

Philippians 3:45b-16 - New Living Translation

4 though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone could. Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more!

5 I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law.

6 I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.

7 I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. 8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ 9 and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. 10 I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, 11 so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!

12 I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. 13 No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. 15 Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you. 16 But we must hold on to the progress we have already made.

I receive regular updates from a Marriage guidance site called Prepare/Enrich - it always has very good tips for relationships in general - yes specific to marriage but ...then everything is a 'marriage' ....married to our jobs, friends, neighbours ....

The last one I read was called 'Four things you will always argue about as newlyweds'. What are the four?

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Family - time spent alone and with family, their intrusion on you, family of origin patterns for holidays, meals, etc.....
- Money
- Expectations - (This impacts everything - even the three above!)

Our topic 'Watch for new things' ..... has an expectation that there will be new things .....

This has been a big thing in the Old Testament - ever since:

- 'the Fall' - expectation of pain and of deliverance.
- The National failures of Israel - expectation of a Messiah
- Inclusion of the Gentiles into Israel.... Isaiah and the Psalms

It is also a theme in the New Testament:

- Jesus asks the Disciples to watch for the new thing of there Spirit
- Jesus infers the establishment of the Church - and of a spiritual community without the constraints of Jewish Culture or nationhood
- There is the New Thing of Salvation by Faith (and that based on Grace) - that God does for us in Jesus - over against what we do in Law and Tradition keeping -
- New thing of Judgement - fall of Jerusalem
- And following from this - and the relocation of our Jerusalem centric thinking from Earth to Heaven .....
- Return of Jesus..... *(perhaps more.....)*

Our topic can be read as an indicative - statement of what is....fact. (The list above....)

But is it an Imperative - a command .... should there be an 'exclamation' mark - 'Watch for new things!!'

From the Philippians Reading we might be encouraged to read it as an Imperative - Watch for New Things!!

But what New things? What expectations.....  
(Remember we can often argue about Expectations .....

**We should not expect more than Jesus!** The New Testament is clear that He is the fulfilment not just a stage in the evolution - we do not expect a new messiah - a new prophet ... a greater than Jesus - He was once and for all - the same Yesterday Today and forever.....

(There is a tradition break away groups - Islam - and of sects and Mormons and JW all who want there to be Jesus + )

**We do look forward to, expect, Heaven** - A divine in-breaking into this world or in the passage verse - 10 - resurrection from the dead - life after death. This hope is not because of our 'flesh' - verses 3-6 - Rather based on verse 9 - righteousness through faith in Christ - verse 12 - Christ has made me His own - Even our faith is initiated by Christ not us! - Grace. (Grace is always the big word.....Praise God!)

**We should not have an expectation of perfection here on earth** - the best Paul could point to was a pressing on .... verse 12... This is a warning to us - do not be unrealistic about what you expect of yourself and of others - are you looking for perfection in me or anyone else here? Think again - the best we can hope to see is a pressing on!

**But can we expect a transformation - a shaping to be more like Jesus...in ourselves?? A discernible growth?**

This is somewhat dangerous for when we fail - and we will according to all the New Testament and the typology of the Old Testament - when we will fail [/do fail - one another and our Lord - 1 John 1:10 & 2:1-2] depression and discouragement easily follow!

Yes a transformation is expected ..... 2 Cor.3:17-18  
17 For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.

**But** how might we see this Transformation - not in a personal declaration - that is pride and arrogance - BUT we might and do see that in others!..... and we should tell them such! [Also - as we engage in Christ like activity to others - we will 'know' or learn of any transformation is self - for we only really know ourselves in relationship with others..... this a big topic for another day .....

BUT a warning - If your expectation is to see growth in perfection - you will fight as newly weds! - Better than placing perfection in self and others - see the perfection in Christ and press on - if you watch for new things - focus that watching in Jesus! The one who has in all perfection, and against all expectations, by pure grace - .....made us His own.....

So - 'But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. .... 15 Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you. 16 But we must hold on to the progress we have already made.'