I read those words. I need some people so you can see it too. 4 people here.

Now these two. I want you to take hold of each other. Each of you, one hand on the other's shoulder. Now press in and stare each other in the eyes. Awkward, maybe a bit, but when you really want someone's attention, I promise you, this works.

Now, I need one person here blowing bubbles, all around. Yup, and you, your job is to catch them. Ok, the rest of us, let's watch. Now, you two, stay focused, look each other in the eye. **THIS is taking hold.**

#### HOW TO PLAY WITH BUBBLES

If you haven't had the opportunity in a few years, when spring has sprung and the mud smells like horse poop, run up to the Dollarstore and get yourself some bubbles, find yourself some preschoolers (ok that sounds creepy, maybe, instead, offer to serve in our preschool ministry here at SSC) and blow bubbles. The kids will dance and prance and duck and spin and grab a hold of those Bubbles, they will giggle and laugh, maybe even pee their pants a little, the sunlight will shine through them making rainbow swirls and it will be fun- but in the end, what we grasp- pop, we are left with sticky soapy hands.

#### LIFE IS LIKE CHASING BUBBLES.

But here's the thing. Sometimes, in life, we act like people chasing pretty bubbles, even as Christians, people trying to live like and for Christ, we can look like children chasing bubbles. You know what I mean. You hear what I'm saying? The next event, the next girls night, the next sports show, the next vacation, the next Sunday service... You hear me....

## SLIDE 3:

### BEFORE YOU GO BY GERALD FADAYOMI

It reminds me of something I read in a book called “Before You Go” by Gerald Fadayomi. He talks about wrapping up another great youth event and looking at his young leaders and offering to take them out to eat in thanks for all their hardwork. As they were eating french-fries at the local McDonalds he realizes that they are all leaving for University in a couple of months and he suddenly feels this intensity to tell them all these spiritual tid-bits before they go. As they expressed their concerns for finding a church to serve in and belong in he starts thinking about the crazy percentages of youth who leave the church when they go to University and suddenly it hits him, he’s participated in it too, **he’s helped young people fall in love with the church itself, great events, great friends etc. but has he helped them fall in love with Jesus?** Because if they fall in love with Jesus, they can find a church to worship in anywhere, but if they fell in love with his church.... Well that’s a different thing....

## SLIDE 4:

OK- Back to Paul.

“But I press on-- in order that I may **lay hold OF THAT** for which I also I was **laid hold of** by Christ Jesus.”

### OF THAT...

Paul, you’re killing us here. We have to ask the question “Of WHAT?”, Not the shinny bubbles. What is THAT?

### THE GOAL.

So Paul, What is the goal? That’s still pretty vague. I need it clearer than that.

Why did God lay hold of me? I don’t want to miss it! I want to grab it, I want to hold on to it! I want to lay hold of the goal.

## SLIDE 5: The Goal

### a. He Took Hold of YOU for Friendship

**He took hold of YOU.**

**Don’t forget it.**

**He pursued a relationship with YOU.**

**Our Purpose- our Goal- the Prize- it’s so very simple and so very hard all at the same time, the Goal is a relationship, a friendship even, with Jesus.**

Did you know, or have you forgotten, why he created you?

How He delighted in you?

How you were his ultimate creation?

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<sup>1</sup> Before You Go. Gerald Fadoyomi

## **SIN SEPARATION**

In the Garden we were in the presence of God but our sin banished us from that intimate relationship with him and since then our longing, our desire, correctly identified or not- is to be back there again, or more accurately perhaps, for **Heaven- where God's presence is.**

So, Jesus brings us to the **foot of the cross**, where we are left to choose for ourselves, if we will let, perfect Jesus take the **weight and responsibility for our selfishness, our sinfulness**, to his gruesome death so that in his resurrection we can live and have a relationship with God despite ourselves.

Ok, some of you, I hear you pretty pen poised, ready to check that off your list- "Got that one down Heidi. Accepted Jesus at 15 years old, back in 1982."

### **But do you hear him calling?**

**He's calling you.**

On your house phone

On your cell phone

By text message

Your voicemail

FB messenger

He's calling to have a relationship with you. That's not a check list, a "did that", a "prize". It's time to pursue Him. Get to know him. Press in- and find out who he is, and you will find your life.

He doesn't want you to "tag" him in your picture or post about it on social media

He wants you to sit on your couch beside him and **pour out your heart.**

He wants you to sit on your couch beside him and **listen to his heart.**

## **IMAGE 5:**

### **Romans 5:10**

**"You were restored to friendship with God by the death of his son."**

For **THIS** he took hold of me. For salvation, yes, but for relationship,  
**BUT FOR FRIENDSHIP HE TOOK HOLD OF YOU.**

## **STUDY ME!**

Do you learn about him, his likes and dislikes?

Chad makes fun of me for saying it from time to time but I've been known to say "STUDY ME!! KNOW ME!!" That's relationship.

Did you decide this morning, to come in here and worship God with your words and your song and even your posture?

Do you listen TO him, listen FOR him? What does he say about you?- Find it, study it, memorize it, remind yourself of it.

Do you let him say “actually, I disagree” when you’re rambling along with your thoughts and plans.

He knows you better than you know yourself. He designed you.

Be quiet and listen. You have to have relationship enough to hear him.

Are you comfortable enough to just sit in silence with him?

### IMAGE 6: Incredibles Image<sup>2</sup>

Have you seen that meme? “You are a child of God!” Sometimes it’s like this with God. We are so busy talking and snuffling and ranting or going on in stony silence we nearly need someone to hit us over the head.



### REACHING OUT FOR CHRIST. REACHING OUT FOR ME.

This is practice. And this will transform our lives.

Our choices become our daily habits

Our daily habits become our character

Our character influences our decisions.<sup>3</sup>- this is where your identity in Christ comes from.

The prize isn’t Heaven, all glitter and banquets in the skies; Heaven is the place God makes his presence most fully known.

### IMAGE 7:

#### Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV

“... Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross...

### WHAT IS HINDERING YOU? ENTANGLING YOU? KEEPING YOU BUSY?

Did you know that YOU are the joy sat before him? YOU are the relationship he longs for.

The race marked out before us is our relationship with Jesus, he will start, grow and perfect our faith, if we stay, pursue, push in, press on, in our relationship with Him.

<sup>2</sup> The Incredibles. C. Disney

<sup>3</sup> Micheal Hayatt

All the metaphors here but...

The race is relationship

The journey is relationship

The path is relationship

The walk is relationship.

We can't lose focus on the end goal- it is Jesus!

**TRANSITION: IS THAT IT?**

I've spent a long time here so you're asking me So is that it? Are we off the hook? What about my son whose graduating high school this June Heidi? Do I just tell him to go sit on the couch and pour out his heart to God!!

Not on my couch! On his OWN couch, that he's paying for, with his own money from his own job in his own apartment...

Nah. There's a Part 2.

**IMAGE 8: THE GOAL**

**b. YOU TAKE HOLD OF HIM FOR PURPOSE**

**NATE'S STORY:**

A few months ago I was tucking my 7 year old son into bed. If you know him at all he is extremely sincere (and rather stubborn) about everything in his life and this tuck in was no different. There had been a career fair at his school and he had walked from booth to booth being asked the age old question again and again "What do you want to be when you grow up?" He'd even been given a work sheet or activity page where he could draw himself in the uniform or gear of any occupation he wanted. He was stumped.

"But Mama, I don't know what I want to be when I grow up!! I don't know what I want to do!"

He was sincerely distraught.

Mommy win-Cue one of everyone's favourite Bible verses of all time:

**IMAGE 9: Passage**

**Jeremiah 29:11**

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Cue smart sincere little boy...

"I know GOD knows what I'm going to be when I grow up Mama, but I don't!"

Here's the thing:

## GOAL!!! TAKE HOLD OF THE PRIZE

We can become so consumed with MISSING God's plan for our lives.  
We are so busy telling him what to do and how it should be that we miss that  
His plans are greater than my plans, his ways are greater than my ways, and I will learn to trust  
him with them IF I'm getting to know him, spending time with Him, trusting Him, listening to  
him.

### Isaiah 55:8-9

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.  
As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my  
thoughts than your thoughts."

### COTTON CANDY

YOUR PURPOSE isn't like the first time you give a toddler cotton candy. I mean, never give  
a toddler cotton candy, it's full of sugar and terrible for them, but if you WERE to give a  
toddler cotton candy.... Their eyes widen with this big fluffly cloud of pink or blue, you coax  
them to put it on their tongue and then a sweet surprise and poof! It's gone! And they are left  
grabbing their tongue and trying to bring it back.

You folks are going to want to serve in Preschool ministry after this morning's service aren't  
you. - does she have ulterior motives you think to yourself? Hmmm...

### IMAGE 10: Passage

**HERE'S WHAT WE FORGET** when we quote Jeremiah 29:11, we forget 29:12 & 13

### Jeremiah 29:11-13

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to  
harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."  
"Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you." "You will  
seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart"

**I'VE GOT TO CALL HIM BACK.** He knows the plans. He's made the phone call, left the  
voicemail, sent the text and he even sees my **"Read Receipt"** but I've got to pick up the phone.

**YOU CAN'T MISS YOUR PURPOSE**, if you're listening. He wants it more than you do!  
What has he put in your hands- do that- serve there and watch what He does!

**THIS IS THE CRAZY TRUST FALL**, running into the unknown, face focused on Jesus.  
Where will he take us?

He's purposed in you Motherhood or Fatherhood or Singlehood.

He's using your place of employment or unemployment, or your health situation.

He's directed you to that friendship.

He designed you with that skill.

He placed that opportunity in front of you, it might be so little and seemingly insignificant but  
follow it and see what He will do.



Ask Him.

**IMAGE 13:**

**The LORD'S PURPOSE PREVAILS**

**Proverbs 19:21**

"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."

Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us into the open, in a spacious full life.

**Ephesians 1:11**

It is in Christ we find out who we are and what we are living for.

**IMAGE 14:**

**WRAP IT UP TOGETHER**

So let's pop back up to Philippians, just a few verses before our passage and tie this all together here.

**Philippians 3:10**

I want to know Christ

**YOU:**

**DO YOU WANT TO KNOW CHRIST?** Do you know him as a friend, truly?

Are you pressing into HIS purpose for your life?

**THIS, MY FRIENDS, IS THE GOAL. THIS IS THE PRIZE.**

Leave the pursuit of fleeting religious bubbles and cotton candy behind and pursue getting to know him, your savior, your father, your guide; consequently, you'll get to know yourself- your purpose, the reason he created you. And you can be certain you will make your paths straight.

**IMAGE 15:**

**KNOW CHRIST. KNOW YOURSELF.**

**WE:**

**IMAGINE THIS SPACE**, if it were filled with humans, who have stopped pursuing their own ambitions and are actively listening and pursuing a relationship with God.

Imagine how it might **sound**, how it might **feel**, the atmosphere might ring out, the clapping and hugging, embracing and shouting "Gooooooooooooooooalllllllll" as we call out in each other

– **"THAT'S IT!**

**LOOK AT YOU STEPPING INTO YOUR PURPOSE!**

**FOR THIS YOU WERE CREATED!**

That's right Paul, we get it!

**IMAGE 16: THE GOAL**

- a. **HE TOOK HOLD OF YOU FOR FRIENDSHIP**
- b. **YOU TAKE HOLD OF HIM FOR PURPOSE**

**PRAYER/INVITATION:**

**HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?**

Have you gotten so busy in your overwhelmed life that you've forgotten what your goal is? He's messaging you, but he needs more than a **"Read Receipt"** in response.

**TAKE HOLD OF HIM**

Maybe today, you need to stop for a minute and answer your messages. Don't rush off without doing that. He's created this space for you, don't miss it again. **Take Hold of Him**

Maybe today, you'd like someone to take hold of your shoulders, look you in the eye and say "I see you. He designed you. Let me pray **with you** as you discover, **with Him** your purpose." Feel free to come forward. This space is for you. What would it be like if this place was filled with people praying for each other to discover a deeper relationship and purpose with Him?

Maybe today, you see that person across the room and you know that God wants YOU to reach out and say "I see you." And pray for them. It made all the difference for me. Do it. Don't skip it. We've created this space for that.

**LET'S PRAY.**