

Philippians 3 (Part 2): 12-21 • Pressing On Toward the Goal

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Okay, Philippians chapter 3. We're going to pick it up in verse 12. I'm going to read through the rest of the chapter. Please follow along as I do. Goes like this:

“¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶ Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

¹⁷ Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸ For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” (ESV)

Stop there. Let's pray.

Father, thank You so much for Your Word. Now we pray that You would anoint our ears spiritually, our eyes spiritually, to both hear and see what You would have us to take from this passage. Help us, we pray, and guide us in understanding. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

You'll notice here that Paul is kind of in mid-thought in verse 12 when he says at the beginning, *“not that I have already obtained this.”* And if you missed last week, you may not know what this is referring to, but it's referring to what we looked at last week back in verse 10, which was Paul talking about how he wants to be like Christ. He says, I want to know Christ; I want to be conformed to His image. And that's basically a fancy way of saying, I want to be like Him; I want to be like Jesus. And that was Paul's heart desire. But he says here, *“not*

that I've already obtained this”—and so, what he's basically telling the Philippians here is that even though that's his goal, he's not yet reached it. In other words, he's saying, I haven't arrived; not by a long shot, as a matter of fact. I have a heart's desire to be like Jesus.

And I think it's important for preachers, teachers, Sunday school teachers, anybody who handles the Word of God in front of other people to be willing to admit to them—to whoever is listening to them—I'm not there. This whole idea of Christ-likeness, being like Him, I'm not there. If the apostle Paul was willing to admit it to you and I, I think we ought to be willing to admit it to one another, I'm not there. It's my heart's desire; it's my goal to be more like Him but I haven't yet arrived.

And so, he says, even though I know I haven't gotten there, in this side of the veil, I never will. I'm not going to be perfected, this side of the veil, this side of the presence of the Lord. However, I continue to press on. That is such an important thing. I keep pressing on.

And why does Paul keep pressing on? Look at the second half of verse 12 if you would please. Very important here. If you haven't underlined this, it might be important to do that. He says: “... *I press on to make it (Christ-likeness) my own, because (Jesus Christ) or Christ Jesus (in this case) has made me his own.*”

Isn't that an interesting statement? And what Paul is saying by that is that every believer has really no other reason beyond the simple truth that He has made you His own for you to keep pressing on to become what God created you to be and what He desires you to be, and so forth.

When Paul talked about Christ made me His own and that's my motivation for being more Christ-like, he basically has in mind what we were just talking about in communion and all that He suffered—the incredible suffering that He endured on the cross for you and I. And He did it so that you could be His. That was why He did it. That's why He endured it. It was a horrible thing to endure, and yet He did it so that you would be His.

I don't know how often that sort of a thought goes through your mind, but I think it's an important one. Just to think about that, when you think about your life and how you're living your life, and you stop to consider the thought that Jesus suffered all of this stuff. He endured all of that horrific suffering so that I would be His. Just so that I would be His.

Talk about paying the bride price. In old cultures there was a situation where a groom would pay the bride price, whatever the father of the woman that man wanted to marry said he needed to pay in order to show his worthiness, and so forth. And whatever it might be—a couple of goats, I don't know—can you imagine being a woman, my dad asked for two goats for my hand in marriage, or something like that. Anybody who's ever raised goats, they're like, yeah, big deal. But Jesus paid with His life to have you. To have you. You.

And I want you to think about that. Paul thought about it, and it motivated him to want to be more like Jesus. It motivated him to press on to be more like Christ. I just find that amazing.

Paul goes on in verses 13 and following to describe that process of pressing on. Because when I say to you, hey, let's press on, let's press on to be more like Him, you might ask the question, well, what exactly does that mean, and what are the ways that you go about doing that?

Paul lays out some strategy here for us in verse 13. Look what he says. He says: *“Brothers, (starting here) I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do (and then he goes on to mention three things—typical Paul, he says): forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*

So, this is the strategy that Paul lays out for pressing on, and I think this is a good strategy for you and I to take a little bit of time here this morning to think about because this is something we're all called to: to press on to Christ-likeness. So, Paul says, *“one thing I do,”* then he mentions three things. Here they are, up on the screen for you.

- Forgetting what lies behind
- Straining forward to what lies ahead
- Pressing on toward the goal/prize

He mentions forgetting what lies behind, straining forward to what lies ahead, and pressing on toward the goal to win the prize.

Let's talk about these because—here's the point: all of these things are a picture of a foot race. And I don't know how many of you have ever been in a foot race before. I did some track when I was in school, and I enjoyed running track. It was kind of fun, and I was fairly fast. And that was fun. Winning is always fun, but I kind of understand a little bit—and some of you do, too, I'm sure—kind of the dynamics of what goes into being a successful runner. And he's going to talk

about that because the picture of our Christian life is likened to a foot race—more like a marathon than a dash, but still, he says the first thing that's very important is forgetting what lies behind. Forgetting what lies behind.

What does that mean exactly? Well, it means that if you're going to be a successful runner, you can't look back behind you. I actually had a friend, a good friend of mine in school, who lost a race because he looked back to see if there was anybody close, and in just that momentary effort that it took physically—because you're no longer, really, using everything you have to propel yourself forward, now you're using some of your muscles to turn around and look backward—some guy passed him up just in that fraction of a second—that always or sometimes is the difference between first and second place—and he lost the race.

Paul is talking about not looking back at the past. Now, what does he mean by that? Is he saying I don't remember my past anymore? Obviously not. Paul even talks about his past from time to time in the Word. But what Paul is talking about here is he's talking about making a conscious determination on his part not to let the past or his past dominate his attention and dictate the kind of a man that he's going to be in Christ.

And the reason that's incredibly important is because—I'll be honest with you—I see a lot of people today, Christians, who live their lives, walk their lives out as if the past is everything. And they will—they may not actually say it but you can hear it in their words that their past dominates their life because they talk about it all the time. And what you hear in the words that they speak is that there is this kind of jail that they are in that is built with the bars of the past, and they just can't break out of it.

They talk about the things they've been through; they talk about the abuse they've received or the difficulty they went through as a child. My parents were mean or something like that. Or my dad was an awful person to live with. Or, I didn't have a mom and a dad, and I was bounced around from foster home to foster home, or whatever the thing might be. And they continually remind you when you talk to them that these are the things that were in their past as if to communicate very clearly that this has shaped the person that they are now. And it's kind of like, although they don't say it, they communicate to you in very real terms that they don't really see Jesus reaching into their jail cell and making any significant changes because this is just who I am. And it's really sad.

Now I want to be careful not to suggest to you that a person's past doesn't affect them because it certainly does very much. I mean I have been doing what I've

been doing long enough and talking to people long enough to know that it can create some very significant hurdles. But remember this is a foot race and many times in a foot race they would put hurdles in your path to see who could get over the hurdle and still finish first in the race.

And some of you guys, your race—the race that you're running in your walk with the Lord is filled with hurdles. You're literally running the high hurdles because of the things that you've gone through but that doesn't mean that those hurdles are insurmountable. They may slow you down a little bit from time to time. In fact, they may produce some real issues, some real challenges.

I don't know if you've ever seen anybody get tangled up in a hurdle trying to get over it and then go to the ground with a crash. Been there, done that. Literally. But in Christ, we get up, and we keep running the race. Right? So, the point of this all is that you don't have to be defined by your past because there is a new reality that has entered into your life.

Paul talks about this in one of his other letters in 2 Corinthians. Let me put it on the screen for you. He writes this:

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. (And he says very specifically here that) *The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

He's talking about the old things that dominated our lives and control our lives, the old things that grab you by the jugular and say, no, you stay put. He says, no, that's not a reality in your life; that stuff has passed away, and the new life in Jesus—which, by the way, is stronger than the old life—has now taken control. And that simply is how we understand that idea that greater is He that is in you than all of the past issues that you've been through put together. Those things do not define you any longer. Christ defines you now, not your past.

And that's what Paul is talking about. If you're going to run the race to win, you can't constantly be looking back. And so, the first strategy that Paul gives us here is a very important one because, culturally, we have been encouraged to do what I believe is very unhealthy, and that's to dwell on the past.

Look what God's Word says. Here's what happens when you do that. Isaiah chapter 43 says—and this is the Lord speaking:

Isaiah 43: 18-19 (NIV)

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.”

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.”

This is a wonderful passage from the standpoint of the questions that God encourages us to think through, like, do you not perceive it? Perceive what? He just got done saying, I'm doing a new thing. Isn't that what Paul said in his passage in Corinthians? The new has come; the old has passed away.

The new has come, right? Well, that's a new thing, but you know what? You're never going to get around to perceiving anything new the Lord is doing in your life as long as you're always looking at the past, when you're dwelling on the past. So, he says here don't dwell on the past because if you do, if you're looking back this way, you're not going to be seeing what God is doing ahead of you.

Oh, we get so caught up in the past. And it's a very natural thing for us to dwell on the past. I'll be honest with you, our flesh likes to live there, likes to make that my address. But it's not a good place for you and I to live, even if you've been convinced culturally, or maybe some counselor somewhere along the line told you, well, you've got to go back into your past and you've got to deal with those issues. Just let Jesus deal with those issues and you just go this way. You go this way. God is able to deal with the past in your heart. He's able to heal those past hurts that you've been through in life. He can do it if you'll give them to Him.

I'll tell you one way that they won't go away. Keep your eyes on them. Keep looking at the past. Keep looking at the big monsters in your background. They won't go away. In fact, they'll get bigger and meaner and nastier and stronger. You keep your eyes on Jesus because He's the one who's going to wrestle your past to the ground and conquer it. Because you see, He's already won the victory. Jesus already conquered sin and death. He can handle the stuff that you've been through. He's already carried the weight of the world on his shoulders. He can carry the issues that you've been through. So very important things to remember.

Second strategy that Paul advances is the opposite of looking back. He says—then, he says, *“straining forward to what lies ahead.”* I think about that. I think

about what lies ahead, and I think to myself, you know what? You and I don't know what lies ahead. I mean, ultimately, we've been given the final sort of a thing. But in your life, you don't know what tomorrow's going to bring, or the day after that, or the week after that. And neither did Paul, and yet he still leaned into it. He still strained toward what God had for him ahead, in that road ahead. I'm not looking back here; I'm just looking ahead. In fact, not only am I looking ahead; I'm straining toward what is ahead; I'm leaning into it.

All right, and the reason Paul was able to lean into what was to come was because he knew who did know what was to come in his life, and he trusted Him. And that's the point. You and I can't see the future; God can. He's not limited by space and time; therefore, He knows your future and you can trust Him with it because He is just as much in control there as He is right here. And Paul knew that, so he said, I am going to lean into it.

And when it comes to a foot race, this is kind of that picture of just leaning into the run. Again, you can't look back when you're running and win. What you do is you take every muscle, every fiber of your being, and you lean into that run. You propel yourself forward. That's what you have to do in a run. I mean, everything from coming out of the starting blocks and the pushing of those leg muscles to propel you forward and then to continue to propel yourself forward during the race. Not looking back, not going to the right, not going to the left, going forward. Jesus, I want to go forward with You, not backward.

So, he leaned into it. So what do we know about this thing we're leaning into? What do we know about this race that we're running? Paul writes about it in Ephesians. It wasn't that long ago we went through this. I'll put it on the screen. Ephesians 2:10. Paul writes:

Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)

...we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

... we are his workmanship, (and here's what we're doing; here's what we're—here's what the race is all about; we've been) created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

They've all been prepared ahead of time that we might walk in them, and we're going to lean into that. I want to lean into what He has for me as my purpose to do the good works that He's called me to do. He has a purpose for your life, and it's not just to make money and pay bills, and go through life, and buy a few things and try to make yourself happy and live a contented life.

That's not the goal. The goal is to serve the Lord, to serve the King, to do the work that He's called you to do. He put you here for a reason. You were created for a reason. You and your children. And so what leaning forward into the race or straining forward is all about is fulfilling that purpose as I run the race, being the person that God has called me to be for whatever time or issue or need it presents itself related to that. Lord, I want to be Yours, so I'm just going to keep straining forward. I'm not going to sit back. I'm not going to stop the race, right? I'm going to keep running and I'm going to propel myself forward.

And then, finally, in this strategy, Paul speaks of pressing on toward the goal to win the prize. Here's where Paul is envisioning the finish line.

I remember I was never in any long races because I was never a long-distance runner. I would kind of tire out after about 75 yards, so they would put me in a relay race. If you're in the last part of the relay race, you're the one that gets to see the finish line, which is kind of cool. You come around that last bend, and there it is. You see they've rolled the tape across the line, and man, I tell you, you do not take your eyes off that tape. You just run like there's no tomorrow for that finish line.

And that's what Paul is talking about here. And for you and I, the finish line is receiving everything that Christ has for us at the finish. Our inheritance, the fullness of the blessing that awaits us, the new life, the different life.

Do you understand, people, when we cross the finish line everything is going to be different? And the reason you guys aren't getting up right now and going, yeah, and screaming your brains out, is because we really can't relate to it. We live in this world that is just full of corruption, full of death and disease and destruction. And this is life for us. We're used to it. And then we hear things in the Bible about across the finish line there's this new life that awaits us that is truly life, and it doesn't include things like death and destruction and disease and decay and corruption, those things don't exist, and we kind of go, wow, and we're all kind of jazzed about it from some—in some respects, but we really can't relate.

But if you think about what you see in this life that is good, here's the interesting thing: we're living in a fallen, corrupted world and yet there are still remnants of God's original creation that are incredibly beautiful. I mean, I don't know the last time you went to a place like Yellowstone or Glacier or the Grand Canyon or something like that and you were just awed by nature. I mean, those are definitely holdovers of God's original creative beauty. And we look at that kind of stuff and we just kind of were blown away.

Guys, do you realize that across the finish line, it's going to be turned way up from that? I mean the kind of stuff you might go to Glacier National Park to appreciate when you cross that finish line, it's going to be like that all over in the sense that the beauty is going to be unmatched. The life without death, no tears, no destruction; all that stuff is going to be gone.

And Paul thought about that stuff. We may not all that often, but he thought about it. He talked about it. The biblical writers talked about stuff like that. The resurrection was a constant thing in their minds. The life to come was a constant thing in their minds. They were always reaching for it, always pressing in to get it. You know what I mean?

We just try to get through the next day; we're just— I'm trying to get through the week because, come Friday, I got, I might have something planned that's halfway enjoyable so I'm just, like, praying to get through the week.

The biblical writers are constantly thinking about what's across the finish line, and that's what gets them out of bed in the morning, and propels them forward.

You see, one of the reasons why we struggle so much many times in our Christian walk is because we're not thinking about the finish line. We're just thinking about the nasty day-to-day getting through with my dignity, I suppose, intact, or something stupid like that.

Anyway, Paul goes on, in verse 15—after giving us these strategies for pressing on—he says in verse 15: *“Let those of (you who are, or excuse me, let those of) us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.”*

So, it is interesting, isn't it? He says Christian maturity is looking toward—well, it's those three strategies: not looking back, propelling oneself forward, keeping an eye on the finish line. That is Christian maturity, okay? It is Christian immaturity to be focused on the day-to-day, and getting tripped up, and constantly focused on the big, bad, rough challenges, my background, my past. That's immaturity in Christ, okay? We expect people to grow out of that. And so, Paul says, let those of us who are mature think this way. In other words, have this strategy of pressing on with the Lord.

He says: *“Only let us hold true to what we have attained.”* That's an interesting statement, isn't it? Because he's just gotten done saying, I have not attained to the fullness of what it means to be like Christ, but he says, you know what? Okay, fine, but just let us hold true to what we have attained.

You know what that means? That means if you're a Christian today, that means something—He has done something in your life to change your life, however big, however small.

I'd love to—I wish we had time to give people an opportunity to stand up and just talk about how God has changed your life. I mean, little things, or big things, doesn't matter. I am sure that if you've walked with the Lord at any, for any length of time, He's changed you in some way. He's changed your outlook; He's changed your words that come out of your mouth; He's changed maybe your marriage, your family, your relationships, whatever.

That's what Paul is saying. For what we have attained, whatever it may be, let's hold true to it. Let's hang on to it. Don't let go. And let's be true to what Christ has done and is doing in your life.

And so, he says in verse 17, if you look with me there: *“Brothers, join in imitating me* (in other words, take upon yourselves the same attitude, the same strategy of what it means to press on; don't look back, keep propelling forward; keep your eyes focused on the goal. Imitate me in this, and also, he says), *and keep your eyes on those* (who do the same), *who walk according to the* (same) *example* (that) *you have* (seen) *in us.*”

And we need good examples in the body of Christ, don't we? But we have to remember something, right? They're not perfect examples. There's no such thing as a perfect example. Right? Remember what Paul said? I have not yet attained to these things. Neither have you and I. That means even though we may at times be a good example, we're never going to be a perfect example. So, get your eyes off that perfection. That's across the finish line. That's not right now, although we keep pressing for it.

And there are plenty of bad examples. Look at verse 18: *“For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.”*

These are the bad examples. He says: *“Their end is destruction, their god is their belly.”* And that means their fleshly appetites are what motivate them. He's just gotten done talking about what motivates him. I press forward to win the prize, to reach that goal that God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus to attain. That's what moves me. But now he talks about people who have rejected the Lord, he talks about what moves them, and he says: *“their god is their belly.”*

That doesn't literally mean what they eat; it just means their appetites. Their—the things that drive them forward are sensual pleasures, right? They live for pleasure, physical pleasure.

Here's the point that we have to be careful and Christians have gotten wrong on this over the years. Physical pleasures are a gift from God. Okay? He made your body, physical body, to enjoy things like food, physical pleasure of looking at a mountain or a flower and appreciating the beauty, the physical pleasure of physical intimacy between a husband and wife. There are many more that we could talk about. God created you to experience physical pleasures; He did not create those pleasures to be your god. And Paul says those who have rejected Christ have made physical pleasures their god. Their god is their belly. Their god is their appetite. They—and what that means is they live for it. We live for the Lord to please Him, to serve Him. They live for fleshly appetites.

He says: “(their) *glory* (is) *in their shame*.” What they—in other words, what they ought to be ashamed of, they glory in. We see that in our culture today. Huge. And then he says: “(their) *minds are* (completely and totally) *set on earthly things*.”

But did you notice that Paul kind of starts off with one of the worst things? He says: “*Their end is destruction*.” I don't like to say that, and I don't think Paul did either. Did you notice he started off by saying, I say this with tears, their end is destruction? And you and I need to remember that the life of this world, and all that is attracted to it, will end in destruction. This world will be destroyed. The pleasures that are founded only in this world will ultimately come to nothing, and they will be destroyed.

I hate to even say that because it sounds like such a Debbie downer and I know that people are kind of like, gee, let's hear something pastor that kind of picks us up a little bit. But these are some reminders and the apostle Paul is giving the Philippians this reminder and it's important for you to embrace it as well.

This world will be destroyed. That's why our goal is over there. That's why our eyes are on the finish line and the new world that God is going to create. We're not going to become fixated on this world. And I think it's important even for parents once in a while to say to their kids, because even kids raised in a strong Christian home, they're going to be dragged away to think of things in the world that are just so attractive. This singer, that actor, this person, whatever. Again, you're not living to be a downer, but you are echoing the statement that Paul makes here to the Philippians. Those things are going to be destroyed; their end is destruction; that's not your end.

By the way, your end is not destruction. Your end is life; that's what's across the finish line. You know how we know that? Because of what he says in verse 20. Look what he says there: “...*our citizenship is in heaven.*” And he's stating a fact here. Your address is in heaven. You might think your address was what you put on your mail, or where you get your mail. But the fact of the matter is, as believers, our home is in heaven with the Lord. It's just a simple reality.

Here's the problem, and it is a problem. There are many Christians who are living in this world as if it is their permanent home. We treat this world like it's our permanent home. And to borrow from one of the parables that our Lord spoke during His earthly ministry, we act as if the master isn't going to return. Remember that parable? Jesus gave the vineyard over to the servants to work and then went on a trip, and some of the servants began to act like the master was never coming back, and they lived a very abusive lifestyle toward other people and so forth. It can happen. But the fact is, our citizenship is in heaven, which means the world is not our real home.

Look at how Peter said this in 1 Peter, chapter 2. He said:

1 Peter 2:11

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.

Dear friends, I urge you as (participants in this world—no, he didn't say that; he said) *I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from* (well, he calls it) *sinful desires*, (but he's—you could just say the things of this world that are going to be destroyed, right? Abstain from that; those things that actually) *which war against your soul.*”

You know why they war against your soul? Because you're a child of God, and you're an alien and a stranger. Have you ever been an alien or a stranger in some place here in this life? In other words, have you ever been in a situation where you were in a room with people that you knew you didn't belong to, or belong with, and maybe they didn't even speak your language. It's a very uncomfortable feeling, and as a believer, it should happen quite often to many of us that we get into a room full of people that are largely unbelievers and we feel out of place. I would hope that if you went into a bar where people are drinking to get drunk, I would hope that you would feel out of place. Like you were an alien and a stranger in that location. I would hope that.

But that's kind of a crude example but I think you get my point. It's, frankly, the way it is for us in the world at large. We're aliens and strangers. The writer of Hebrews mentions this as well. Look what he says in chapter 11 after talking about all these wonderful heroes of the faith. He says:

Hebrews 11:13

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised, they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

And that's us. And there's nobody stranger than you. We are aliens. We don't belong here. Our citizenship is in heaven. You belong with the Lord. That's where you belong. That's where I belong.

He goes on here at the end of verse 20 to say: “and from it (or from there) we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”

And what Paul is saying to you and I with that simple final statement of the chapter is that those are the kinds of things that ought to fill our minds, that all things are going to be made new, because where is that going to be made new? Across that finish line, the one we're supposed to have our eyes on, the one we're straining to run toward, not looking back, pressing on to finish.

I love how Paul got to the end of his life, and he wrote to Timothy and said, I finished the race, I've kept the faith. (2 Timothy 4:7)

Let's stand together.

We're going to have some people down front here as you're heading out today. We call them our prayer team, and they're just available to pray with you about any need that's, maybe, pressing in your life. But please understand these people are here to help and to pray, but you don't have to pray with them. I mean, they don't have any other special connection to God any greater than yours. Grab somebody next to you. I mean, grab anybody. You can pray with anybody here. If you need prayer, get prayer.

Don't walk away with the same burden that you came in here with. Push that burden onto the Lord. Let Him carry it. Remember, He already carried the weight of the sin of the world. He can carry your burdens too. They won't break Him and He's not too busy.

Let's pray.

Father, thank You so much for Your Word. The incredible reminders that we get from it are of just the importance of running our race. And how significant it is that we respond, Lord God, to the race that is before us, not looking back, pressing forward, keeping our eyes on the prize, on the finish line.

Jesus, help us to do it, we pray. And I pray that you'd help us be able to get over all the hurdles that are in our path by the power of Your Holy Spirit.

Teach us, Lord, to follow You and to keep our eyes on You, to focus on the prize. We ask all of this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen.