**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 10**

**Philippians 3:12-16**

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

*Questions for Personal Reflection:*

1. How strong is my desire to grow? How much effort do I put into my growth? Am I walking or running?
2. What am I learning? What do I need learn or grow in more?
3. What are the goals God wants me to go after during this lockdown? What about for the rest of the year? The next five years?
4. What are the goals and accomplishments God is calling me to achieve before I go to heaven? What am I doing to achieve them?
5. What does living up to what I have already attained mean? Would God say I am doing that? Why?

*Insight:*

By the time he wrote his letter to the Philippians Paul had already accomplished much for God. He planted churches, raised up leaders and taught great numbers of people. Compared to others he had done more. But Paul was not complacent nor did he compare himself with others. Neither should we. Paul pressed on to reach the goal God had for him. So should we. The word translated “press” is diṓkō which means “to pursue.” *Thomas Jones* explains that the term “was used in both hunting and foot racing. It could describe pursuing, chasing, even overtaking and capturing”. Does this describe how we go after God’s goals for us? First of all we need to know what God wants us to do. Paul did. Do we? This lockdown gives us an opportunity to sit down and think about our life and where God wants us to take it. Let’s take the time to figure that out if we have not done so already. Second, he pressed on. Paul had setbacks, disappointments and heart aches along the way but he kept moving forward.

This present crisis has disrupted our plans. Things we were looking forward to have been canceled. Activities we are were planning will no longer happen. On a daily basis we are reminded that we cannot do many of the things we used to do. But while our circumstances may have changed, God’s goals for us remain the same. This crisis is a test of our convictions. Will we find a way to still do what God wants us to do? Will we wait for things to go back to normal or are we going to adapt so that we can go after God’s goals even during this unusual time? Our present limitations should not stop us from achieving what God has called us to do.

Paul did not let things in his past stop him from pressing on and straining towards what is ahead. Is there anything in our past that is stopping us from moving forward? We should not allow our past sins or failures to make us doubt whether we should move forward. We should not allow our past suffering caused by the sins and failures of others to paralyze us as well. Neither should we rest on our laurels because of past victories. We should not cling to our comfort zone but climb upward to take hold of the next rung on the ladder faith God is calling us reach.

Having this “pressing on” attitude is a sign of maturity. The mature don’t give up. Many of us have been Christians for some years now. Are we mature? Are we acting in accordance with our spiritual age? Paul says we must live up to what we have already attained. If we have attained a certain number of years as a Christian we should act like it. If we are five years old Christian then we should behave like a Christian who has been learning from God the past five years. If we are 10 year old Christians, we should display 10 years’ worth of wisdom from God. The 10 year old should not act like a five year old. Older Christians should no longer have to struggle with young Christian problems.

To press on, we start from where we are now. We need to ask ourselves: Who am I now as a Christian? What am I able to do now? How do I build on that? We should always be trying to improve ourselves. We need to run after our growth.

This lockdown period can be a time when we grow the most.