

# Pressing On

by A.W. Tozer

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*A.W. Tozer's sermon 'Pressing On' highlights the importance of self-criticism and penitence in the pursuit of spiritual growth and maturity.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:17, Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 5:6, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Philippians 3:12, Hebrews 12:1-2, James 4:10, 2 Peter 3:18, 1 John 1:8-9

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Self-Criticism"

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## Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the necessity of self-criticism and penitence in the Christian journey, arguing that true spiritual growth requires an honest assessment of oneself rather than a passive hope for improvement over time. He warns against the delusion of feeling that one has 'arrived' in their faith, as this complacency halts progress. Tozer cites Paul's determination to 'press on' in Philippians 3:12, highlighting that a genuine Christian life is rooted in a continuous pursuit of Christ and a recognition of one's shortcomings. He asserts that a penitential spirit is essential for spiritual advancement, as even the most obedient believers must remain aware of their need for growth and transformation. Ultimately, Tozer calls for a humble acknowledgment of our imperfections as we strive to know the Lord more deeply.

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## Transcript

The rapidity with which improvement is made in the life will depend altogether upon the degree of self-criticism we bring to our prayers and to the school of daily living. Let a man fall under the delusion that he has arrived, and all progress is stopped until he has seen his error and forsaken it. Paul said, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me" (Philippians 3:12).

Some Christians hope in a vague kind of way that time will help them to grow better. They look to the passing of the years to mellow them and make them more Christlike. This is such a tender and pathetic thought that one hesitates to expose its essential error. But we had better know the facts now while we can do something about them rather than go on moist-eyed and dreamily hopeful--and wholly wrong. A crooked tree does not straighten with age; neither does a crooked Christian.

All this is to say that a growing Christian must have at his roots the life-giving waters of penitence. The cultivation of a penitential spirit is absolutely essential to spiritual progress. The lives of great saints teach us that self-distrust is vital to godliness. Even while the obedient soul lies prostrate before God, or goes on in reverent obedience convinced that he is carrying out the will of God with a perfect conscience, he will

yet feel a sense of utter brokenness and a deep consciousness that he is still far from being what he ought to be. This is one of the many paradoxical situations in which the humble man will find himself as he follows on to know the Lord.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/pressing-on/>

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