

10 STEPS TO FREEDOM

Week 9: Falling With Style
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



RECAP

In this ninth sermon on the journey to freedom, Josh answered the question “What do I do when I mess up?” and shared seven steps to failing forward into freedom.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Josh started by reviewing the first eight steps to freedom: *fill your soul with the hope of Jesus, surrender and unleash the Spirit's presence within you, cultivate a relationship with your Heavenly Father, transform your mind through the power of Scripture, release your hurt through forgiveness, do life together, fully engage in worship to strengthen your soul, and establish guardrails to protect your freedom.* Of the eight, which one has been the most rewarding? Which one has been the hardest?
2. As you feel comfortable, talk about when you tried and failed to overcome something or struggled to find freedom from something. How did you respond to the failure?
3. Read Philippians 3:13-14 and talk about Paul's life before he met Jesus, when he was known to the world as Saul of Tarsus. How does his story of redemption give you hope that God can redeem and use you?
4. Josh walked through the 7 Keys to Failing Forward (on the notes page of this handout). Walk through these seven steps together, and for each one, share examples in your own life of how you've done (or not done) this step and what each step would practically look like in the future.
5. Josh finished by sharing a quote from the life and story of Franklin D. Roosevelt, a president who overcame personal tragedy in his own life to lead a country to overcome the tragedy of the Great Depression. Who are people who inspire you by how they've overcome and helped others experience freedom?

NEXT STEP

- Focus in on Key #7 of how to fail forward: Do something different. What's something different each one of you can do to take another step towards freedom? How can you fail forward?

For more information (training and support) on how to start a small group, contact steve.lizzio@cbcva.org



CENTREVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2019
WEEK 9: FALLING WITH STYLE
PHILIPPIANS 3:13-14

Step NINE to Freedom: Fail _____ and keep _____

7 KEYS TO FAILING FORWARD

F - _____ (*Romans 7:15-18*)

O - _____ your failure (*1 Timothy 1:15*)

R - _____ out to someone (*Acts 9:11-12*)

W - _____ up (*Ephesians 5:15-17*)

A - _____ for forgiveness (*Colossians 3:13*)

R - _____ grace (*1 Timothy 1:16*)

D - _____ something different (*Ephesians 4:22-24*)

Bonus Content

Sunday (This Handout) - 7 Questions on Philippians 3:13-14 and Small Group Questions for this message

Monday (Blog) - If This Bible Hero Could Get Past His Past, Anyone Can

Monday - Friday (Blog) - Devotionals from 10 Steps to Freedom book

For bonus content and much more, visit: joshdaffern.com

Philippians 3:13-14

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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.

Philippians 3:13-14

1. WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THE ORIGINAL READERS?

If you start with today you're twenty centuries too late.

Paul commits to pen and paper a powerful driving force for his life in these two verses. Writing to the Philippian church, who would have known of his past attachment to and achievement in Jewish legalism, Paul gives a motto which drove his life. He had not yet taken hold of the full knowledge of Jesus Christ (which doesn't happen this side of heaven), but there's one thing he does. The original language puts this transition even more starkly, four short Greek letters comprising two Greek words "but one," as if the staccato recitation of these two words offered a glimpse of Paul's passion and resolve.

Paul forgot what was behind, which is a little more active than we might imagine. The way he constructed the word gives the picture of something he actively does on a regular basis. It's not a picture of Paul living in denial of the past, but him choosing on a daily basis not to let his past mistakes and allegiances define him anymore nor determine his future.

While he actively forgets what is behind, like a runner in a race he strains towards the goal of heaven. It's a passionate picture, contrasted greatly with much of the lukewarm Christianity that dominates today. Paul would have never advocated for saying a quick prayer of repentance then sitting idly by for the next several decades, waiting for heaven. The goal of heaven was one Paul strained for with all his might. It defined him and the difference he made.

GREEK WORD OF THE WEEK

ἐπεκτείνω (*epekteinō*) is the Greek word for "straining" in Philippians 3:13 and is unique in that it is the only time this Greek word is used in the New Testament. It's a combination of three Greek words meaning "direction," "forth," and "stretch." It's a vivid word picture of a runner in the race nearing the finish line, stretching outward with his or her hand to cross the finish line and win the prize. This powerful image captures the energy and zeal with which we should be pursuing the prize of heaven God has for us.

2. WHAT'S THE CONTEXT? *Scripture without context makes no sense.*

The context for Paul's call for a passionate and relentless pursuit of the goal of heaven is not a rebuke to the distracted or self-indulgent life (which would be applicable today). In Philippians 3, Paul is not rebuking laziness but misguided passion. Paul recounts his former life as a religious zealot in Judaism, where he thought his effort somehow secured his righteousness. The defining realization for Paul was that all of his efforts were rubbish compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:7), whose death and resurrection at once secured the righteousness for Paul that he could never secure on his own. Zeal and passion are good things, gifts from God Himself. But it must be a zeal and passion for the right thing: the heavenly pursuit of Jesus Christ.

3. WHAT TIMELESS TRUTHS ARE THERE?

Since the Word doesn't change it still matters today.

- We will never fully arrive at complete righteousness this side of heaven.
- Although we will never fully arrive, we are called to always pursue the righteousness of Christ this side of heaven. It is our great calling in life.
- Christians ought to be the most passionate, hardest working people on the planet because of our pursuit of the prize of heaven.

4. WHERE ELSE IN SCRIPTURE DOES IT SAY THIS?

The best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. *Hebrews 12:1-2*

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him. *1 Timothy 1:15-16*

5. HOW DOES IT APPLY TODAY?

Information without application becomes stagnation.

- Christians are empowered to continually forget their past, not meaning they live as if their past never happened, but living so that their past neither defines nor imprisons them.
- Salvation is not permission for a life of laziness or slothfulness. The passionate and relentless pursuit of heaven should define our lives.
- It is in the process of straining ahead, of pressing on towards heaven, that we find ourselves unburdening ourselves from the cares and concerns of this world.

6. HOW SHOULD THIS CHANGE THE WAY I LIVE IN COMMUNITY?

The Bible comes alive in me when I live it in community.

- How hard is it for you to actively and continually live as if your past doesn't define you anymore? Which part of your past tends to haunt you the most?
- What's a specific way you can press on this week and strain towards what is ahead? What can you do to reach forward to realize a life that is defined by the pursuit of heaven?

7. HOW CAN MY LIFE GET BETTER BECAUSE OF THESE VERSES? *If I trust God and step in faith, what kind of life will God create?*

Imagine a life defined by the passionate pursuit of the goal of heaven, where the salvation of Jesus was not a "Get Out of Hell Free" card that enabled a life of idleness or sin but one that lit a fire underneath you to spend your life making a difference in the lives of others, knowing that heaven and eternal rewards were awaiting you on the other side. Imagine a life free from the burdens and encumbrances of sin and the things of this world as you fix your eyes on Jesus and pursue him relentlessly. Imagine how much contentment you would walk around with on a daily basis because your joy rests not on the fleeting pleasures of this world but on the life-giving relationship that comes from Jesus. This can be your life!