

# Press On!

**W**orld champion marathon runner Robert de Castella said, "Running well is a matter of having the patience to persevere when you are tired and not expecting instant results. The only secret is that it is consistent, often monotonous, boring, hard work. And it's tiring."

My good friend, Doug Echols, runs marathons (I don't, but I am supportive of my friends who do!), and one day I referred to a marathon as "26 miles" and was gently reminded that a marathon is "26.2 miles." Any marathoner will tell you that the extra 0.2 is make or break. Races are actually won or lost in those last 385 yards.

According to runnersworld.com, at the 2017 Tunnel Vision Marathon, Devon Bieling stopped, dropped in a controlled manner, crawled, and then rolled—yes, rolled—across the finish line.

I know ministry over these past few months has been like a long marathon. Our Christian walk and corporate worship have faced myriad challenges. Today, I want to reflect on a Scripture passage that tells us to "press on!"

## Press On In Humility

*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.* (Philippians 3:12)

Paul states—twice—that he is far from perfect—not that he had already obtained it; already been made perfect. He admitted he had a lot of growing to do. He had not arrived. Chuck Swindoll wrote, "We ourselves are imperfect,

living in an imperfect world, surrounded by imperfect people, who continue to model imperfections on a daily basis." If a Christian leader and servant like Paul could admit it, I should too.

"Be humble or you'll stumble." – Dwight L. Moody

## Press On With Intensity

*Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.* (Philippians 3:13–14)

Paul pressed on with intensity from his past glories, griefs, grudges, and guilt. Glories—Paul had done great work. Griefs—beaten, shipwrecked, scorned, left for dead. Grudges—betrayed, lied to and about, sold out. Guilt—blasphemer, persecutor.

Paul pressed on with intensity by keeping his eye on the goal, the finish, and the prize.

Most of us would rather say, "many things I do," and it would be true because we are fragmented people. But Paul (who was the consummate man of action) could truthfully say, "one thing I do."

Paul focused intensely on knowing Christ, the power of Christ, and making known Christ and His powerful Gospel. Lord, help us to press on with that intensity.

*Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.* (1 Corinthians 9:24)

## Press On Toward Maturity

*Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.* (Philippians 3:15–16)

The challenges we encounter, the trials we suffer, and the opportunities we receive can all serve to make us more like Christ. Maturing in Christ is the goal. I haven't arrived and, in fact, it seems that I have a long way to go. I am thankful we can run this race together.

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* (Hebrews 12:1)

Let's keep pressing on together!

Your brother in Christ,

## Brian Autry



✉ [bautry@sbcv.org](mailto:bautry@sbcv.org)

🌐 [brianautry.com](http://brianautry.com)

📘 [facebook.com/brian.autry.70](https://facebook.com/brian.autry.70)

🐦 [@brianautry](https://twitter.com/brianautry)