

Word on Wednesday Bible Study
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Mature Faith- Philippians 3:5-14

Introduction: Next to Mount Everest, the Matterhorn has been a goal for many climbers from around the world. First ascended in 1865, this jagged, tooth-like mountain towers 14, 692 feet above sea level. The Matterhorn is in the Swiss Alps near the border between Switzerland and Italy. Each year approximately 3000 people climb to the icy, snow-covered top of this legendary peak. The goal of each climber, obviously, is to make it safely to the top. Unfortunately, each year about 5 climbers will not complete the climb safely, dying either on the ascent or on the descent from the peak. The goal of our Christian life is to complete our spiritual journey well. Tragically, we all know people who have fallen away on the journey. In Paul's words, they have "shipwrecked" along the way and have drifted away from their faith in Christ (1 Tim. 1:19). Our challenge as followers of Jesus Christ is to stay on course and keep climbing toward maturity in our faith. In the letter to the Philippian Christians, Paul set forth three critical thoughts to aid his readers on the climb to Christian maturity. Each of these thoughts arose from Paul's own life where he learned how to grow a maturing Christian faith.

I. Reject _____ (Phil. 3:5-7)

"But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ." - Vs. 7

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? Matt 16:26

"...any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." – Luk 14:33

II. Strive to _____ (Phil. 3:8-11)

In His Power "The power of His resurrection"

In His Pain... "The fellowship of His sufferings"

Matt. 5:44 - "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"

James 1:2-5 - Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

2 Cor. 12:10. Since God grace was sufficient vs. 9... vs 10 Paul said... ***"For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."***

..." being made conformable unto His death"

III. Keep_____ (Phil. 3:12-14)

"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own because Christ Jesus has made me his own." - Vs. 12

"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends. - 2Co 10:17-18

"Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead..." vs. 13-14

Conclusion: In the village of Zermatt, Switzerland, at the foot of the Matterhorn lies the Mountaineers Cemetery, where some who died climbing the mountain are buried. One of those graves belongs to a seventeen-year-old New Yorker, Donald Stephen Williams. On his tombstone are engraved the words "I chose to climb."

In the Christian life, we, too, have a choice. We can be content with where we are in following Christ as a shallow Christian. Or we can choose to keep on climbing. My prayer is that this will be your testimony when you come to the end of your faith journey: "I chose to climb!"