**Desirable Characteristics: Introduction**

* The purpose of the study is to further equip ourselves as Christians.
* These characteristics are those which we should obtain.
* As we mature, we gain more facets to our own characteristics.
* We should always *“press on.”*

**Philippians 3:12-16**

* **Not** already attained (v. 12) – have not yet obtained something.
* **Not** already perfected (v. 12) – have not yet been completed or consummated.
* **Not** apprehended (v. 13) – have not laid hold of.
  + **3:7-11** – Paul is talking about the fullness of knowing Christ. He will not fully know Him, or fully be found in Him, until He attains to the resurrection from the dead (cf. 1 John 3:2).
  + Our knowledge of Christ cannot be perfect, or complete, in the physical form.
* This knowledge is an applied, or experienced, knowledge (cf. 2 Peter 1:3 – *epignōsis* – recognition, that is, full discernment or, acknowledgment.
  + Strengthened form of *gnosis* – knowledge.
  + Participation by the knower in the object known.
    - It is a saving knowledge that receives grace and peace.)
  + As long as Paul was alive in the body he had room to grow!
  + This takes place *“through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”*
    - (Romans 10:17 – through the word.)
    - Ephesians 2:8-10 – our righteousness/salvation is not something earned of works of the law. It would then be by merit ***(“For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.”*** – Romans 4:2). However, it is conditional and we must do what He has created us to do.
    - Our righteousness is a work of God conditional upon our faith (cf. Colossians 2:12).
* **(v. 12b)** – What is Paul pressing on toward?
  + He is pressing on to lay hold of *“that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of [him].”*
  + The parallel is in v. 14 – He presses toward the prize!
  + When did Christ lay hold of him? (Acts 9:6; 22:16 – calling on the name of the Lord; Romans 10:13 – shall be saved.)
    - Christ laid hold of us for the purpose of receiving salvation.
    - So we press on to lay hold of salvation!
* **(v. 14)** – Paul speaks of pressing forward, but not without a fixed point of focus.
  + (cf. 2 Timothy 4:7-8 – Crown of life = salvation.)
  + The upward call of God in Christ Jesus is salvation! This is what motivates Paul, and us (cf. 1 Peter 1:3-5, 9).
* **(v. 13 – *“but one thing I do”*)** – a necessity to lay hold of the prize is forgetting the past. How?
  + Paul remembered his past – (bad – 1 Timothy 1:15; good – 2 Corinthians 11:30).
  + Luke 9:62 – ***“No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”***
    - Dwelling on the past, good or bad, will not allow us to look at the goal ahead. We will falter, not seeing the path.
  + Hebrews 4:8-10 – Heaven is our rest. We are presently pressing on (constantly active). This does not stop until we have obtained the rest.
* **(v. 15-16)** – Those who are spiritually mature must have this mindset (to press on; progress every day). (*The spiritually mature have the mindset to grow further in maturity. Not to stop as if they had already attained.*)
  + If there is in anyone doubt as to the importance of such, it will be revealed by God in their life how important it really is (spiritual decline; consequences of sin; etc. – all because you have not been pressing on!)
  + In order for them to grow spiritually they needed to walk in the truth they had already attained, i.e. the Gospel. It is in the truth we can be of the same mind.
    - **This is the purpose of the Desirable Characteristics study. They are records in God’s word of characteristics we should walk in as Christians.**