

Becoming Like Christ, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 13: Pressing On Toward the Goal

Philippians 3:7–14

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This is the capstone lesson of the entire study, so the doctrine at stake is the very shape of the Christian life from beginning to end. Paul lays before us two truths that must be held together. First, our standing before God is never a righteousness we manufacture by law-keeping or religious achievement; it is the righteousness that comes from God and depends on faith, received in Christ (Philippians 3:9). Second, that same faith is no static possession but a living, straining, pressing-on faith that is not yet finished and will not be finished until the resurrection (Philippians 3:11–14). Make sure the class leaves seeing that grace and effort are not rivals, that being grasped by Christ is precisely what sets us running.

There are two errors this passage guards against, and the heaviest doctrinal block of the lesson (Q9) must name them both. On one side stands the presumption that since salvation rests on grace, a person who once believed is eternally secure no matter how he lives, free to coast. Paul, the great preacher of grace, refuses this: he himself has not yet laid hold, and he warns elsewhere that those who turn back are severed from Christ and fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4; compare Hebrews 3:12–14; 2 Peter 2:20–22). On the other side stands the claim that a Christian reaches sinless perfection in this life. Paul refuses this too: not that I am already perfect. The truth lies in the holy tension, already accepted in Christ, not yet perfected, and therefore pressing on with all his strength. Present this as cooperative: God who laid hold of us works in us, and we work out our salvation (Philippians 2:12–13).

But this lesson is not finally an argument to be won; it is a race to be run, and it closes a study meant to change lives. The pastoral aim is to send every student home with the image of Christ more clearly forming in them and with the resolve to keep going. Some in the room are weary and tempted to quit; some are quietly proud and tempted to coast; some are haunted by what lies behind. To all of them Paul says the same thing: fix your eyes on the prize of the upward call, forget what is behind, lean into Christ, and press on. Teach so that the end of the study becomes not a finish line but a fresh start in the long obedience of becoming like Jesus.

Question 1

Student Question:

Paul says that whatever gain he once had, he now counts as loss for the sake of Christ, and that he counts everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus his Lord (Philippians 3:7–8). What does it tell us about the true worth of Christ that a man would write off every other advantage to gain Him? Why does Paul speak not merely of knowing about Christ but of knowing Him personally as Lord?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Open the final lesson by letting the word loss land with its full weight. Paul is doing accounting, the language of profit and loss columns. In the previous verses he listed his assets, and they were formidable: the right birth, the right pedigree, the right party, a blameless record under the law (Philippians 3:5–6). These were the very things that made a man somebody in his world. And Paul says he has moved every one of them out of the gain column and into the loss column, and not reluctantly, but because he found something worth infinitely more.

That something is a Person. Notice Paul does not say he gave up everything for a doctrine, a religion, or a moral code. He gave up everything for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus his Lord (Philippians 3:8). The word knowing here is not the cool knowledge of facts about someone; it is the warm, personal knowledge of someone, the knowledge of a relationship. Paul is not merely informed about Christ; he knows Him, walks with Him, belongs to Him, calls Him Lord. This is the difference between knowing about a king and being known by the King.

Press the class to feel the math. If Christ is who He says He is, the eternal Son, the risen Lord, then everything else really is loss by comparison, the way a handful of pebbles is loss to a man who has been handed diamonds. The pebbles are not evil. They are simply nothing next to what he now holds. Help people see that this reckoning is not gritted-teeth sacrifice but clear-eyed wisdom. Paul is not the poorer for the trade; he is unspeakably richer.

This is the foundation the whole study has been building toward. We have spoken of becoming like Christ for twelve lessons. But no one will pay the cost of being formed into His image who has not first seen His surpassing worth. Knowing Christ is both the goal of the race and the fuel for it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The surpassing worth of knowing Christ above all earthly gain (Philippians 3:7–8)
- Knowing Christ as personal relationship, not mere information about Him
- The lordship of Christ: He is known and confessed as Lord (Philippians 3:8; Romans 10:9)
- Counting all things loss as clear-eyed wisdom, not grim sacrifice
- Christ as both the goal and the motive of the whole Christian life

Discussion Prompts

- What is the difference between knowing about Christ and knowing Him personally?
- Why is counting all things loss actually a wise trade rather than a sad one?
- How does seeing Christ's surpassing worth give us the strength to be changed into His image?

Question 2

Student Question:

Paul names the specific things he had counted as gain: his heritage, his religious zeal, his blameless record under the law (Philippians 3:5–6). What are the things in your own life that you are most tempted to count as gain, the achievements, relationships, or securities you quietly lean on? Which of them is hardest to lay down before Christ?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question moves the truth from Paul's ledger to ours. Everyone in the room keeps an accounting, often unconsciously. We all have a gain column, the things that make us feel that our lives count: a career, a reputation, a clean moral record, family, comfort, the approval of others. Paul's list was deeply religious, which is worth noticing. The things hardest to surrender are often not our obvious sins but our respectable strengths, the very assets we are proud of.

Help the class be honest about what they lean on. Ask not only what is on the list but which item is hardest to move into the loss column. For one person it is a hard-won career; for another it is the good opinion of people whose praise they crave; for another it is a record of religious performance they secretly trust to make them acceptable. These are not all wicked things. But the moment we lean our weight on them instead of on Christ, they become rivals to Him.

Be careful here to preserve the gospel order. Paul does not say these things are worthless in themselves; he says they are loss compared to Christ, and loss when trusted instead of Christ. The call is not to despise good gifts but to dethrone them, to take our security off of them and put it on Christ alone. The test is simple: what would be left of my sense of worth if this were taken away? If the honest answer is nothing, that thing has been sitting in Christ's chair.

Invite each person to name one specific thing they most need to relocate from the gain column to the loss column this week, and to bring it deliberately before Christ in prayer.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The hidden ledger: what we actually lean on for worth and security
- Respectable strengths often harder to surrender than obvious sins
- Good gifts becoming rivals when trusted in place of Christ
- Dethroning idols rather than despising good things
- The test of the heart: what remains of our worth if this is removed

Discussion Prompts

- What sits in your gain column, the things that make you feel your life counts?
- Which one would be hardest to count as loss for the sake of Christ?
- What would it look like to take your security off that thing and put it on Christ this week?

Question 3

Student Question:

Paul says he wants to be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of his own that comes from the law, but the righteousness that comes from God and depends on faith (Philippians 3:9). What is the difference between trying to build a righteousness of our own and receiving the righteousness God gives through faith? Why is this distinction so important to the gospel?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Now we reach the doctrinal heart of how a sinner stands before God, and it must be taught with care. Paul says his great desire is to be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of his own that comes from the law, but the righteousness that comes from God and depends on faith (Philippians 3:9). Two kinds of righteousness are set side by side. One is built; the other is received. One is mine, earned by performance; the other is God's, given as a gift and laid hold of by faith.

This is the very thing Paul had to abandon. He had been blameless under the law (Philippians 3:6), the gold standard of self-made righteousness, and it could not save him. No record of law-keeping ever could, because it always leaves us trusting in ourselves and always falls short (Romans 3:20–24). The gospel is the announcement that God provides, in Christ, a righteousness we could never produce, and gives it to those who come to Him in faith. We are accepted not on the strength of our resume but on the strength of His.

For the Lord's church this is precious and must be guarded on both sides. We reject every notion that we earn standing with God by piling up religious credentials; that is a righteousness of our own, and Paul calls it loss. Yet we must equally reject the idea that this faith is a bare mental assent that leaves the life untouched, faith only that never bows to Christ as Lord. The faith that receives God's righteousness is the obedient faith that hears the gospel, believes in Jesus as Lord and Christ, repents, confesses Him, and is baptized into Him (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3–4; Galatians 3:26–27). Then it goes on trusting and obeying. It is not faith plus our merit; it is a living faith that takes God at His word and acts on it.

Help the class breathe in the relief of this. The pressure to be good enough, to assemble a record that will satisfy God, is lifted. We are found in Christ, clothed in a righteousness that is His gift. And precisely because that gift is so secure and so undeserved, it sets us free to obey out of gratitude rather than anxious self-justification.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Two righteousnesses contrasted: our own from law versus God's by faith (Philippians 3:9)
- Justification as a gift received, not a record earned (Romans 3:20–24)
- Rejection of self-righteousness built on religious credentials

- Faith as obedient and living, not mere mental assent or faith only (James 2:24; Acts 2:38)
- The obedient faith expressed in belief, repentance, confession, and baptism into Christ (Romans 6:3–4; Galatians 3:26–27)
- Obedience flowing from gratitude rather than anxious self-justification

Discussion Prompts

- What is the difference between building your own righteousness and receiving God's?
- How does it free you to know your standing rests on Christ's record, not yours?
- Why does receiving God's righteousness by faith never mean a faith that leaves the life unchanged?

Question 4

Student Question:

Paul's deepest desire is to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death (Philippians 3:10). Where in your life right now are you being invited to share in Christ's sufferings, perhaps through hardship, sacrifice, or dying to your own will? How might that very place become a place of knowing Him more deeply?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns the diamond and lets a costlier facet catch the light. Paul's longing is to know Christ, and he immediately defines what knowing Him means: the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death (Philippians 3:10). We instinctively want the power without the fellowship of suffering. But Paul binds them together. To truly know the risen Christ is also to share in the path He walked, the path of laying down self, of suffering for righteousness, of dying that others might live.

Help the class see that this is not morbid; it is the way of all real love. We come to know people most deeply not in easy times but in shared hardship. Paul wants to know Christ so fully that he is willing to walk where Christ walked. And he discovers that the very sufferings he might have feared become the place of deepest communion, where the power of the resurrection is most felt. The cross and the empty tomb are not separable; the power of the one is known by those who will share the shape of the other.

Bring this down to where people actually live. Most of us will not face a Roman prison. But there is real suffering in faithfulness: the cost of telling the truth, the slow death of laying down our own will in a marriage or a family, the ache of serving someone who never thanks us, the loneliness of standing for Christ when it is not popular. Paul invites us to see these not as interruptions to knowing Christ but as the very classroom of it.

Press each person to name the place where they are now being invited to share Christ's sufferings, and to ask whether they might let that place become holy ground, a place where they come to know Him and feel His resurrection power rather than merely a hardship to escape.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Knowing Christ includes the fellowship of His sufferings (Philippians 3:10)
- Resurrection power and shared suffering held together, not separated
- Conformity to Christ's death as the pattern of dying to self (Romans 6:5–6)
- Suffering in faithfulness as the classroom of deeper communion with Christ
- Ordinary costly obedience as a real sharing in the way of the cross

Discussion Prompts

- Why does Paul tie knowing Christ's power so closely to sharing His sufferings?
- Where are you being invited to share in Christ's sufferings right now?
- How might that hard place become a place of knowing Him more deeply?

Question 5

Student Question:

Paul writes that he presses on so that he may attain the resurrection from the dead (Philippians 3:11), and he describes the whole Christian life as movement toward a future hope. How does keeping the resurrection in view shape the way a Christian lives now? Why is our hope anchored in the bodily resurrection rather than merely in going to be with the Lord?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Here Paul lifts our eyes to the horizon. He presses on, he says, that by any means possible he may attain the resurrection from the dead (Philippians 3:11). The whole movement of the passage is forward, toward a future. The Christian life is not a circle we walk around but a road we travel down, and the destination is not vague; it is the bodily resurrection at the return of Christ. This is the goal that gives the running its meaning.

Make clear what the hope actually is. The New Testament hope is not merely that our souls go to be with the Lord when we die, blessed as that is (Philippians 1:23). The fuller hope, the one Paul strains toward here, is the resurrection of the body, when the Lord returns and the dead in Christ are raised imperishable and we are made like Him (1 Corinthians 15:20–23, 51–57; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; 1 John 3:2). God is not finally going to discard His creation; He is going to redeem it, and our redeemed bodies are part of that. This is why the resurrection of Jesus is the firstfruits and the guarantee of ours.

Guard the hope here from a common distortion. The New Testament knows nothing of a future earthly thousand-year reign that the church waits for; the kingdom of Christ was established when the church began, and Christ reigns now from heaven (Daniel 2:44; Mark

9:1; Acts 2; Colossians 1:13). What we await is not an earthly golden age but the return of the King, the resurrection of the dead, the judgment, and the eternal home with God (2 Peter 3:10–13; Revelation 21:1–4). Keep the class looking to that sure and certain hope.

Then bring it home. A hope this large changes how we run today. If this life is all there is, then loss really is loss and suffering is pointless. But if the resurrection is coming, then every faithful sacrifice is an investment that cannot be lost, and we can spend ourselves without fear. The runner leans into the tape because she knows it is really there. So do we.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The Christian life as forward movement toward a future hope (Philippians 3:11)
- The bodily resurrection at Christ's return as the believer's hope (1 Corinthians 15:20–23; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17)
- Christ's resurrection as the firstfruits and guarantee of ours (1 Corinthians 15:20)
- The kingdom already established and Christ reigning now, with no future earthly thousand-year reign (Daniel 2:44; Colossians 1:13)
- Final hope: Christ's return, resurrection, judgment, and the eternal home (2 Peter 3:10–13; Revelation 21:1–4)

Discussion Prompts

- How does keeping the resurrection in view change the way you live today?
- Why is our hope anchored in the bodily resurrection and not merely in dying and going to heaven?
- How does a sure future hope give you courage to spend yourself for Christ now?

Question 6

Student Question:

Paul speaks of forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead (Philippians 3:13). What is behind you that you most need to forget, whether past sins that still accuse you or past successes that tempt you to coast? What would it look like this week to stop looking back and to strain forward instead?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Now Paul gives us the runner's discipline: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead (Philippians 3:13). The backward glance is the enemy of the forward stride. Two kinds of things lie behind us, and both can trip a runner. There are past failures, the sins and stumbles that still whisper their accusation, and there are past successes, the achievements that tempt us to slow down and live off old glory.

Take the failures first, because for many they are the heavier weight. Paul, of all people, had a past worth being haunted by; he had persecuted the church and consented to a martyr's death (Acts 8:1–3). Yet he refuses to let it chain him. This is not pretending the past did not

happen; it is refusing to let a forgiven past define a future. When God forgives in Christ, He does not keep dragging the file back out (Hebrews 8:12; Psalm 103:12). To keep flogging ourselves for what God has buried is not humility; it is a quiet distrust of His mercy. Forgetting here means refusing to let the past keep its grip.

But the successes can trip us just as surely. The runner who looks back at the lead she has built loses ground in that very moment. The Christian who lives on a conversion years ago, or a season of zeal long past, or a reputation for faithfulness, is no longer running. Paul will not coast on his blameless record; he has already counted it loss. Help the class see that yesterday's obedience, real as it was, cannot carry today's race.

Make it concrete. Ask each person to name what most needs to stay behind them, whether a sin they keep digging up or a success they keep resting on, and to picture themselves this week leaning forward instead, eyes off the rearview mirror and fixed on Christ ahead.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Forgetting what lies behind as a discipline of the forward-running life (Philippians 3:13)
- Past sins forgiven in Christ and not to be dragged back (Hebrews 8:12; Psalm 103:12)
- Refusing to live on past successes or former zeal
- Distrust of God's mercy disguised as ongoing self-condemnation
- Today's race not carried by yesterday's obedience

Discussion Prompts

- What from your past most often pulls your eyes backward, a failure or a success?
- How is refusing to dwell on a forgiven sin actually trusting God's mercy?
- What would straining forward instead of looking back look like for you this week?

Question 7

Student Question:

Paul says that he has been laid hold of by Christ Jesus, and that this is why he presses on to lay hold of that for which Christ laid hold of him (Philippians 3:12). How does it change the nature of our striving to know that Christ first took hold of us? Why does being grasped by Christ produce effort rather than passivity?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question uncovers the secret engine of Paul's effort. He presses on, he says, to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus laid hold of him (Philippians 3:12). Before Paul ever took hold of Christ, Christ took hold of Paul, on the Damascus road, by sheer grace, while Paul was still an enemy (Acts 9:1–6). All of Paul's straining is a response to a prior grip. He runs because he has been caught.

This is the exact balance the whole study has tried to hold, and it is worth saying again plainly. The initiative is God's; the power is God's; the grip that holds us is God's. We do not lay hold of Christ in order to make Him take an interest in us. He laid hold of us first, and our pressing on is the glad answer to His grace. This guards us from the pride that imagines we are saving ourselves by our running.

And yet, crucially, being grasped by Christ does not produce a passive coasting; it produces effort. Notice that Paul's response to having been laid hold of is not to relax but to press on. Grace is not the enemy of striving; it is the fuel of it. This is the same truth Paul states elsewhere: work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:12–13). God's work in us does not replace our effort; it empowers and obligates it. The one who has truly been grasped runs hardest of all.

Help the class feel how freeing and how energizing this is. We are not running to earn Christ's love but because we already have it. The hand that holds us will not let go as long as we keep hold of Him, and that security is exactly what frees us to spend ourselves without fear.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Christ's prior grip: He laid hold of us before we laid hold of Him (Philippians 3:12; Acts 9:1–6)
- Grace as the initiative and power, excluding all boasting
- Being grasped by Christ producing effort, not passivity
- Cooperative sanctification: God works in us as we work out our salvation (Philippians 2:12–13)
- Effort flowing from security in Christ's love, not anxiety to earn it

Discussion Prompts

- How does it change your striving to know Christ took hold of you first?
- Why does being grasped by grace lead to more effort rather than less?
- How do God's work in you and your own effort fit together without rivalry?

Question 8

Student Question:

Paul presses on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14). What is the prize that keeps you running, and how clearly do you actually see it? When the Christian life gets hard, what helps you fix your eyes on the goal rather than on the difficulty of the road?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Paul names the destination at last: he presses on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14). The image is the finish line and the victor's prize awarded at the end of the race. Paul runs with his eyes locked on it. Whatever the upward call fully means, it is the summons of God to come up higher, to the prize He has prepared, the fullness of life with Christ that the resurrection will bring.

Underline how a clear view of the goal sustains a runner through pain. The reason Paul can endure prison, shipwreck, beatings, and the daily pressure of the churches is that he sees something at the end worth all of it (2 Corinthians 4:16–18; 2 Timothy 4:7–8). The difficulty of the road never disappears, but it is recalibrated by the glory of the goal. A weight is bearable when you know what it is buying.

Help the class examine how clearly they actually see the prize. For many believers the goal has grown fuzzy; they are running, but out of habit or duty, no longer able to see what they are running toward, and so they tire. The remedy is to lift the eyes again to Christ Himself, who is finally the prize, to dwell on the hope set before us until it becomes vivid enough to pull us forward (Hebrews 12:1–2).

Ask each person what keeps them running when it gets hard, and whether the prize is vivid to them or has gone dim. Encourage them to feed the vision, through the Word, through worship, through the Lord's Supper that proclaims the Lord's death until He comes, so that the goal stays bright enough to run toward.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The goal and prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14)
- Christ Himself as the ultimate prize of the race
- A clear view of the goal sustaining endurance through suffering (2 Corinthians 4:16–18)
- The danger of a goal grown dim and the resulting weariness
- Feeding the vision through Word, worship, and the Lord's Supper (Hebrews 12:1–2)

Discussion Prompts

- What is the prize that keeps you running, and how clearly do you see it?
- How does fixing your eyes on the goal change the way you bear the hard road?
- What helps you keep the prize vivid when the running gets difficult?

Question 9

Student Question:

Paul says plainly, not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on (Philippians 3:12). On one side this corrects those who imagine they have already arrived and can coast, presuming their salvation is secured no matter how they live. On the other side it corrects those who imagine that a true Christian becomes sinlessly perfect in this life. How does Paul's settled confidence in Christ's righteousness, joined to his refusal to consider himself

as having already laid hold of the prize, teach us to hold assurance and perseverance together rather than letting go of either?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal block of the lesson, and as the capstone of the study it must be taught with great care, because Paul here protects the Christian life from two opposite cliffs. He says, not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own (Philippians 3:12). Hold those words next to what he has just said about righteousness from God by faith (Philippians 3:9), and you have the whole shape of a healthy Christian life: secure in Christ's righteousness, yet not finished, and therefore still pressing on.

Consider the first cliff, the presumption that says, since I am saved by grace and stand in Christ's righteousness, my arrival is guaranteed no matter how I now live, so I may coast. Paul, the very champion of grace, will not say it. He has not obtained, he is not perfect, he presses on by any means possible to attain the resurrection (Philippians 3:11–12). Elsewhere he warns with sober clarity that a Christian can fall: those who seek to be justified by law have fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4), and the Scriptures plead with believers not to harden their hearts and fall away (Hebrews 3:12–14; 10:26–31; 2 Peter 2:20–22). Salvation is not a possession to be set on a shelf; it is a race to be finished. Assurance in Christ is real, but it belongs to those who keep pressing on, not to those who turn back.

Now the opposite cliff, the claim that a Christian reaches sinless perfection in this life. Paul flatly denies it of himself: not that I am already perfect. If the great apostle had not arrived, neither have we. The Christian still battles sin and still needs the cleansing blood of Christ and ongoing repentance (1 John 1:7–9). To claim sinless perfection is to deceive ourselves and, in its own way, to stop running, since one who has arrived no longer presses on.

The truth, then, is the holy tension of already and not yet. We are already accepted in Christ, clothed in a righteousness we did not earn (Philippians 3:9); we are not yet perfected, and will not be until the resurrection (Philippians 3:11; 1 John 3:2). So we neither presume nor despair. We do not coast, because we have not arrived; we do not panic, because the One who laid hold of us holds us still as we hold to Him. This is cooperative grace: God works in us, and we work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12–13), persevering in an obedient faith to the end.

Teach this not to win an argument but to give weary saints a true and livable hope. The presumptuous need to hear, keep running, you have not arrived. The discouraged need to hear, keep running, the One who grasped you will bring you home. To both, Paul says the same word: press on. That posture, confident in Christ and never coasting, is itself a mark of the mature.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Paul's settled confidence in Christ's righteousness joined to his refusal to claim arrival (Philippians 3:9, 12)
- Against presumption: Christians can fall away and must persevere, not coast (Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 3:12–14; 10:26–31; 2 Peter 2:20–22)
- Against sinless perfectionism: even Paul was not yet perfect; ongoing repentance is needed (1 John 1:7–9)
- The already and not yet: accepted now, perfected at the resurrection (Philippians 3:11; 1 John 3:2)
- Salvation preserved through persevering, obedient faith, never once saved always saved
- Cooperative grace: God works in us as we work out our salvation (Philippians 2:12–13)
- Assurance and perseverance held together rather than either being surrendered

Discussion Prompts

- How does Paul avoid both coasting and despairing at the same time?
- What goes wrong if we let go of assurance, and what goes wrong if we let go of perseverance?
- How does the already and not yet shape the way you run your own race?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back not only across Philippians 3:7–14 but across this whole study of becoming like Christ, from being changed into His image, through the love and humility and endurance we have considered, to this closing call to press on. Name one specific way you sense Jesus has been forming you into His image through these thirteen lessons, and one concrete step you will take to keep pressing on toward the goal rather than treating the end of this study as the end of the race.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The capstone question gathers not only this passage but the whole study into a single response. Walk the class once more through the movement of Philippians 3:7–14: counting all things loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ; being found in Him with a righteousness from God by faith; longing to know His resurrection power and the fellowship of His sufferings; forgetting what lies behind; straining forward; pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call. This is the engine of a Christian who keeps becoming like Jesus.

Then lift their eyes back across all thirteen lessons. We began with the promise that we are being changed into the image of Christ from one degree of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18), and we have walked through the character that change produces. This final lesson reveals what keeps that change moving over a lifetime: a heart so captured by the worth of Christ that it counts everything else loss and refuses to stop running. The study ends, but the transformation does not. The danger now is to close the book and quietly coast.

So press for two specifics, as we have all along. First, ask each person to name one concrete way they sense Jesus has actually been forming them into His image through these weeks, not a vague impression but a real change in love, humility, patience, courage, or trust. Naming it helps it take root. Second, ask for one concrete step to keep pressing on after the study ends, a sustained habit in the Word, a renewed life of prayer, a relationship to mend, a service to begin, a sin to lay down, so that the end of the class is a fresh starting line and not a finish.

Close with hope, as the whole study has aimed to. The One who said let light shine out of darkness has shone in our hearts (2 Corinthians 4:6); the One who laid hold of us on our own Damascus road has not let go; the One who began a good work in us will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6). We are not asked to finish the race in our own strength, only to keep our eyes on Him and keep running. Forgetting what lies behind, straining forward to what lies ahead, let us press on together toward the goal, until faith becomes sight and we are made fully like the Lord we have been beholding.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- A synthesis of Philippians 3:7–14: surpassing worth, righteousness by faith, fellowship of suffering, forgetting, straining, pressing on
- The whole study gathered: changed into Christ's image from one degree of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18)
- Knowing Christ's worth as the lifelong engine of transformation
- Transformation as personal and particular, named and acted upon, not abstract
- The end of the study as a starting line, not a finish line
- Confidence that God will complete the work He began (Philippians 1:6; 2 Corinthians 4:6)

Discussion Prompts

- Name one specific way Jesus has formed you into His image through this study.
- What one concrete step will you take to keep pressing on now that the study is ending?
- How does knowing the One who grasped you will finish the work change the way you run from here?