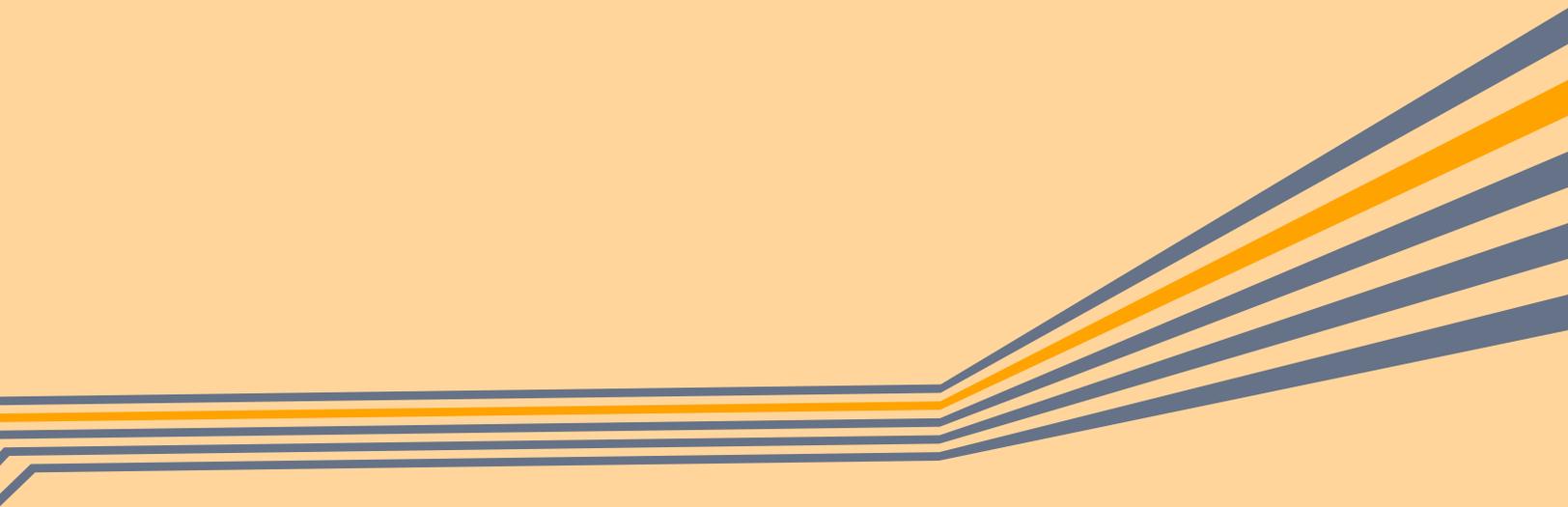
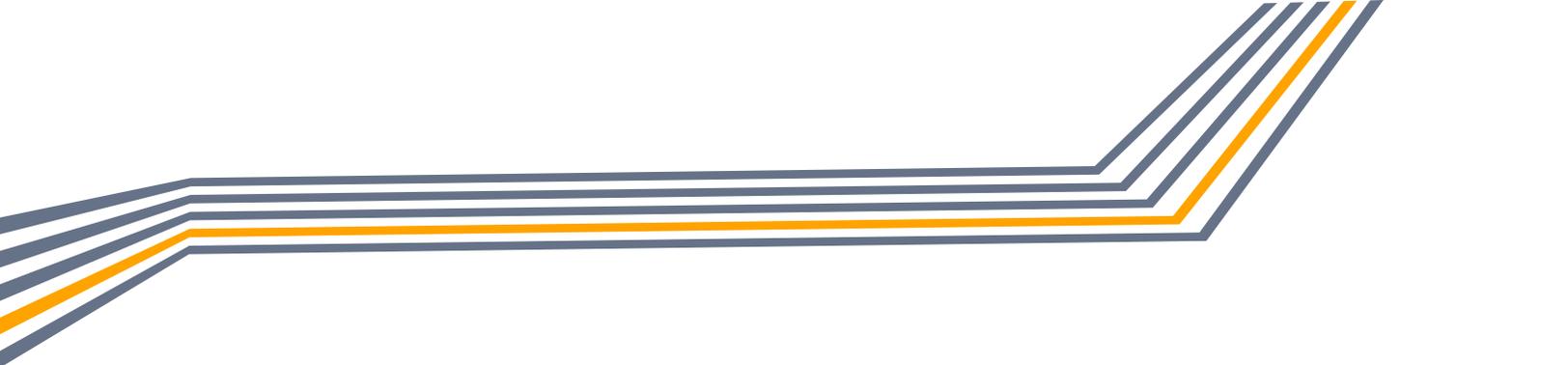


SESSION 4





A FOCUSED LIFE **Session 4**

Paul's life is one of unwavering faith and perseverance. Despite being a prisoner of Rome with a painful past, he never slowed down. He never stayed silent.

Paul was a man on a grand mission—and this week, we'll tap into the secret of his endurance and fortitude. We're meant to do what he did—to run, to grow, and to win in life by focusing on Christ.

We'll do this by tackling three things:

1. Letting go of past mistakes.
2. Embracing today.
3. Aiming for a brighter future with God.

Like Paul, we'll find endless strength in Christ if we don't lose focus.

SESSION 4

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL



DAY 22:

NO ROOM FOR DISPOSABLE CAMERAS

*But what things were gain to me, these
I have counted loss for Christ.*

PHILIPPIANS 3:7

Do you remember disposable cameras? You would buy them before a vacation or special occasion, snap the pictures, and then have them developed in an hour. That certainly brings some nostalgia! One of the most popular brands was Kodak, but did you know they actually invented the first digital camera in 1975?

Today, from our phones to professional equipment, digital cameras are the primary game in town. So why did Kodak go bankrupt in 2012 after being the leader of an entire industry for over 100 years?

They focused on the wrong thing!

Rather than embrace their golden opportunity, they sacrificed their future by clinging to the status quo. Over time, they became irrelevant and were forced to shut their doors for good. Yes, focus matters in business. But Kodak's story reaches beyond the boardroom and into our homes, families, and spiritual lives as well.

The Apostle Paul could have easily lost focus in his life. He faced intense trials that could have derailed him and zapped his confidence and drive. He could've also been stuck in the shame and guilt of his past. But that's not what we see. Instead, we watch a man harness the power of focus, never losing sight of God's call. In turn, we can follow a life of intentionality and accomplishment.

Consider Paul's words in today's verse. He was saying that all of the trappings of status and success he used to cling to listed in verses 2-6 weren't really "gain" at all. Instead, they were "loss" when he compared his life to Jesus' mission for him.

When Paul met Jesus, he underwent a tectonic shift in what his life was really about. It transformed everything from the inside out. He ditched the "disposable camera" of his past pursuits to focus on the greatest prize and opportunity in the universe—following Jesus with everything he had!

REFLECT

Memory Verse

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

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

Think about the people you look up to most in life. Are they driven by focus or derailed by distractions?

Does focus or distraction drive your daily life most? How so?

What is one area of distraction you can bring to Jesus to find eternal focus and perspective? What will that look like?

DAY 23:

FINDING FOCUS IN CHRIST

“...for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.”

ACTS 9:15B

Do you feel like you're climbing a ladder, only to realize it's leaning against the wrong wall? Paul had an impressive resume and was zealous in his religious pursuits, but he was climbing the wrong ladder. Then came the Damascus Road encounter. Struck blind for three days, he received a new God-given mission. Scales fell from his eyes, both physically and spiritually. Jesus became the center of his life, redirecting his passions and pursuits for divine purposes.

Paul had to let go of his accolades and identity among peers to find his focus on Christ. Similarly, we may achieve worldly success but still lack spiritual significance. Like Paul, we have to submit our lives to the lordship of Christ to lead a determined and focused life.

Our relationship with Jesus is not a “cosmic killjoy.” He is our ultimate coach. He gives us the power, perspective, and purpose we need to make an eternal impact. Just as a rudder guides a sailboat, let Christ be the rudder in your life, steering you in the right direction. We are His “chosen vessels.”

The key to a fulfilling life isn't climbing the ladder of success, but instead making sure that ladder is propped against the right wall. In Christ, we find our true focus, where our passions and pursuits align with an eternal purpose.



REFLECT

Memory Verse

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

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

Do you feel like your ladder is leaning against the right or wrong wall? Why?

What are you holding on to that may be standing in the way of a focused life in Christ?

Is Christ the rudder in your life, or are you steering in your own direction?

How is your relationship with Jesus affecting your daily decisions and long-term goals? Are there any changes you want to make in your relationship with God, decisions, and/or goals?



DAY 24:

GOODBYE TO CONDEMNATION

*There is therefore now no condemnation
to those who are in Christ Jesus...*

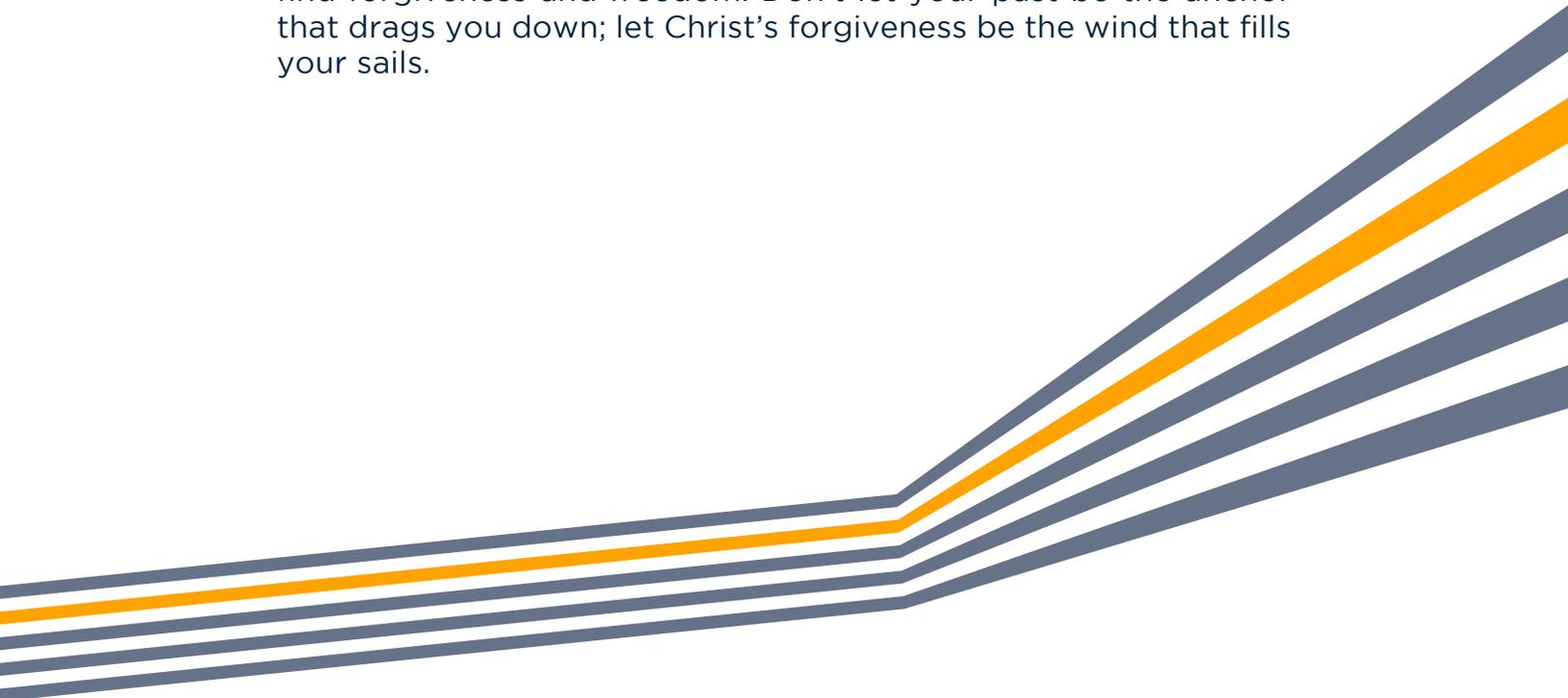
ROMANS 8:1

Do your past failures and shortcomings haunt you, pulling down the sails of your confidence? Paul, a persecutor-turned-apostle, knew the weight of a past riddled with sin. So when he came back to the people he had once tormented, the air was thick with tension. Thoughts of unworthiness and guilt likely bombarded him. Yet, Paul encountered a life-changing truth—in Christ, our past loses its power over us!

Paul shares that message of total forgiveness in today's guiding verse. Imagine the freedom Paul felt knowing his past was redeemed and his conscience purified!

Much like Paul, we all have hurts, habits, and hangups. But the transformative power of Christ's forgiveness enables us to forgive ourselves and move forward. Don't drag around the burden of your past; Christ already carried it on the cross. Release it, and embrace the new life Jesus offers.

Your past may be filled with imperfect choices, but in Christ, you find forgiveness and freedom. Don't let your past be the anchor that drags you down; let Christ's forgiveness be the wind that fills your sails.



REFLECT

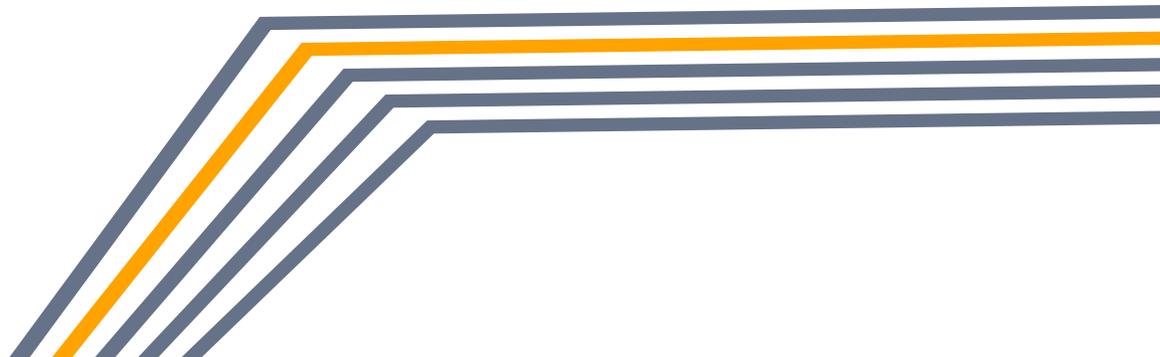
Memory Verse

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

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

How often do thoughts of your past interfere with your walk with Christ?

What do you need to release and forgive in yourself to fully embrace God's forgiveness?



Are you letting your past serve as a stumbling block or a stepping stone in your relationship with Christ?

How can you apply Paul's wisdom to 'forget what was behind' in your own life?



DAY 25:

ACCEPTING FORGIVENESS

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

HEBREWS 10:22

Yesterday we learned about our total freedom in Christ. However, even with that knowledge, that doesn't always stop our past from acting like a rearview mirror, distracting us from the road ahead.

Like Paul, we all have experiences or failures that can tether us to the past if we allow them. Forgiving ourselves and others is crucial; it frees us to focus on the present and future God has planned for us. Today's guiding verse reminds us that we can draw near to God with a clean conscience, as Jesus has washed us clean.

Imagine it like this—on a hot summer day, you were working on landscaping. Once finished, you come inside sweaty, muddy, and ready for a shower. What changes once you leave the water? You're clean, of course! You don't see dirt and mud caked on your arms in your reflection. Instead, your body has been washed. This is the picture of our lives in Christ.

Don't let your past dictate your future. Choose to forgive, choose to release, and choose to press forward. Doing so will free you from the hindrance of past regrets, strengthen your faith, and prepare you for the journey ahead.

REFLECT

Memory Verse

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

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

Are you allowing past regrets to define your future?

Have you truly forgiven yourself as Christ has forgiven you?

Have you truly forgiven others? Who is someone you need to forgive?



What steps can you take today to release your past and focus on what God has in store for you?

How might your life change if you stopped looking in the rearview mirror and started focusing on the road ahead?



DAY 26: THREE FEET FROM GOLD

Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.

HEBREWS 10:35-36

Have you ever felt so weighed down by discouragement when you almost convinced yourself to just give up? I know it's hard to believe, but it's in these moments you might be closer to your breakthrough than you think.

Consider Darby, a man caught in the gold fever of the gold-rush days. After endless hours of digging, he found a promising vein of gold. Elated, he covered it up, raised funds for machinery, and began mining. But just when it seemed like he'd struck it rich, the vein disappeared. In the blink of an eye, everything he'd worked for vanished.

Desperate and disheartened, Darby and his team sold the machinery for scrap and went home defeated. But here's the twist—the man who bought the machinery consulted an engineer and found that Darby had stopped drilling just three feet from a massive vein of gold!

Today's guiding verse encourages us not to cast away our confidence but to endure. Unfathomably great rewards lie ahead. You might be facing challenges in your marriage, your career, or your walk with Christ. And just like Darby, you might be three feet from striking gold. The message is simple—if God's leading you, don't quit!

Don't be a Darby, giving up when you're just three feet from your "gold." Press on with confidence, enduring for the promises that God has for you.

REFLECT

Memory Verse

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

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

Is there an area in your life where you feel like giving up? Could you be "three feet from gold"?

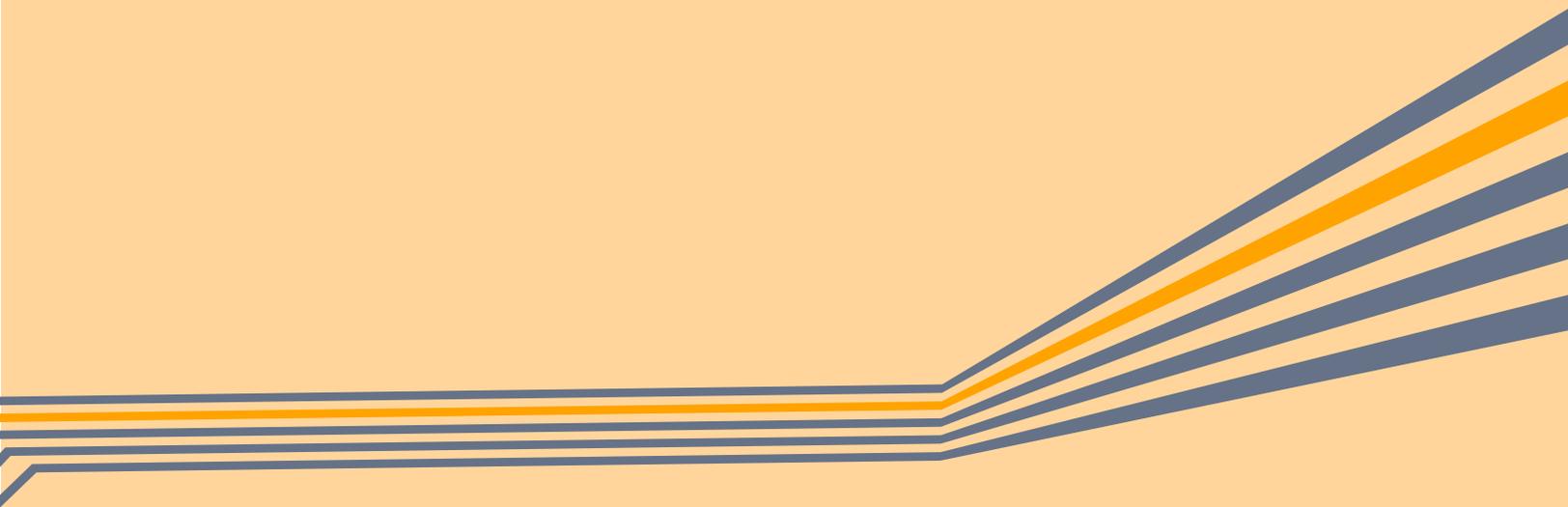
How might you refocus your efforts to endure and see it through?

Are your goals aligned with God's will for your life?

What would it take for you to place your confidence in God's promises and press on?

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

Philippians 3:14 NIV



DAY 27:

A LIFESTYLE OF PERFECT PEACE

"You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You."

ISAIAH 26:3

Life has a way of snatching our peace, doesn't it? You're not alone if you've felt a knot in your stomach from yet another negative news story, or from racing thoughts when your head hits the pillow at night. The world doesn't pause to let us catch our breath; it moves with or without us, often stealing our peace in the process.

But today's guiding verse has a promise for you today! You can daily live in perfect peace. But how do we latch onto this peace? How can we embrace it and make it our own? We keep our minds "stayed" on Him. That's it. We never allow worry to steal our worship or allow problems to loom larger than the Prince of Peace.

Why do we have this peace? Because you are His child. You belong to the God who led Moses and the children of Israel through the Red Sea. The God who sent help to Daniel in the lion's den. Whatever the situation, God has helped millions of others find peace in similar circumstances.

Perfect peace is a lifestyle. And it's simpler to put into practice than you might think. Keep your mind "stayed" on God.

Morning Prayer

Before you even get out of bed, invite Jesus into your day. Ask Him to guide your thoughts, your actions, your words. If you're unsure where to start, keep it simple: "Father, please direct my day. Set my mind on Your presence above everything else!"

Mindful Moments

During the day, when stress tightens your chest, mentally step back and envision Jesus standing right beside you. What would He say?

The tough stuff of life might not immediately change. But your perspective will—and the starting point is knowing and declaring the promise that Jesus keeps in perfect peace, those whose mind is stayed on Him.

REFLECT

Memory Verse

*I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. **Philippians 3:14***

To aid in your memorization, write out this week's memory verse:

When was the last time you felt true peace? What circumstances led to that moment?

What are some practical ways you can shift your focus from your worries to Jesus?

How can you integrate these steps into your daily routine to maintain a sense of peace?

What promises from God's Word can you hold onto during times of uncertainty and fear? Write down a few verses from the Bible.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

What are the top three realizations you had this session?

What is the main thing you believe God wants you to apply?

