

Water Under The Bridge

Phil. 3:13-14.

I. PAUL HAD NOT LAID HOLD.

1. Not Sinlessly Perfect.

Phil. 3:12.

II. BUT ONE THING I DO.

1. Paul's One Aim. Phil. 1:21.

Matt. 6:22-24. Two Parts.

III. FORGETTING THINGS BEHIND.

1. Past Success. 2 Cor. 11:22-27; Gal. 1:14.

2. Past Failures. Gal. 1:13; Acts 9:1-2; 8:3.

3. Past Injuries. Luke 9:62; 17:32; Ex. 14:15.

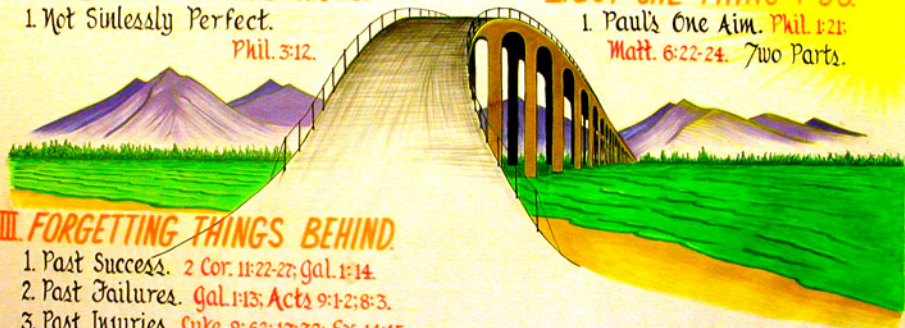
IV. STRETCHING FORWARD.

Phil. 3:13; Heb. 6:1.

V. PRESSING ON.

Phil. 3:14; 2 Tim. 4:7-8;

1 Cor. 9:25; Rev. 2:9.



WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

Phil. 3:13-14

INTRO: Grove Patterson, editor of the *Toledo Blade* once wrote a classic editorial entitled “Water Under the Bridge.” It told of a boy who leaned against the railing of an old bridge and watched the current of the river below. He watched a log float past, then a piece of driftwood, a leaf, and a chip of wood. The water kept flowing by—under the bridge. The image stuck in the boy’s mind and served him well in future years. He had some very difficult days, but he knew that they like the water would pass under the bridge. When he made a mistake or fumbled an opportunity he would say: “It’s water under the bridge.” He did not waste valuable time lamenting past errors, nor did he let trouble get him down because it was “water under the bridge.”

I. PAUL HAD NOT LAID HOLD.

- A. Paul was not sinlessly perfect. Phil. 3:12.
- B. Paul pressed on so that he might lay hold on, get in his grasp, that for which he was laid hold on. He had been grasped by Jesus Christ. Paul was striving to reach the state of godliness and sanctification for which Christ had laid hold on him at his conversion. He had not reached that state. Phil. 3:13.

II. “BUT ONE THING I DO.”

- A. Paul had only one real aim in life. His aim is expressed in Phil. 1:21.
- B. Jesus said: Matt. 6:22-24. As you look at Jesus’ teachings in this chapter, you see that he pointed to the motives of men.
 - 1. Men do alms for two motives.
 - 2. They pray for two motives.
 - 3. They fast for two motives.
 - 4. They even see double. There are two motives behind our looking. The eye is the light of the body. If the eye is clear, clean, and has the right motive, then the body is full of light. If the eye is evil, darkened by evil motives, then the whole body is in horrible darkness. We cannot serve two motives or two masters. Paul’s one aim in life is divided into two parts.

III. FORGETTING THE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND.

Paul forgot everything that would hinder his progress in running the Christian race.

- A. Forget Past Successes. Paul did not dwell on his past attainments. Glorifying in past accomplishments can only lead to a fruitless future. Paul could remember and glory in his Jewish privileges and education. He could remember his past work for the Lord with all of his sufferings and persecutions. 2 Cor. 11:22-27; Gal. 1:14. We cannot rest on past laurels. How many times have you heard that? What does it mean and where did it come from? The laurel tree was used to make a crown for the winners in the Pythian games. Later it

was used for academic honors. The meaning is we cannot rest on past attainments or victories. We must forget what little we have accomplished. It is “water under the Bridge.”

- B. Forget Past Failures. A morbid memory of past mistakes, sins, and failures will only cause fear of what may happen in the future. We need to repent of sins, pray for forgiveness, and learn from past mistakes to avoid repeating them. Then we must forget them, leaving them behind. Paul did not dwell on his past life. Gal. 1:13; also Acts 9:1-2; Acts 8:3. To Paul, it was “water under the bridge.”
- C. Forget Past Injuries. If we carry resentments, hatreds, and disappointments into the future, they will soon wear us out. We cannot allow our life to be controlled by constantly thinking of how others have mistreated us. They are “water under the bridge.” We cannot dwell on past failures or injuries. We must forget them and press on. They are “water under the bridge.” Luke 9:62; “Remember Lot’s wife.” Luke 17:32. We must remember that God told the children of Israel to “Go Forward.” Ex. 14:15.

IV. STRETCHING FORWARD. PHIL. 3:13.

This has reference to a runner in a race. He extends himself, giving every effort to reach the goal before him. Our goal, as was Paul’s, is to be more like Jesus. Paul strained to be more like his Master. Notice how the Hebrews writer tells us to leave behind the first things. Heb. 6:1.

V. PRESSING ON. PHIL. 3:14.

The word “press” means to “pursue.” The “goal” means a mark to shoot at. It is a spiritual end, target, or goal. Our goal is living a life of faithfulness, always seeking the holiness of Christ. We are trying to attain it. We are trying to fight the good fight, to finish the race, to keep the faith. Paul said: 2 Tim. 4:7-8. The “high calling” means the “upward calling,” a calling from heaven. It is not just Paul’s calling to be an Apostle, but the common calling of all Christians to eternal salvation, the prize given to all who reach the goal. Paul refers to the Prize as an incorruptible crown. 1 Cor. 9:25. John says it is “The crown of life.” Rev. 2:9.

CONCL: The future does not belong to us as long as we are shackled by the past. We need to pray to God to help us forget the past. It is “water under the bridge.” We learn from it and profit from it, but we cannot change it, if you are not a Christian, you have your past life to account for. The blood of Christ can cleanse you of your past sins and make you clean again. If you believe Jesus died for you, repent, confess Jesus, and be baptized for remission of sins. Forget the past and stretch on toward the goal. The prize is worth the price.