



# PHILIPPIANS

## 12-15

### 01 PUSHING PAST EASIER

The following document is a rough copy of Pastor Drost's sermon notes

from January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019

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✚ This past December, I was praying about our church and the start of this year. Just seeking the Lord as to what we should focus on as we start our year at Smythe Street Church. I woke up in the night with the words of **Philippians III 12-15** ringing out in my heart and this strong and clear impression that we should launch this year as a church with this passage of scripture.

I shared it with the Staff, Pastors and Elders and we are planning on preaching, meditating, and praying this passage for the next few weeks. I'm asking you to join us in letting God speak to you through this verse... **Philippians III 12-15** Here is what it says (They are the words of the Apostle Paul):

"I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid 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....

"Think this way" or "have this way of thinking"... this **attitude**!

**This** (what he is talking about here) **is an attitude**, a way of thinking, an attitude you have **IF** you want to be a mature Christian. Immature Christians don't think like this!

"And if in any way you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you." Philippians 3:12-15

God wants us to have this attitude, this way of thinking, in everything! And **"if in any way we are thinking otherwise"**, if in any way we have the wrong attitude, God wants to show us and **adjust our thinking, adjust our attitude**!

So here are some of the things we are going to be looking at over the next few weeks:

- 1) That disposition to **"press on" "reach forward"**
- 2) Having the right attitude of humility... Paul says,

"I do not consider myself to have apprehended it yet

In other words, **"I haven't arrived!"**

When you think you have arrived (spiritually) then you haven't. And you stagnate!

- 3) Then Paul tells us to consider those things that we need to let go off...

"forgetting those things which are behind"

There are things we have to let go of if we want to reach our future potential...

- 4) Paul also tells us that we are called to **"lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of us"**. Everyone of us has a **purpose**, a call of God, a **wonderful God breathed destiny**!

A God dream that He calls you to "lay hold of"! Wow!

**He also has a purpose for this church; a call on us as a congregation that's unique to us!**

**LET'S REACH FOR IT!**

Then Paul talks about that goal, that **"prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus"**.

**There is a "payday"! Having the right motivation. Having your eye on the right prize!**

**All of this, Paul says, develops the right attitude, the right way of thinking as a mature Christian.**

So, I'm inviting you as we stand at the dawn of a new year, to consider with us, this invitation from Paul, this way of thinking, and let the Holy Spirit adjust our attitudes as we press into what God has for us, personally and together as a church.

Would you take a few minutes this week to read this passage, **Philippians III:12-15**, pray about this series, and ask God to help you learn the right thinking so as to reach your full 2019 potential?



✚ A few weeks ago I was going for my daily walk with my dog Cookie on the Hanwell park trail. My goal was reaching 11,000 steps (Not a big deal for some, but it's a good goal for me).

Temperature was -17° (Chill factor was -21°).

I was on the halfway mark turning up towards the Y in the path.

I could feel the cold setting in, the frost biting my face and the chill penetrating my hands.

Turning one way on the Y ahead was the way I had to go to reach my 11,000 steps. Turning the other way was the shortest way back to the car. It's amazing how your mind can negotiate with you in those moments:

- It's way too cold to take the longer way!
- You walked enough yesterday, just do a little extra tomorrow.
- Your hands are starting to pain. You better get back to the car and warm up.

Those little decisions, those small choices, might seem insignificant but they are the path to much bigger consequences. Small compromises that become a slippery slope to serious problems!

**A simple Y in a moment of my day that will affect my long-term health.**

This is the case with all aspects of life, including our spiritual health.

**If you want to grow in your spiritual journey you will have to make those little daily decisions to “push past easier”.** It's the small wins that take you farther!

✚ There's this interesting verse tucked away in this Old Testament book called Song of Solomon. This book is a love letter between a bride and her groom that has verses that can steam up the windows and make a conservative blush. But right in the middle of the love talk you will find this verse that says:

“Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines are in blossom.”

Song of Solomon 2:15 (NKJV)

What is this verse about and why is it part of a love letter between a bride and her groom?

In Bible lands, when the grape vines blossomed, the foxes would sneak in and eat them not allowing the fruit to develop.

The little foxes were hard to catch...

Often what destroys a love relationship or a marriage, are silly arguments. The little things that spoil the blossoming of love.

Then, after the serious damage is done, you can't even remember what the argument was about!

**The little foxes that spoil the vine of love!**

**The little foxes that spoil a great friendship!**

“The tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!”

James 3:5 (ESV)

How destructive a careless word can be to a great relationship!

To a strong team. To a successful partnership.

But on the other hand, what a powerful tool a kind word can be, taking the time to give a loving comment, a thoughtful gesture. A small shift in how you treat someone can have huge results!

**We often are looking for these big events to accomplish big life-changes when in fact it's often the small daily efforts that give us the greatest long-term victories.**

That Y on my walk represents a lot of small efforts in life that can make huge differences. Like taking the stairs instead of the elevator/escalator (this has major health benefits).



- Listening more (really listening) instead of thinking/planning your response.
- Going to bed earlier so you can get up earlier and spend quiet time with God.
- Turning the TV off (silencing your cell) and sitting with you wife giving her your full focus.
- Looking at people when you talk to them.
- Changing where you sit in church.
- Eating together as a family instead of in front of the TV.
- Praying for people instead of gossiping about them.
- Drinking more water.
- Giving one dollar a day to help a kid in Haiti.
- Writing an encouraging note to someone.
- Chewing your food slower.
- Driving your car slower.
- Kneeling to pray instead of sitting.

**It's the small daily efforts that make for the biggest life wins!**

**Small daily choices to “push past easier” make big changes!**

✚ Paul, a seasoned Apostle, on his third world missionary journey, having established churches in several countries, seen incredible miracles, disciplined great leaders, preached in front of the great and mighty, writes:

“I **press on**, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid 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”.

**This is about those small daily choices to “push past easier”.**

It's not about setting these outlandish targets. It's just making those daily small decisions, changes, shifts, pushing past the shortcuts, the compromises, what is easier, familiar, the excuses... that rob our greater potential!

**It's the small daily efforts that make for the biggest life wins!** It's an attitude, a way of thinking!

**Illustration** John Wooden is the first man to make it to the Basketball Hall of Fame as both a player and a coach. In his book, **A Lifetime of Observations and Reflections On and Off the Court**, Wooden points out that the seemingly small things make the difference between “champions and near-champions.”

He would begin the first team meeting of a new season with the same demonstration year after year. The demonstration wasn't about showing his college players how to execute the perfect dunk or fast break. What the legendary coach wanted to teach them was how to put on their socks.

He writes in his book: *“I wanted absolutely no folds, wrinkles, or creases of any kind on the sock,” he explains. “I would demonstrate for the players and then have the players demonstrate for me. This may seem like a nuisance... but I had a very practical reason for being meticulous about this. Wrinkles, folds, and creases can cause blisters. Blisters interfere with performance during practice and games... These seemingly trivial matters, taken together and added to many, many other so-called trivial matters, build into something very big: namely, your success.”*

Jesus said that a little bit of faith like a tiny mustard seed put into action can move mountains!

- What do you have in your hand, in your power that (though small) could change significantly your spiritual walk?
- What small effort is God calling you to make? **Those small daily choices to “push past easier”**