

FIRST THINGS FIRST

One Pursuit

January 4, 2026



Message Summary.

Life brings competing demands: good, bad, or great! Often, we don't have clear priorities. Paul shows us how to start the year well with three practices that help keep God first: don't look back (regret and pride sabotage the future), look ahead (press on toward what God has called you to), and look around (your "huddle" will shape your direction). A centered life is about pursuing the right "one thing."

Key Scripture Summaries.

Philippians 3:13-14 | "One thing I do": release the past and press on toward Jesus and His calling.

Philippians 3:4-6 | Even "good" spiritual achievements can become misplaced confidence and lead us away from Christ.

Philippians 3:7-8 | What once felt like "gains" become "loss" compared to knowing Christ. Self-trust is never a safe foundation.

Luke 9:62 | Looking back keeps us from moving forward in the Kingdom.

Acts 9:4 | God can redirect our passion. Paul's zeal didn't disappear. It was surrendered and aimed at Jesus.

Philippians 3:17 | The people you follow and surround yourself with will shape what you pursue.

Start Talking.

1. What's one "good thing" that tends to crowd out the "best thing" in your life?
2. When you say, "I'm so busy," what are you meaning? (Tired? Scattered? Overcommitted? Overwhelmed?)
3. What's a funny or frustrating moment when you realized your schedule was running your life?

Start Thinking.

- Paul says, "One thing I do..." Why do you think spiritual growth often comes down to one clear pursuit, not ten new goals?
- Why is looking back dangerous: regret and pride? Which one is more tempting for you?
- What happens to a person (or family) when God isn't the priority?

- Paul says he "presses on." What do you think "press on" looks like in real life when motivation is low?

Start Sharing.

1. What's one part of your past you need to stop letting define your future: something you've done, something done to you, or even something you're proud of?
2. Where do you feel the "spiritual yips" most often? (Fear of failure, fear of being judged, shame, comparison, feeling like you're not enough, or feeling like you've got it handled.)
3. What's one practical way you can prioritize God this week? (Time, worship, Scripture, prayer, serving, generosity, or Sabbath.)
4. Who is in your "huddle" right now spiritually? How are they influencing what you prioritize?
5. If you could reset one priority for the next 30 days, what would it be, and what would need to move down to make room?

Start Praying.

Father, thank You for giving us clarity in Your Word. Forgive us for living stuck in the past, whether in shame or pride. Help us to make You our priority and trust You to bring order to the rest of our lives. Give us courage to press on, and wisdom to surround ourselves with people who keep their eyes on Jesus. Lead us this year into a deeper pursuit of You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Start Doing.

- Name your "one thing." Write one sentence: "This month, my one pursuit is _____."
- What's one past regret or success you're releasing? Write it down and pray over it.
- Pick one habit you'll practice 4-5 days this week (Bible reading plan, prayer rhythm, worship playlist, etc.).
- This week, replace "I'm too busy" with: "That's not my priority." Then adjust one commitment accordingly.