

**THE BIG IDEA:** Prioritize to keep from compromise.

### The Take-Off

Can I tell you something that I already know is true about you? You'd love to be better than what you are right now. Well, there are a small minority of people who truly believe that they are already the best they can be, but most of us - followers of Jesus or not - don't fall into that category, do we?

We fall into the swarm of Americans who last year combined to make sales of self-help materials climb into the 12 BILLION DOLLAR RANGE.

That, my friends, is a lot of wanting to be better.

Now, the good news is that I believe it's possible to improve, and the even better news is that I believe the series we're starting today can help you see tremendous improvement in just 10 weeks.

But there's some sobering news, too, and I've got to tell it to you on the front end. While this series will contain lots of tips and practical ideas about how to improve you, it's not really a series about you.

That's why we didn't call it "70 days to a new you!"

We called it ten because we want to challenge you to commit to 10 weeks of spiritual disciplines that are actually designed to kill you.

John the Baptist said it this way: Jesus needs to be bigger in me and so there needs to be less of me.

Less of my way and more of His.

Less of my opinion and more of His truth.

Less me, more Him.

That's what sets this series apart from just another self-help class.

Self-help books have a basic premise: we're good, but confused, and if we make the right choices, we'll be better.

Basically, given the right information and right situation, we can save ourselves.

But the gospel has a different premise: we're sinful and captive and we can't make the right choices. Basically, even with the right information and in the best situation, we'll find a way to mess it up and we need a Savior.

His name is Jesus, and the next 10 weeks are designed to lift Him up in every way so that He will increase and we will decrease.

The beauty of it all is that when we do that, we actually will be better.

Not because we somehow become good, but because we start to rely on Jesus' life being lived through us.

So this is week 1, and today we're going to look at something Paul wrote in Philippians 3:13-15.

I want to share with you 3 steps Paul took that will help us start the next 10 weeks headed in the right direction, and then we'll wrap it up with the Big Idea.

### **1. Forget what Jesus has forgotten**

Let's establish the obvious first: Jesus doesn't have a bad memory

Some of us think, "Forgetting will be easy for my spouse. He forgets things all the time!"

But this isn't that kind of forgetting, and even if it was, most of the things we need to forget we can't forget!

In fact, numerous studies have found that bad things are harder to forget than good things.

Bottom line? When Paul tells us that he is "forgetting" what is behind, he isn't talking about amnesia.

He's talking about making a choice to not allow the past to control him.

We could go into all the things that Paul needed to let go, but that's not the point of this message. You can read about the good stuff he'd done in vv. 4-6 and the really bad stuff he did in Acts 9.

Our purpose this morning is to address why we can forget things that are behind us.

One reason: Jesus does.

- Hebrews 8 talks about a new covenant with a new and better high priest who - according to verse 12 - forgives our wickedness and remembers our sin no more
- Jesus doesn't forget your sin; he forgives it, and once he's forgiven it, he chooses not to hold it against you anymore.
- That's why Jesus said "it is finished" on the cross. He made the sacrifice necessary to free us from the haunting memories of the past.
- When Satan reminds us of our past, we can simply tell him that God has no idea what he is talking about. And God really doesn't.

If Jesus has forgotten it, then you and I need to forget it, too.

Make the choice to not hold your past against yourself. You are free.

## 2. Focus on what Jesus is doing

It's really never enough to just forget, is it?

In fact, sometimes we spend so much time and energy trying not to think of something that we inadvertently do I mean, just try to forget the number 7

Impossible. In order to remember what to forget, we remind ourselves of what we're supposed to forget.

But one sure-fire way to make me forget something is by instantly focusing my attention on something else.

You're the same way.

If you hear a phone number that you need to remember, you'll try not to hear anything else - especially other numbers - until you can write it down.

How can we make sure we forget what Jesus has forgotten?

By focusing on something else, and specifically on what Jesus is doing.

And what is he doing?

- He's getting you to the finish line (v. 14)

- He's completing you (Phil. 1:6)

- He's praying for you (Rom. 8:34)

- He's remaking you (2 Cor. 5:17)

So it's not just about forgetting, but also about focusing on something new.

## 3. Fill your life with what Jesus is saying

How do we forget and re-focus our lives? It's all about changing our view.

Paul says it in verse 15, doesn't he? That as we mature we'll begin to see differently?

The next 10 weeks we want to help you think differently, and so we want you to completely give yourself to the Bible.

We want you to fill your life with what Jesus is saying.

The quickest way to change how we think is by changing what we look at.

So often we look at ourselves, or our problems and situations, and so that's what consumes our thoughts, but looking at the Word will change that. His truth will begin to renew your mind (Romans. 12:2).

Here are a few things that happen when we read the Bible:

- It has the power to reveal our thoughts to us (Heb. 4:12)

- It always does what it says it will (Isa. 55:11)

- It breaks us and sets us on fire (Jer. 23:29)

- It gives us life (John 6:63 and Psalm 119:50)

- It nourishes us (Jer. 15:16; Psalm 119:103; Matt. 4:4; and 1 Peter 2:2)

We want you to spend 10 minutes a day for the next 10 weeks reading the Bible.

We believe that when we do that, the Bible will change us if we allow it to show us the right person.

Here's what that means:

When we're religious, we read the Bible and see others. When we're repentant, we read the Bible and see ourselves.

Let the Bible show you who you are, and who Jesus is.

When we fill our lives with what Jesus is saying, we find that our past has a lot less power and our future has a lot more potential.

## The Landing

Let's try to wrap this up with some laser focus, ok?

We've talked about some pretty specific action steps: forgetting, focusing, filling.

None of these will happen accidentally. We've got to be intentional.

We're asking you to intentionally give yourself to 4 spiritual disciplines over the next 10 weeks:

- Spending 10 minutes a day of Bible reading and journaling

- Giving 10 percent of your income to the Lord through the church

- Spending 10 nights over the next 10 weeks building relationships in a Community Group

- Having 10 conversations (1 a week) with others in the church about what you're reading in the Bible

No, none of these are a law and not doing any of them won't send you to hell, and if you're totally happy with where your life is, don't bother.

But most of us are in the group that will spend 12 billion on trying to improve ourselves, and here's a plan that you can try for no money. The only cost is a willingness to be intentional about doing them.

The Big Idea today will help you with being intentional. Prioritize to keep from compromise.

Gym parking lots are full in Jan. and empty in Feb. not because people don't want to get fit, but because they don't make it a priority and end up back in their old habits and routines.

Make these 4 disciplines a priority in your life over the next 10 weeks - be intentional about them - and it will be harder for you to slip back into what you've always done.

A quick story about being intentional and then we'll close.

Sydney wanting her ears pierced and showing us she'll be responsible by posting charts on her wall.

Show the note she wrote to herself about looking on the wall behind her (in case she forgot).

Now, that's being intentional. That's making new priorities. That's making changes in order to get what you really want.

How bad do we want to look like Jesus, think like Jesus, and speak like Jesus? Enough to spend our time differently, give differently, relate differently?

If so, be intentional. Prioritize your life to keep from compromise.

Let's pray.