



# abclinks

connecting personal and small group studies with this week's sermon

Today's edition for the sermon on **May 6, 2007**

## this week's core belief

### *Single-mindedness*

**I focus on God and his priorities for my life.**

*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

*Matthew 6.33*

Adapted from **The 30 Core Competencies** *The Christian Life Profile*, Randy Frazee, Zondervan

See [www.pantego.org/resources/30core.html](http://www.pantego.org/resources/30core.html)

## using abclinks

### **Personal Bible Studies** (inside pages)

- Personal studies that explore Scripture passages related to this week's sermon and include a prayer to help you through the week.

### **Small Group Discussion** (back page)

- Small group questions that connect with the sermon and your personal Bible study
- If you are not in a small group, contact one of our small group staff members to get more information on ABC Small Groups or go to [www.adabible.org](http://www.adabible.org)>small groups.

See [www.adabible.org](http://www.adabible.org) for abclinks archives.



## Part Four of a Five Part Sermon Series

### **"Pressing On"**

One of the most inspiring stories of love and perseverance I have ever read is the story of Dick Hoyt. In a 2005 *Sports Illustrated* column, Rick Reilly describes it as a love story that began when Hoyt's son, Rick, was strangled by the umbilical cord during birth leaving him brain damaged, unable to control his limbs. The Hoyts were told their son would be a vegetable and they ought to put him in an institution. The Hoyts refused.

When Rick was 11 years old, the Hoyts took him to the engineers at Tufts University and asked them if they could find some way for their son to communicate with them. They had been told that there was nothing going on in Rick's brain. Turned out, there was a lot going on! "Tell him a joke," Dick suggested. They did. Rick laughed. So, the engineers rigged up a computer so Rick could type out letters with a stick attached to the side of his face. Rick was now able to make some incredible requests of his dad.

After a high school classmate of Rick's was paralyzed in an accident, a charity run was organized. Rick pecked out the words, "Dad, I want to do that." How was Dick, a self described "porker" who never ran more than a mile, going to push his son in a wheelchair five miles? Well, he did. Then came the words that would change everything. "Dad," Rick typed, "when we were running, it felt like I wasn't disabled anymore!" From then on, Dick became obsessed with giving his son that feeling as often as he could. He pushed himself into such shape that he was ready to train for a marathon. Since that first five mile race, Dick Hoyt has pushed his son in 85 marathons, 26.2 miles each. Twenty four times they have run the Boston Marathon.

Somebody suggested, "Hey Dick, why not a triathlon?" How's a guy who never learned to swim and hadn't ridden a bike since he was six going to haul his 110 pound kid through a triathlon? Well, he did. As of 2005, at the ages of 65 and 43, Dick and Rick had competed 212 triathlons, including four 15-hour Ironmans in Hawaii where the father pushed the son 26.2 miles in a wheelchair, pulled him 2.4 miles in a dinghy while swimming and pedaled him 112 miles in a seat on the handlebars. Columnist Reilly wrote, "I try to be a good father. But compared with Dick Hoyt, I suck." When writing of his father, Rick pecks out this line, "No doubt about it. My dad is the Father of the Century." As for Dick, he says he does it purely for "the awesome feeling" he gets seeing Rick with a huge smile as they run, swim and ride together.

As we continue our examination of Paul's letter to his friends in Philippi, we read of Paul's dedication, focus, tenacity and suffering as he "presses on toward the goal to win the prize" that God had called him to pursue. This week, as you read Paul's letter, evaluate your goals, your focus, your tenacity and your efforts toward reaching God's goal in your life. Be determined to shed that which is holding you back from living the life God has called you to.



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# personal bible studies

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## timeandplace

Paul opens the third chapter of Philippians with a stern warning against thinking that what we do will bring us closer to God rather than the free gift of grace given by faith. During the time of Paul's writing, there were a group of Jewish Christians who wrongly taught that Gentiles must follow all the Old Testament Jewish laws (essentially become Jewish) in order to become a Christian. Paul admonishes such teaching by emphasizing that his own Jewish attributes brought him no closer to Christ. What believers do is a result of faith, not a pre-requisite to faith.

Paul then acknowledges that even though he is in deep relationship with Jesus, he has not yet reached spiritual perfection. We will never live a perfect Christian life and perhaps that realization left Paul's friends discouraged. Here Paul gives a motivational message that we need to "press on towards the goal" of living a life of holiness.

## storyline

*"...I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord..."*

### Assets Turned Liabilities - Read Philippians 3.1-9

Acts 27 records Paul's sailing trip to Italy. It is not exactly a pleasure cruise as Paul's ship is quickly swept into a storm of hurricane force. The ship took such a beating the crew feared it would become submerged. In an attempt to salvage the boat and save their lives the crew threw the cargo into the sea. Cargo that was once considered an asset, had become a liability.

Paul lists what some would consider "assets" in terms of righteous living. Why would such things be considered beneficial?

After identifying these "assets," Paul reverses the thinking and declares them all to be liabilities or rubbish. Why would Paul consider his stellar "resume of righteousness" to be a hindrance?

What sort of things could someone today put on their "righteousness resume" that could give them the feeling of being approved by God?

How might these same things be considered liabilities in terms of living by faith?

How might "religious people" be hindered by their past in having a relationship with God?

#### Today's Prayer

Ask God to reveal to you what is currently in your life that is distracting you from knowing Him more. (crowded schedule? television watching? approval of others? pursuit of pleasures? pattern of sin?) Take time to listen to what God reveals to you. Then apologize to God for allowing this to prevent you from knowing Him more. Accept His forgiveness. Thank Him and rejoice that you don't need to be perfect to be in relationship with Him.

What is hindering you in your relationship with God? What do you need to throw overboard? Some may actually be good things.

*"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings..."*

**It's Not What You Know, It's Who You Know - Read Philippians 3.7-11**

Describe the difference between *knowing of* someone and *knowing* someone. Do you know of Jesus or do you know Jesus? Describe your relationship with Him.

How are you growing to know Him versus knowing about Him? What is currently in your life that deepens your relationship with Jesus?

Would anything have to change in your life to know Jesus more? What would that be? Would it be worth the effort? What's stopping you?

*"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."*

**Focus on the Prize - Read Philippians 3.12-21**

Clearly Paul knew Jesus. If Paul would have been executed during the time of writing this letter, he faced an eternal life with Jesus. So what is Paul talking about when he tells his friends he is "pressing on toward the goal"? Hasn't he achieved the goal?

Since true righteousness comes from God by faith and not of our own works or heritage (v. 9), what is there for us to do?

What is the goal of the Christian life?

What is the ultimate goal or purpose of your life? What prize are you pressing toward? Is this God's goal or yours? What is getting most of your resources and energies?

Contrast the goals in verses 19 and 20. In light of these verses, where do you find your focus to be? What world are you living for?

Was this easy for Paul (v. 13)? What's most difficult for you in maintaining such a focus?

**Today's Prayer**  
Is there anything in your past that is haunting you and keeping you from knowing Jesus more? If so, confess it to a trusted friend who will pray with you. Confess this to God and accept His grace. Then, like Paul, put it behind you and press on with intensity towards that which God is calling you: a life lived for Him and His Kingdom.

**memoryverse**

*"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death" Philippians 3.10*

- or -

*"But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3.13b-14*

**Week One**

*Philippians 1.4-6*

**Week Two**

*Philippians 1.20b-21*

**Week Three**

*Philippians 2.12b-13*

**Week Four**

*Philippians 3.10 or 3.13b-14*

**Week Five**

# small group discussion

## warmup

**What big goal in your life took you the longest to achieve? Share why it took so long. What obstacles did you have to overcome to achieve it?**

## divein

*"...I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord..."*

**Assets Turned Liabilities - Read Philippians 3.1-9**

What sort of things could someone today put on their "righteousness resume" that could give them the feeling of being approved by God? What was on Paul's resume?

How can these same things become liabilities in terms of living by faith?

How might "religious people" be hindered by their past in having a relationship with God?

What has hindered you in your relationship with God? What do you need to throw overboard? Some may actually be good or religious things.

*"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings..."*

**It's Not What You Know, It's Who You Know - Read Philippians 3.7-11**

Describe the difference between *knowing of* someone and *knowing* someone. Do you know of Jesus or do you know Jesus? Describe your relationship with Him.

Tell the group some of the ways you are growing to know Him versus knowing about Him? What or who is currently in your life that deepens your relationship with Jesus?

Would anything have to change in your life to know Jesus more? What would that be? Would it be worth the effort? What's stopping you? How can the small group help?

*"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."*

**Focus on the Prize - Read Philippians 3.12-21**

What is the goal of the Christian life? What is the ultimate goal or purpose of your life? What prize are you pressing toward? Is this God's goal or yours? What is getting most of your resources and energies?

Contrast the goals in verses 19 and 20. What world are you living for? Where's your focus?

Was this easy for Paul (v. 13)? What is most difficult for you in maintaining such a focus?

take  
action

### Knowing His Forgiveness!

To know Christ is to know His forgiveness. Take a few minutes to walk through this exercise taken from the booklet, *Destined For Security* from Life Builders (pg. 24).

1. Ask God to reveal any unconfessed sin in your life.
2. Write these sins on a sheet of paper and confess each one to God. Be transparent since this is just between you and God.
3. After you have confessed your sins, write out God's promise of forgiveness from 1 John 1.9 across the list.
4. Destroy the list and thank God that He has forgiven all your sins.

God's forgiveness is complete! God "has removed our sins as far away from us as the east is from the west." Psalm 103.12