

Beulah Baptist Church
Rev. Jerry D. Black, Pastor

Sunday School Lesson: January 29, 2023
Rev. Mark A. Seals, M.Div., Instructor/Teacher
Bro. Mike Moore, Sunday School Superintendent

Lesson—Stand Firm¹

Text: Philippians 3:12-16

I. Aim for Change/Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, we will...

1. BECOME familiar with what Paul says about living as it relates to eternity with Jesus Christ;
2. APPRECIATE that the journey of Christian living and a quest for something eternal are demanding experiences; and
3. PLEDGE to stand firm in Jesus Christ.

Key Verse— *“Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” (Philippians 3:16, KJV).*

Lesson Song of Praise and Worship: *“I Want To Know Your Ways” by Fred Hammond*

II. People Places and Times

Races. To the Greeks of Paul’s day, races were very important. After all, this was the culture that had invented the Olympics! Beforehand, the runner spent much time in physical fitness training. The race was not just a game to the Greeks; only one man could win. In Christ, however, many will win and we hope to be in that crowd.

Background

Before Paul was reaching out to grasp the prize, Jesus reached out to him and grasped him on the road to Damascus. All of us have different salvation stories. We can tell how God was reaching out to us and if we could see things from God’s perspective, we would probably realize that He was calling out to us at many times and in many ways before we received Him as our Savior. The Lord has grasped each of us for different tasks. We have different things to do at different times of our lives, but we don’t want to fail to do those things that the Lord has called us to do. It’s a race.

III. The Lesson At-A-Glance...

1. Pressing toward the Goal (Philippians 3:12–14)
2. Putting Commitment to the Goal into Practice (vv. 15–16)

¹ Lesson Summary is from Direction Commentary, Urban Ministries Inc. 2022-23 Annual Edition.
(<https://directionbiblestudy.com>)

IV. In Depth with More Light on the Text

1. Pressing toward the Goal (Philippians 3:12–14) After warning them about placing confidence in themselves, Paul proceeded to warn the Philippians about the dangers of false perfectionism. Apparently, some at the Philippian church had deluded themselves with the notion that they were perfect. Paul does not consider his past achievements to be sufficient. He cannot rest on past accomplishments. The race is unfinished. He must continue to strive to fulfill the call of God that is given through Christ Jesus. Paul's goal is to attain the objective that Christ has set for him. There is a danger in looking back. A runner would surely slow down and probably trip and lose the race. If we keep on looking back at the things we have accomplished, we will slow down as we admire what we have done. Some people look back and worry about the things they did and the things they didn't do.

Though unattained, perfection is Paul's goal. Admittedly, it is an ambition that one never seems to be able to grasp. Still, Paul is willing to continue to press toward the goal. Conversion in itself represents the beginning, not the completion, of the goal. Fulfilling God's will has both a beginning and a desired end, but it is a process and a lifetime achievement.

2. Putting Commitment to the Goal into Practice (vv. 15–16)

The King James translation of the word "perfect" in verse 15 appears to be a direct contradiction to Paul's insistence that he is not perfect. What Paul meant here was the evidence of maturity—willingness to admit shortcomings, openness to correction, and willingness to be recreated in Christ Jesus. Those who possess this attitude are those who hold true to what they have attained. The Philippians were admonished to remain true to this point of view so that they could make further progress. They must neither forget the goal nor suffer under the illusion that they have already attained it. Just as there was a danger in assuming perfection had been reached, Paul was well aware, and equally concerned, about those who treated the goal with total disregard.

Liberating Lesson—... See Sunday School Book

The picture that this Scripture paints of Paul is that he is grasping with all his might. Today, we want to make it easy to follow Jesus. We want Jesus to drop all the material blessings into our laps. We certainly don't want to suffer for Him. Is this the picture we see of Paul in these verses or anywhere else in Scripture? People in other places are suffering for Jesus, but we don't always take this as seriously as we should. How can we turn around our lazy and indifferent attitudes toward our faith in Jesus Christ?

Application for Activation—... See Sunday School Book...

Write down on a piece of paper the things you need to do to commit your life completely to Jesus. As a reminder, post it on the refrigerator or a mirror in your bedroom.

Discuss the Meaning

Food for Thought and Questions for Consideration (from the Application for Activation)?

What have we learned (😊 Charlie Brown)?

See AA and LL

Vocabulary-New Words

A. Attained—(*Philippians* 3:12, 16) lambano (Gk.)—Took hold of, or received, such as having received a prize

B. Press—(v. 14) *dioko* (Gk.)—Pursue, follow after, or press forward, work hard, do one's best

Daily Bible Readings For the Lesson of January 29th

MONDAY

Be Watchful (*Matthew* 24:36–44)

TUESDAY

Be Prepared (*Matthew* 25:1–13)

WEDNESDAY

Be Trustworthy (*Matthew* 25:14–21)

THURSDAY

Be Compassionate (*Matthew* 25:31–40)

FRIDAY

Be Holy (*1 Peter* 1:13–21)

SATURDAY

Stand Firm (*Philippians* 3:17–4:1)

SUNDAY

Hold Fast (*Philippians* 3:12–16)