

# **Past, Present, And Perfect (Philippians 3:12-16)**

## **Sunday AM 12/23/18**

### **Introduction:**

The "Back To the Future" movies were interesting because they dealt with the subject of time travel. Man has often speculated on and talked about time travel. All of the "what I would change" to "if I knew then what I know now" discussions. Time travel is impossible but there is a relationship between the past, present, and future. One's past determines where they are presently, which point to where one will be in the future. Paul understood this principle and uses it to teach all of us some lessons.

### **I) Goals and Self Evaluation, v. 12**

#### **A) Paul realized he had room for improvement in his life.**

1. Paul was faithful in his ministry but he was lacking in comparison to Christ, *Colossians 1.28*
2. Our measuring stick is not ourselves or others but Christ.
3. We should always be pursuing our goals with vigor, *James 4.15*
4. "To lay hold of" - Paul was chosen by Jesus to be an apostle. He took this very personally.

5. Christ is our "personal Savior" we need to remember He died for me.
6. Fact: To accomplish more we must rely on God more and be willing to do more of the right things. Paul spoke of excelling more and more, *1 Thess. 4.10b.*
7. Like Paul we have not completed our race, God is not finished with us yet.

**B) We all have improvements to make.**

1. The brethren at Thessalonica were idolatrous at one time, *1 Thess. 1.9*
2. I have known brethren to turn from immoral conduct, drugs, worldly living, and religious error to serve the true God.
3. We may not be in that position but we still have room for growth.
4. Are we Christ like in love, faith, knowledge, patience, etc.
5. We need to be enthused and vigorous in our growth.
6. Jesus died for you and me and we need to lay hold of him.
7. Stagnation, and apathy are two of our greatest enemies.

**II) Present, vv. 14-15**

**A) "I press on" as a runner goes for the finish line.**

1. Lesson taught to base runners is to run through the base.
2. To pursue the goal, *1 Corinthians 9.24ff*
3. A singleness of purpose, key is to understand our purpose.

**B) We must realize where we are, *Phil. 2.12***

1. Where are you at this morning? Are you glorifying God or living for your self.
2. Are you determined to succeed and go to heaven?
  - a. Example: KFC does one thing but they do it well.
  - b. Story to wrecking the truck trying to do too much.
3. Souls are lost due to doing too much of the wrong thing and sometimes of too much of good things.  
*James 4.13-17*
4. There is the danger of looking to tomorrow and not taking care of today. *Matthew 6.33-34*

### III) Past

#### A) **Some lessons learned from the past are important.**

1. Knowledge gained from the past, mistakes and successes prepares us for the future.
2. Experience is a hard teacher; it gives us the test first and then the lesson.

#### B) **Forgetting the past is important if it hinders our obedience to God.**

1. Past accomplishments are to stay in the past.
  - a. Sports teams rarely repeat as champions due to being satisfied with what they accomplished last year.
  - b. Coach must get them to focus on the future and forget the past.
2. Example of Paul in *Philippians 3.8*
3. Past sins once repented of should stay in the past.
4. Some past relationships are to stay in the past.

#### C) **We must keep the skeletons out of the closet.**

1. When you clean house you empty out the trash. You don't put the dirt back from where you got it.

2. *1 Corinthians 6.9-11* they were forgiven. A lesson I have to continually work to remember is that "could of and should of" don't do a whole lot of good.

**D) Lessons for others, to allow the past to die.**

1. Paul probably heard a lot of criticism due to what he had done before becoming a Christian.
2. Don't drag up old repented of sins; don't hurt the influence of a faithful Christian.

**IV) Perfect**

**A) Perfect, maturity, complete, future development.**

1. I have not been but.....
2. All of us grow, some grow together, some mature.

**B) If you are on the right road you need to continue on to the end.**

1. To be faithful unto death, *Revelation 2.10*
2. It does not matter what you used to be but what you are.

**C) If you are on the wrong road you need to change.**

1. No sin is too big to receive forgiveness.
2. Don't allow your past to ruin your future.

**Conclusion:**

Paul's words challenges us to serve Christ and yet see our own imperfections and strive to be better.