

## How Far Are You Willing To Go To Please God?

Scripture: Phil 3:7-14

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless and I count all things but loss for the Excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung **that I may win Christ,**

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; **[This is the reason to Press]**

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, **This should be the desire of all who call themselves Christians.**

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus

Introduction:

I often wonder how much pressing is done by the church today, how much struggling in the Spirit does a man do to obtain an intimate relationship with Christ?

Too often we settle for a too little and we are acquainted with knowing God by name only and have no relationship at all with Him.

It's easy to tell someone you love them but showing love and growing intimate takes more than just words. **Love is an action not just a saying.** We tell God often how much we love him and adore him but our intimacy is shallow.

Paul saying I press toward the mark means that he is struggling to get somewhere with God so that he can obtain that relationship of not only saying words but going forward in proving he has a greater desire to be like Christ.

Jesus example shows us of a man pressing toward the mark to obtain complete satisfaction of the Father. His goal was to please God not get to a point that he was just satisfied with knowing God.

The world knows about God but the majority has no relationship with God.

Luke 13:23-24

23 Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able. **“They will seek but not strive!” Not willing to change.**

The living Bible translation says it this way: Luke 13:24... **"The door to heaven is narrow. Work hard to get in, for the truth is that many will try to enter but when the head of the house has locked the door, it will be too late.**

Then if you stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Lord, open the door for us, he will reply, **'I do not know you.'**

So hearing about God and saying we know him, doesn't get us any closer to God,

“We must Press toward the Mark.” Do everything possible to be pleasing

to God.

We worry about change and some of you say I don't see any need to do that but why don't you just try to press your way in and help us to be unified.

Some strive to be different than the church and refuse to comply with simple request. Jesus said if you love me keep my commandments.

In Prayer are we pressing?

In attendance are we pressing?

In sacrifice are we pressing?

Do you press to make your family life better?

How do you look at your circumstances? Do you declare that I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me?

1. Are we satisfied with a little when God has so much for us?
2. Do we go beyond what is expected of us or do we get to the stage that we expect someone else to do our part.
3. How much do you pray and what are you praying about, you and yours or are you pressing to enter into the presence of God for someone else's need?

Pressing means that if I expect God to do something I presume that God is expecting me to do something.

The disciples before they received the Holy Ghost relied on the verbal commands of Jesus but seldom fulfilled his request.

A request to Pray: Matt 26:41

41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

The results of his request: Matt 26:43

And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

So by this it shows how they gave into the flesh and refused to obey the spiritual request to pray.

It's no different today Prayer is one of the least things to do on our daily routine in life.

We think we are getting by without it, but the results of the Apostles prove that if they would have prayed they wouldn't have run when Jesus needed them most.

**Matt 26:56**

But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

James 5:16 The living translation:

Admit your faults to one another and pray for each other so that you may be healed. **The earnest prayer of a righteous man has great power and wonderful results.**

Do we want great results from our prayers?

To press means this: Phil 3:14 **I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God is calling us up to heaven because of what Christ Jesus did for us.**

What is the prize of the high calling of God? What has God promised to the believer?

Answer: Matt 11:12

**And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.**

Some of you have learned about forcing your way in.

1. You force yourself to make it to church when nothing is going right.
2. You force yourself to come to prayer meeting even though you are

worn out from your daily activity.

3. You force yourself to be available to help at the church when asked.
4. You force yourself to give in the offering and give of your tithing to please God.

You are learning to press your way in: others are satisfied with just coming to church just assuming that someone else will take up the slack.

But I want to tell you every man has to press his own way into the Kingdom of God.

You have to have the desire to enter into the Kingdom and a fervent passion to obtain what seems to be so far in the future but could be as close as the next breath!

When was the last time you really felt the presence of God when you prayed and got an answer to your prayer?

When we have a prayer request before church I watch as we pray some pray but others don't and some find it a good time to go to the bathroom and completely ignore the request.

Some of you are playing with the babies and aren't reverencing what others are attempting to do. You're making conversation while others are striving to pray.

But are we doing any good mumbling a few words to God and expect him to honor our request.

If we aren't sincere, what makes us think that God is going to take us seriously?

Paul made this statement:

Philippians 3: 13-14 **Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching**

forth unto those things which are before,  
I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ  
Jesus.