

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching 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 NASB)

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## **FORGETTING WHAT LIES BEHIND** [PART 4 –RECONCILIATION]

**Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching 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 NASB)

Paul has given us the principle of forgetting what lies behind, although for him, it was forgetting his former life as a Jew according to the flesh. For us believers today, it may be other things that we need to forget. In the last issue [#02-0823 April 25, 2008], I injected the idea that unforgiveness is one of the hindrances to pressing on toward the goal for the prize. Unforgiveness is living in the past or, to use Paul's phrase, not forgetting what lies behind, which could be offenses or sins committed against us by others. Consider Paul; he was harshly treated by other Jews, and yet, he had a heart of love for his brethren according to the flesh. Listen to the cry of his heart: **For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises...** (Romans 9.3-4 NASB). This is a man who knew forgiveness.

Some years ago, an elderly sister in the Lord began calling people that she knew to make sure that there was nothing between her and the ones she called. She wanted to make sure that all accounts were settled and that there was peace. Shortly after, she fell asleep in Christ. Truly, this had to have been a prompting of the spirit of God. She was a conqueror!

Personally, over the years I have been led by the spirit to contact people and ask for forgiveness for things that I said or did 20 to 50 years ago. In all cases, the persons I contacted did not even recall the event, but for me, it settled something that had lingered in my conscience for many years. As James wrote: **To one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin** (James 4.17). In one case, I felt led to send some money as restitution for an item that I had broken. Some might think such action is unnecessary. Wouldn't you rather settle matters while in your body of humiliation than at the judgment seat of Christ? I would! Consider 1 Corinthians 11.31-32.

Paul has given us two mighty principles, and whoever follows these principles is truly one who is pressing on toward the goal for the prize.

**Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another....** (Romans 13.8 NASB)

**If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.** (Romans 12.18 NASB)

This leads to reconciliation, which is closely aligned with forgiveness and the matter of making peace with all men. If we forgive one another, we will be at peace with one another. **Reconciliation** means "to make friendly again or win over to a friendly attitude; to bring two parties into harmony or peace with each other." In reference to entering the kingdom, Jesus confirmed the principle of reconciliation.

**"Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first**

**be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering” (Matthew 5.23-24 NASB).**

The principle is first to be reconciled to your brother, and to do this, one must go to his brother. In other words, if you know that someone has something against you, go to that person and do all that you can to make peace. This is what reconciliation is all about. However, true reconciliation requires both parties to be in harmony or to be at peace with the other. When one goes to a brother who is offended, the purpose is to settle the matter so that there is true peace between the two, and, as pointed out previously, this requires forgiveness of one or both.

When two parties are at war with each other, they are enemies. If only one party makes peace with the other, then true reconciliation has not come. This is what is called *conciliation*; that is, it is a one-sided peace deal. One party is at peace with the other, but the other party has not made peace with the one that has made peace. There is still enmity coming forth from one party. It is as if one waves the white flag of truce, but the other continues shooting.

For a peace deal to be of any value, it takes both parties to be at peace with the other. When both parties have entered into peace with the other, it is called *reconciliation*. Thus, the word *reconciliation* means that both parties are in harmony and at peace with the other. It is a mutual peace agreement. Each party has to make peace (to be conciliated) with the other to come into a mutual peace (to be reconciled).

Do you realize that all mankind was an enemy of God, but that God, through His Son, is making peace with not only all mankind but with all in the heavens and on the earth?

**And He is the Head of the body, the ecclesia, Who is Sovereign, Firstborn from among the dead, that in all He may be becoming first, for in Him the entire complement delights to dwell, and through Him to reconcile all to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens. (Colossians 1.18-20 CV)**

Ultimately, the blood of His cross will be absolutely, 100% successful in reconciling all to God because peace has been made through the blood of His cross. It doesn't matter where one resides, whether in the heavens or on the earth, for the blood of His cross reaches to every corner of God's creation and to every creature in His creation. This is the greatest and the grandest peace deal that the world has ever known and will ever know. It is in Christ Jesus, the One who is preeminent in all things.

Do you honestly believe that peace through the blood of His cross will not reach out until it has won the heart of every single human that has ever stepped foot on this earth, none excepted? The word does not state that some are reconciled, or that all with exceptions are reconciled, or that only those who believe in this day are reconciled. It simply states that it is God's delight through Him to reconcile all to Him. We must not redefine *all* as if it were not the whole. All has no exclusions.

Obviously, there is much that could be written about this matter; but the point of this series is pressing on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus, and to do this, we must forget what lies behind. Holding to the past, especially holding to offenses, not forgiving one another clouds our vision and becomes a mighty encumbrance that weighs us down and keeps us from running the race into the coming kingdom of Christ. We need to shed all things of the past so that we will have a clear vision of what lies ahead. We need to forgive and to be reconciled to one another. After all, our God has forgiven us and reconciled us to Himself. How can we refuse to do likewise to our brethren and even to our enemies? Let us forget what lies behind and press on!