

Philippians 3:12-16 – Sample Interpretation Questions

1 ¹²Not that I have already obtained *it* or have
2 already become perfect, but I press on so that I
3 may lay hold of that for which also I was laid
4 hold of by Christ Jesus.

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8 ¹³Brethren, I do not regard myself as having
9 laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting
10 what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what
11 *lies* ahead,

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13 ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of
14 the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

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16 ¹⁵Let us therefore, as many as are perfect,
17 have this attitude; and if in anything you have a
18 different attitude, God will reveal that also to
19 you;

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21 ¹⁶however, let us keep living by that same
22 *standard* to which we have attained.

Verse 12

What is the “it”?

What is the relationship between the “it” and perfection?

Why does he say “already become perfect” instead of “not that I have already obtained it or I am already perfect”?

What is the contrast between “already become perfect” and “I press on”?

What is the picture he gives with the repetition of “lay hold”? How does that help understand what his goal is?

How was he laid hold of by Christ Jesus? How does that relate to his goal (“that I may lay hold of”)?

How does this relate to what appeared to be uncertainty in verse 11?

Verse 13

Why does he address them as “Brethren”?

What does it mean to “regard myself”?

How does he describe his “laying hold”?

Why does he say “one thing” and mention two (forgetting and reaching)?

How do the two participles (forgetting and reaching) relate to each other? How do they help us understand Paul’s goal?

What does he mean by things “behind” and “ahead”?

Verse 14

Does he equate a goal and a prize and a calling? How are these three similar and different? What does this tell us about Paul’s view of the Christian life?

Verse 15

Is he saying he is perfect? Does that contradict verse 12?

Why does he switch from singular (“I”) to plural (“us”)?

Why does he switch from first person (“I”, “us”) to second person (“you”)?

What does he mean by “attitude”? What attitude is he talking about? What is the problem with a “different attitude”? What is the solution for someone with a “different attitude”?

Verse 16

Why does he put in the “however”?

Why “keep living” instead of “start living”?

What is the standard?

What have we “already attained to”? If that is the standard, doesn’t that mean we have attained it and don’t need to keep working?