



- In verse 13 of our text, the phrase “*reaching forth*” literally means “to stretch oneself forward.”
- According to God’s Word, we need to be reaching forth and stretching ourselves spiritually in our Christian walk and as a church family.
- How can we (individually and as a church) stretch ourselves spiritually? This text will show us how.

**First, we must refuse to trust in our fleshly power.
vs. 3**

Second, our passion must be for a Person – Jesus Christ. vs. 10

**Third, _____ from the past, but don’t live in it. –
vs. 13**

- We will never know Christ in a greater way - we will never be stretched spiritually - until we decide to forget those things which are behind.
- You cannot know someone in the _____ if your heart is dwelling on the past.
- Knowing Christ does not change the past, but it changes the _____ of the past.

- *“Forgetting”* doesn’t mean it is wiped from your memory. Biblically, it means that we are no longer influenced or affected by those things in a _____ way.
- Too many Christians live in bondage to the past. They live with regrets, guilt, or bitterness over past events. This impedes their ability to _____ and be stretched.
- You can live in the past and continue to dig up bad memories and painful events if you want to, but you need to understand two facts about this:
 - ⇒ First, it will do nothing to _____ the past.
 - ⇒ Second, it will hinder you in _____ Christ in the present and growing spiritually.

**Fourth, we must rise above our _____ . –
vs. 17-19**

- Paul was determined to reach forth and press forward, but Paul had enemies.
- They are not team players. They are “_____” players. They want to shackle you to the past, and they will suck the life right out of you.

The ultimate prize would be when Paul received the high calling, that is, the heavenly invitation into the presence of Christ. vs. 20-21

Until that day, Paul wanted to keep growing so that when he was ushered into the very presence of Christ, it would be just the next natural step in his _____ relationship with Christ.