

Bible Talk 8: THE LAST POST

Passage: Philippians 3:12-4:3

Bible Talk Video: <https://vimeo.com/147273005>

Metaphor: the last post

Story: Soldiers working together don't stop at each trench and get discouraged – they know they're temporary, there'll be other trenches to storm – and there is an end to the war that's coming.

Key Verse: I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. – Phil 3:14

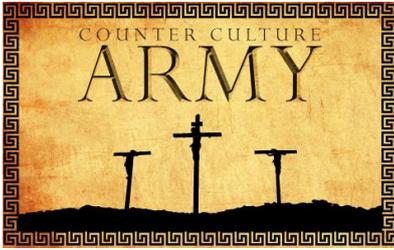
Opening Question: When do we get stuck in the trenches of life? Qn: What are you waiting for? // Where are you going with your life? // what do you get out of bed each day to serve?

Big Idea: In the light of the new dawn that Jesus brings we don't passively wait but press on to our last post, representing him to others.

Key Application: Christians don't need to deny how hard it can be to keep going 'over the top', storming the trenches of life. But we know Jesus has won the war. When we storm the trenches this week – they're real but not ultimate.

Call to Action: Growing servant hearts. Dawn is coming – enter the light.

Songs: Joy!; Alive; It is Well; Be Thou My Vision; The One Who Made Us One



MOVEMENT 1: METAPHOR AND KEY QUESTION

What keeps you GETTING OUT OF BED each morning?

What **MOTIVATES** you?

What keeps you **PRESSING ON** through all the trenches of life?

Especially as PHILIPPIANS has us thinking about serving Jesus

...serving as A SOLDIER in his counter-culture army...

...what keeps you **PRESSING ON** through all the trenches of life serving Jesus?



I want to share with you in a moment how THE LAST POST motivates soldiers for the coming day

...how this song at DUSK...sets their minds on the NEXT DAWN... **WHAT MOTIVATES YOU IN THE MORNING?**



Maybe you have a nice big **MOTIVATIONAL POSTER** on your wall...

...wonderful things, motivational posters...

...all you need is a great **INSPIRING** picture



...add a bold concept... like "SUCCESS"



And then add a **LAME PHRASE IN A BAD FONT**... sorry I couldn't bring myself to make one up...

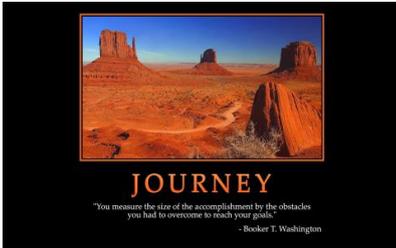
...now this industry launched with **READY MADE** motivational posters ...such as...



DREAM BIG

Your attitude not your aptitude will determine your altitude...

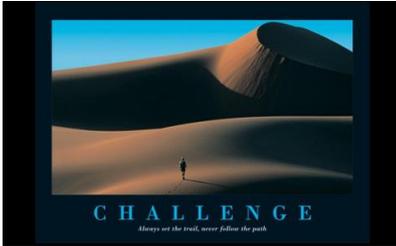
[not your aptitude?...]]



JOURNEY

You measure the size of the accomplishment by the obstacles you had to overcome to reach your goals...

[that's a bit like what we'll hear from Paul ...*but only completely different...*]



CHALLENGE

Always set the trail...never follow the path
[what does that even mean?...]



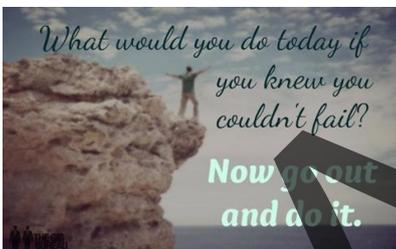
But now on social media the big thing is MAKING YOUR OWN motivational pics

...SELF-MADE SELF-HELP...

...APPS devoted to MAKING MOTIVATIONAL MATERIAL



Creating the future ...



Never failing...



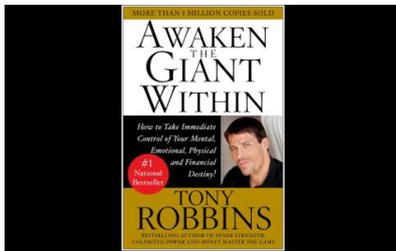
Being awesome....BUT...

...because WE DON'T KNOW how exactly to be awesome

...because we don't know how to motivate ourselves in the morning

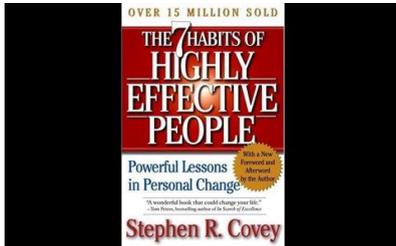
...because we don't know how to press on when we feel stuck in life...

Alongside all these motivational pics is the STILL MASSIVELY GROWING INDUSTRY of motivational books...



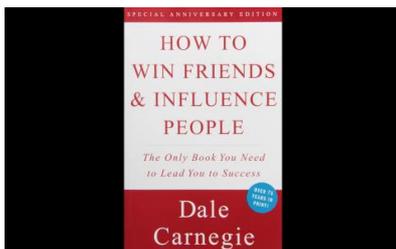
AWAKE THE GIANT WITHIN

How to take immediate control of your mental, emotional, physical and financial destiny...



SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE

Powerful lessons in personal change



HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

The original motivational book by Dale Carnegie from 70+ years ago, that's billed as "the only book you need to lead you to success" [which makes you wonder why THE OTHERS wrote theirs?] PAUSE

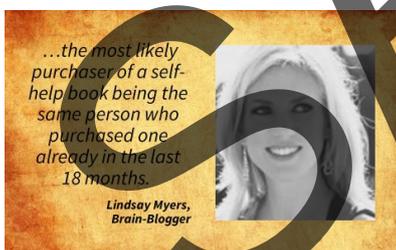


What's TRULY STAGGERING about this motivational book industry...

...with such terrific advice as *"if opportunity doesn't knock then build a door"*



...it's not just – as **LINDSAY MYERS** FROM BRAIN-BLOGGER tells us...that it's a \$10 BILLION A YEAR industry in the U.S. alone...she also talks about the failure of these books... *with...*



...the most likely purchaser of a self-help book being the same person who purchased one already in the last 18 months.

...so you read the ONLY book you need... except then you need ANOTHER one!

There is in fact ONLY ONE BOOK you need for REAL MOTIVATION in life...

...and it's the one _____ just read fromwhere you heard Apostle Paul's motivation in life...

I **press on** toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:14



I press on toward **the goal** to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:14

I press on toward **the sentry post** to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:14

LITERAL TRANSLATION

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

But WHAT'S going on here?

Is this just Paul's version of a fluffy motivational poster

...

"pressing on... to win the prize!!!!..."

Well NO ...there's NOTHING fluffy about this at all... because when Paul says I press on towards **the goal** there in verse 14, our key verse in the is passage (it was there in verse 12 as well)

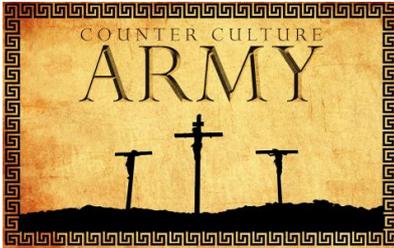
...when he says I press on towards **THE GOAL**...

...a more *LITERAL* translation would be this...

'I press on toward the sentry-post'.

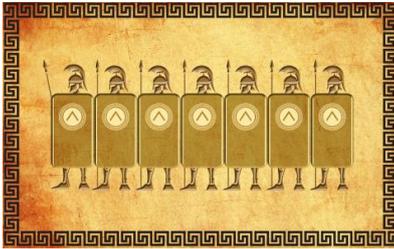
...the *SENTRY POST*... we're going to have to think about that...

...because here's ANOTHER MILITARY TERM popping up in Philippians



MOVEMENT 2: PLURAL "YOU" AND "ARMY" LANGUAGE IN PASSAGE (answering our key question)

We keep seeing this ARMY LANGUAGE through Philipians



How Pauls **THE WHOLE CHURCH** a "YOU" TOGETHER ...striving SIDE BY SIDE...

How he called **EPHRAPHODITUS** – couple of weeks back – a FELLOW SOLDIER

And now pictures **HIMSELF** a SOLDIER ALSO... on duty... mid-battle ... in the stretch... moving to his next POST.



It's always moving isn't it... at an Anzac Day or Remembrance Day service when the trumpeter strikes up the 'Last Post'.

Hats removed, heads bowed, weapons inverted, flags lowered and salutes held while the sombre tune rings

out.

You know we think of this tune as a **LOOKING BACK** but originally it was used for looking **FORWARD**.

...going back a few hundred years now, the 'Last Post' got its name from the wartime daily inspection of sentry posts around a military camp at the end of a day's fighting: when the LAST INSPECTION was complete, the 'LAST POST' was played.

With soldiers assembled at their sentry post by night: mid-battle, ready for the next day's action. Ready for dawn.

So it would ring out again at the end of the next day of battle, and the next day and so on.

That's a GREAT PICTURE of how Paul talks here

Picturing himself as a SOLDIER ... on duty... mid-battle ... in the stretch... moving to his next POST ...until he reaches the LAST POST...**RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.**

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I **press on** to take hold of that for which **Christ Jesus** took hold of me.

Philippians 3:12

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: **Forgetting** what is behind and **straining** toward what is ahead...

Philippians 3:13

I **press on** toward the **goal** to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in **Christ Jesus**.

Philippians 3:14

Take a look at it in context... from the start of our reading... Paul says... *Not that I have already obtained all this*

...obtained **WHAT?** RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD!
...the final goal... the last post

...that's what he was just talking about in verse 11 – pressing on through sufferings in this life to the end – to resurrection

Not that I have already obtained all this... or have already arrived at my goal (my last sentry post), but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. [I'm holding on to him – but really, more, he's holding me!!]

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind...

[how many of us really do that?... We're always looking BACK aren't we? Hurts, disappointments, scars, guilts... **FORGETTING** what is behind...

and STRAINING toward what is ahead...

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

...heavenward...beyond TODAY'S post, TOMORROW'S... the dawning of a NEW DAY WITHOUT END in heaven...

Now I've left the word as GOAL there ...not THE SENTRY POST ...either way what he's looking to is CHRIST JESUS...

...and it's possible Paul could have an image from the LOCAL GAMES happening

...some of you might have heard RACE ILLUSTRATIONS for this passage... and hey - they do help...

Let me give a NEGATIVE example and a POSITIVE one...



This is the NEGATIVE – don't be like this example...

I mean when Paul says I haven't ATTAINED this yet...
...it's like he's saying I'm MID-RACE...

He doesn't want to make the mistake of this runner
...celebrating like he's already won...*look behind you...*



Still celebrating just BEFORE the line

...as the runner on the left goes PAST him ...



That moment when victory turns to DEFEAT!

...you realised you celebrated a bit early...

Paul's not FIST-PUMPING about his past service of Jesus... but keeps his eyes fixed on Jesus...



This is the POSITIVE – be like this example...

...ERIC LIDDELL from Chariots of Fire... who later became a missionary in China

There's that scene where he's BUMPED by another runner...and it goes all SLOW MOTION ...Liddell

tumbling...down ...defeated ...except... he presses on anyway ...gets to his feet

...presses on through the field



...arms flying everywhere, head back... he breaks the tape first...

- & *it was brilliant – you had to jump up & spill your popcorn*

...because apparent DEFEAT turns to VICTORY

I **press on** toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in **Christ Jesus**.

Philippians 3:14

...there's plenty in that image that helps us start thinking about Paul's determination here ... to PRESS ON

...to press on through the STRUGGLES...

...to press on through the SUFFERING...

I press on toward the **goal** to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:14

I press on toward the **sentry post** to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:14

LITERAL TRANSLATION



But when you consider that the word GOAL...

Is SENTRY POST

...that Paul's picturing himself running not on a SPORTSFIELD but a BATTLEFIELD

...you need to crank the image UP A NOTCH OR TWO...

Crank it up from *a runner towards a FINISH line.*

To **a soldier storming the ENEMY lines.**

Like in the MOVIE GALLIPOLI... guys that used to run side by side...

Now in the trenches side by side... that's a whole new seriousness to PRESSING ON!!!

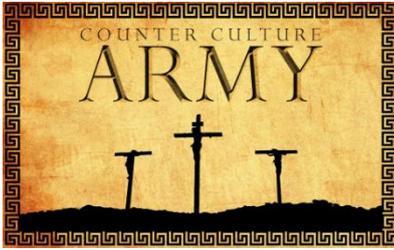
And for Paul... he's in the trenches... he's under house arrest in Rome...MID-BATTLE...he's where God's STATIONED him (awaiting his appeal to Caesar – see Acts 25:11 and 28:30).

Even as Paul sits under house arrest, he knows he's AT HIS POST...and he knows what a GLORIOUS POST awaits him...because God is calling him HOME TO HEAVEN.

Maybe imagine THE 'LAST POST' playing as the backing track here. He's in battle TODAY

He'll be back in battle TOMORROW.

One day he'll reach his FINAL SENTRY POST... because he's travelling 'HEAVENWARD'. RESURRECTION.



MOVEMENT 3: *SOLDIER STORY INTRODUCED IN RELATION TO KEY QUESTION*

Now do you see why this **SENTRY POST** language is so important? ...in a race you battle **AGAINST** the people beside you...they might even bump you off the track...**NOT IN THE ARMY!!** ...in the army you strive not **AGAINST** each other but **FOR** each other...which is Paul's point in holding up **HIS EXAMPLE**...it's to **SPUR ON HIS FELLOW SOLDIERS**...

All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.

Philippians 3:15

Only let us live up to what we have **already attained**. Phil 3:16

Join together in following **my example**, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who **live as we do**.

Philippians 3:17



loving arms...they're imitating JESUS... imitate THEM



This is for ALL OF US! he says

All of us should aim for **MATURITY** in Jesus

All of us should take **THIS VIEW** – this mindset, this confidence in Jesus

All of us should **THINK ALL THIS THROUGH**...

Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

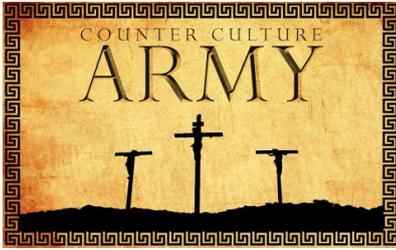
...let's not **SLIP BACKWARDS**...let's not lose the ground **ALREADY TAKEN**... **NO!!!**... he says...

Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.

JESUS never left his post... obedient even to death on a cross. PAUL, TIMOTHY, AND EPAPHRODITUS...following Jesus, pressing on... laying down their lives...they're model soldiers you can imitate. In **THIS** army the **CALL TO ARMS**... is a call to arms **LIKE JESUS'**... giving, serving,

We've been pointing out some Pauls and Timothys and Epaphrodituses in our midst through this series

REMIND PEOPLE OF THEM HERE...



MOVEMENT 4: CONFLICT IN PHILIPPI (historical/pastoral context – Euodia & Syntyche) = importance of answering our key question

And remember Paul keeps up these **POSITIVE** examples ...because tragically some people he USED TO HOLD UP as examples... have gone all **NEGATIVE**

I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the **same mind** in the Lord.

Philippians 4:2

...**NOT PRESSING ON** but *FALLING BACK*...
...**NOT LIVING UP** to what they've attained...but *GIVING GROUND*...



Remember I said earlier... in the army...

...you strive **FOR** each other
...not **AGAINST** each other...



OOPS!

...they've **ABANDONED** their post
...they've **TURNUED** on each other
...which makes them easy picking for those who **OPPOSE THE GOSPEL**
...who Paul says are just waiting to move in and do damage...

For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as **enemies of the cross of Christ.**

For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Philippians 3:18



We met these people **LAST WEEK**... people Paul described as **FEEDING ON RUBBISH**...

...people who are the religious version of the **SELF-HELP MOVEMENT...confident in THEMSELVES**



Which makes them ENEMIES of the cross of Christ

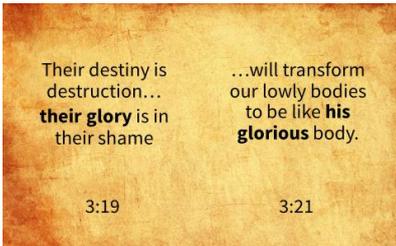
...because your help, your motivation, your salvation, your confidence...

...must be the CROSS OF CHRIST ...and ONLY the cross of Christ...



So Pauls COMPARES now...

The RUBBISH motivation of **SELF-CONFIDENCE**...with
The LASTING motivation of **CHRIST-CONFIDENCE**...



These enemies of the cross...

...their destiny is destruction... their glory is their shame...

Because only the cross gives life...

...only the cross removes shame

...only the cross gives hope beyond these bodies...
glorious new bodies...in our heavenly home



These enemies of the cross...

...their god is their STOMACH...

...their confidence in the OT law – including food laws you see...

...is really a confidence in themselves...not Jesus

...you 'can go on a CLEANSING DIET but only Jesus CLEANSSES YOUR SIN



These enemies of the cross...

...their mind is set on EARTHLY things...

...but our citizenship is in HEAVEN...



Bigger than ROME!... your citizenship is in HEAVEN...
...remember the Philippians love being Roman citizens
...and the ultimate prize for them – many who used to be soldiers – would be to serve well as a soldier to be given a last post ... a final sentry post of retirement in a colony like Philippi...

...every day they'd watch soldiers moving through town from one post to the next...hoping to retire one day... rest... a dawn beyond battle...

Paul says:

You have that in the RESURRECTION OF JESUS!

You are citizens of HEAVEN!

And for us of course... it's bigger than citizenship in Australia

...which is subject to debate in parliament at the moment

...all sides claiming a higher view of citizenship...

...well there's a higher citizenship than your nation... citizens of HEAVEN...

I was thinking about that through the week

...when the national anthem struck up to open a function I was at...

...and they went on to sing the much neglected SECOND verse...

...and something leapt out at me I hadn't noticed before...

The words

Beneath our radiant Southern Cross

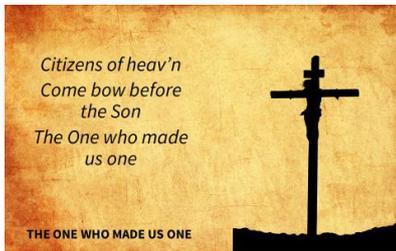
We'll toil with hearts and hands

In our Grow Dailies we talk about head, heart and hands don't we???

The anthem invites a THOUGHTFUL GAZE upon the Southern Cross...calling to mind the privileges, values and joys of being an Australian citizen.

...a thoughtful gaze moving to heartfelt action, toiling with 'heart and hands.'





So when we sing soon

Citizens of heav'n, Come bow before the Son, The One who made us one

Singing about STANDING FIRM, SERVING SIDE BY SIDE, PRESSING ON

Citizens of heaven gaze thoughtfully on THE SOURCE OF THEIR CITIZENSHIP.

Citizens of heaven gaze WORSHIPFULLY upon Jesus' death upon the cross.

This thoughtful, worshipful gaze most certainly moves to heartfelt action, toiling with 'heart and hands.'



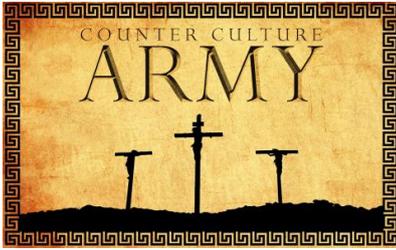
Speaking of anthems and citizens and pressing on

Did you catch this in November 2015....this LITTLE TROOPER Ethan Hall from Adelaide...pressing on, battled through a bad case of the hiccups... singing the national anthem...pressing on to the end....

What a great little example... PRESSING ON AS A CITIZEN ...for his country...singing his anthem

... HOW MUCH MORE THEN... should we press on in Jesus!!

SAMPLE



MOVEMENT 5: KEY QUESTION ANSWERED (applying what we say in text to conflict and instead being a counter-culture army)

What keeps you PRESSING ON through all the trenches of life serving Jesus as a citizen of heaven?

stand firm in the Lord in **this way**...be of the same mind in the Lord
Philippians 4:1-2

See when Paul says in chapter 4 ...stand firm IN THIS WAY ...IN **THIS** WAY be of the same mind IN **WHAT** WAY?

I **press on** toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Philippians 3:14

...the way he's just being talking about... **PRESSING ON!!**
...the way to **STAND FIRM...** is to **PRESS ON**

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we **eagerly await** a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. Philippians 3:20

Not just WAITING...WAITING...WAITING
But **EAGERLY** awaiting...



Not THIS sort of waiting

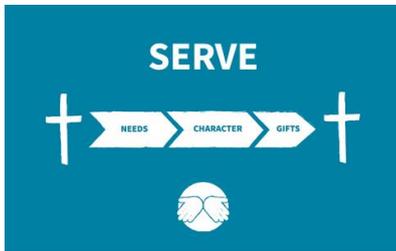


THIS sort of waiting. Pressing on from sentry post to sentry post...travelling to our **GLORIOUS** sentry post... Which is tough isn't it? **LIFE** is tough...**MINISTRY** is tough
There are days I've felt like I can't press on to the next one – do you ever feel like that? There are some days I feel like I can't see this great coming dawn beyond this world...what about you?



But God's Word tells me...Philippians 3 tells me... the gospel tells me...because of the ultimate victory of Jesus resurrection...we'll enter a **NEW DAWN** that never ends...**And can I say if you're new with us today or recently**...the promise of the gospel is **NOT**: become a

Christian and the struggles will disappear...the promise of the gospel is: trust in Jesus and there is joy even in the struggles and hope beyond the struggles...not an **EASY** life ... but the **RIGHT** life... a **LIFE** without end... **SERVING THE LORD JESUS**



MOVEMENT 6: CALL TO ACTION (CALL TO ARMS!)

What about you... will you serve with that motivation??
Remember, there's a reason this SERVE graphic starts and ends with the Cross.

...looking to NEEDS as Jesus did

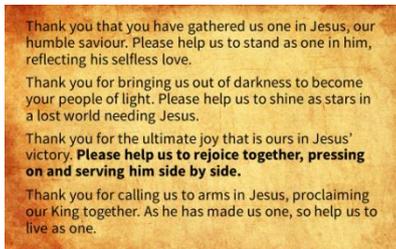
...growing in the CHARACTER of Jesus

...discovering NEW GIFTS along the way... like cooking on a camp...



So HERE'S YOUR MOTIVATIONAL POSTER for every day until you're home with Jesus ...the cross of Christ is your motivation, your salvation, your life
TO LIVE IS CHRIST... TO DIE IS GAIN...

...what greater motivation could there be?



Let's pray ...using our prayer for this series...

Thank you that you have gathered us one in Jesus, our humble saviour. Please help us to stand as one in him, reflecting his selfless love.

Thank you for bringing us out of darkness to become your people of light. Please help us to shine as stars in a lost world needing Jesus.

Thank you for the ultimate joy that is ours in Jesus' victory. **Please help us to rejoice together, pressing on and serving him side by side.**

Thank you for calling us to arms in Jesus, proclaiming our King together. As he has made us one, so help us to live as one.