

*Philippians 3:12-14. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my **goal**, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the **goal** to win the **prize** for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

What is my Goal?

- **This is a passage that is often mis-interpreted.**
- **Is this about possessions, power, position, prestige, pleasure, etc?**

1. Understanding the context

*Ephesians 1:15-23. Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ **that** the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; **that** you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His*

mighty power²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 3:14-21. **For this reason** I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,¹⁶ **that** He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,¹⁷ **that** Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; **that** you, being rooted and grounded in love,¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; **that** you may be filled with all the fullness of God.²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do **exceedingly abundantly** above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,²¹ to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Romans 12:1-2. Therefore, **I urge you**, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed **by the renewing of your**

mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

2. The goal is 'Christlikeness' – or 'Godliness'

Ephesians 4:13. ...till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

Note the goal or objective – maturity - Christlikeness

What does Christlikeness or Godliness look like?

▫ First – consider 'Godlessness':

Galatians 5: 19-21. The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God

Ephesians 4:25-32. Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. ²⁶ "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on

your wrath, ²⁷ nor give place to the devil. ²⁸ Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. ²⁹ Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. ³² And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

*Ephesians 5:3-7. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; ⁴ neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. ⁵ For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for **because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.** ⁷ Therefore do not be partakers with them.*

Paul warns us with conviction & passion

- **Do not be seduced by the popular rhetoric being thrust upon our society**
- **Christlikeness looks like:**

Galatians 5:22-25. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit

Ephesians 5:8-10. For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

*Philippians 2: 14-16. Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, **children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation**, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.*

3. How do we become Christlike?

*Many have correctly understood the goal but, have **incorrectly** understood how to arrive at the goal!*

Most Christians attempt to become Christlike by 'good works'

- **Prayer, bible reading, church attendance, giving, serving – and trying to do ‘the right thing’**
- **Some try extreme methods of achieving Godliness – ‘Asceticism’**
 - A lifestyle characterized by abstinence from sensual pleasures, often for the purpose of pursuing spiritual goals.

We will never reach Christlikeness by any religious effort – no matter how noble or self-sacrificing!

4. Paul gives us the answer to becoming Christlike

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and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

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- **The ‘exceedingly abundantly’ is for Christ-likeness and Kingdom building!**

The key to becoming Christlike is for increasing revelation, insight, knowing and understanding of the glorious life, love and power of Jesus living in us and working through us.

*Philippians 3:7-14. But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, **that I may gain Christ** ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰ **that I may know Him** and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my **goal**, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the **goal** to win the **prize** for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

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