

Philippians Series

Lesson #078

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Dean Bible Ministries

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The Upward Call

Philippians 3:14–16



In Php. 3 the focus is on standing firm against error.

Two sources:

- 1. The Judaizers: added human works to justification and/or spiritual growth (sanctification).**
- 2. The enemies of the cross of Christ, Php. 3:17ff**

Php. 3:12, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected [arrived at maturity]; but I press on,

that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”

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Php. 3:13, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

Php. 3:14, “I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

διώκω *diōkō*

**1 sing pres act indic
to pursue, run after**

Php. 3:12, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”

**λαμβάνω *lambanō*
1 sing aor act
indic
to take, receive,
choose**

**τελειόω *teleioō* 1 sing perf mid indic
to finish, to complete or to become
complete, to finish, accomplish
something or become fully mature
[~HCSB]**

Php. 3:12, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”

**καταλαμβάνω *katalambanō*
1 sing aor act subj to
take, overtake, reach**

**καταλαμβάνω *katalambanō*
1 sing aor pass indic
to take, overtake, reach**

1 Cor. 9:24, “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain [lay hold of] *it*.”

**καταλαμβάνω *katalambanō*
2 Pl aor act subj to take,
overtake, reach**

**βραβεῖον *brabeion*
neut sing acc
prize**

Php. 3:14, “I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

1 Cor. 9:25, “And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable *crown*.”

Php. 3:13, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,” [NKJV]

Php. 3:13, “Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead,” [HCSB]

λογίζομαι *logizomai*

**1 sing pres mid indic
to count, think, calculate**

Verse 13 has this phrase in it, “forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead.”

What are “those things”?

In Bible Study Technique we have three stages:

Observation: what does the text SAY?

Interpretation: what does the text MEAN?

Application: how does this relate to the way I think, talk, act, conduct my life?

Application at times can only mean one thing and can only be applied by one group. I know it seems like I am splitting hairs, but I'm not.

Php. 3:13, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting **those things which are behind and reaching forward to **those things** which are ahead,” [NKJV]**

Php. 3:13, “Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting **what is behind and reaching forward to **what** is ahead,” [HCSB]**

1. In Php. 3:13, “things” translates the neuter plural accusative of the article.

2. The verse uses a *men-de* construction.
On the one hand ... on the other hand ...

“Brethren, I do not count myself to have reached the goal, but one *thing* I do, **on the one hand**, forgetting what [article] is behind, **on the other hand** stretching out to what [article] *is* in front.”

Psa. 103:12, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Isa. 43:25, “I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.

Mic. 7:18, “Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy.”

Php. 3:7, “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.” [NKJV]

What “things” did he think were gain?

Four Related to
Genetic Heritage
(non-volitional)

1. Circumcised (parents’ decision)
2. Stock of Israel
3. Tribe of Benjamin
4. Hebrew of the Hebrews

Three Related to
Paul’s Decisions
(volitional responsibility)

1. Pharisee
2. Zealously persecuting the Church
3. Blameless in the righteousness of the law

Php. 3:13, “Brethren, I do not think myself to have reached it; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,” [RD]

**λογίζομαι *logizomai*
1 sing pres mid indic
to count, think, calculate**

**καταλαμβάνω *katalambanō*
Perfect active infinitive
to take, overtake, reach**

Php. 3:12, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

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**διώκω *diōkō* 1 sing pres act
indic to pursue, persecute
[NIDNTT]
to move rapidly and decisively
toward an objective, hasten,
run, press on [BDAG]**

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**σκοπός; *skopos* the distant
mark looked at, the goal
or end one has in view:
goal, the finish line, a
point to be aimed at**

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Php. 3:14, “I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

***ἄνω anō* Adverb (place)
above, up, upper, upward
often used as an idiom for
Heaven**

John 11:41, “Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, ‘Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.’ ”

Acts 2:19, “I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.”

John 8:23, “And He said to them, ‘You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.’ ”

Gal. 4:26, “but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.”

Col. 3:1, “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

Col. 3:2, “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”

Php. 3:14, “I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

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**ἄνω *anō* Adverb (place)
above, up, upper, upward
often used as an idiom for
Heaven—“the heavenly
call”**

**κλήσις *klēsis*
fem sing gen
calling**

What is “the calling?”

1. Simple calling, profession, or career vocation:

1 Cor. 7:20, “Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.”

2. It can refer simply to the invitation to believe in Christ.

a. It can have the idea of simple invitation, Matt. 22:3, but often what is important is the event or the position to which someone is invited.

BDAG ① invitation to experience of special privilege and responsibility, call, calling, invitation.

b. But in this other sense, it refers to our new position, our new identity, and the new privileges and assets given to us in Christ. In this sense it applies to what every believer receives at the instant of salvation.

c. One other sense of the word is an appointment. This relates to the group of words related to “election” and “foreordination”.

We as members of the body of Christ receive an appointment to a position, it is our new identity, our new calling. It has the idea of a new role, or station in life which includes a new task (LN).

d. “in Christ Jesus” orients it to the ones who are “the called.” All those who have believed in Christ are among *the called*.

Rom. 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

those who love God = those who are the called

Rom. 8:29, “For whom He knew before hand, He also appointed beforehand to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Rom. 8:30, “Moreover whom He appointed beforehand, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”

e. This new identity comes with a new destiny. In Eph. 1:18, the hope of His calling.

Eph. 1:18, “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,”

Eph. 4:1, “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,”

Php. 1:9, “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,

Php. 1:10, “that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,”

“In keeping with the vivid imagery drawn from the Greek games that pervades this section there is still another explanation of the ‘upward call’ that seems the most reasonable explanation of all. It sees in the expression *tes ano kleseos* [‘the upward call’] an allusion to the fact that the Olympian games, which included foot-races, were organized and presided over by *agonothetes*, highly respected officers called *Hellenodikai*. ‘After each event they had a herald announce the name of the victor, his father’s name and his country, and the athlete or charioteer would come and receive a palm branch at their hands.’ ”

(G. Glotz, ‘Hellenodikai,’ in C. Daremberg and E. Saglio)

Another writer puts it this way:

“Each believer is on the track; each has a special lane in which to run; and each has a goal to achieve. If we reach the goal the way God has planned, then we receive a reward. If we fail, we lose the reward, but we do not lose our citizenship.”

Php. 3:15, “Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

Php. 3:16, “Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.”

**φρονέω *phroneō* 1 plur pres act
subjunctive [imperatival] to be
wise, to think**

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**φρονέω *phroneō* 2 plur
pres act indicative to be
wise, to think**

**στοιχέω *stoicheō*
pres act infin
to walk in line**