

Read: Philippians 3:12-21

We're on Heaven's Team

Philippians 3:13,14

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The soccer chant filled the air and Amir sang along, "Go old blue! Go old blue!" Amir and his dad hustled toward the soccer stadium wearing their blue jerseys with white stripes. Almost everyone was wearing blue. The sidewalk looked like a blue river rolling toward the stadium. But a few people wore red jerseys and sang a different song. "Red boys, red boys! Always ever red!"

Amir turned a corner and saw a huge party ahead of him where everyone was wearing red. Grownups stared at him as they chanted, "Red boys, red boys! Always ever red!" Amir stopped singing his blue song and grabbed his father's hand. He pressed his cheek against Dad's hip. Dad looked down and smiled. "Don't be scared, buddy. They're just cheering for their team." Then he sped up and tugged Amir's arm forward.

One block later, it was quiet. Amir's dad knelt down and looked him in the eye. "You know, that's a lot like being a Christian. When St. Paul wrote to the Philippians, he told them that our citizenship is in heaven, like we are on heaven's team. Sometimes that feels lonely and scary. Not everybody does things the way we do. When you were surrounded by red jerseys, what did you do, Amir?"

"I got close to you!"

"Why did you choose to come by me?" Dad asked.

Amir laughed. "Dad! You were the only other person wearing blue!"

Dad smiled. "That's what St. Paul told Christians to do. He said to join together and keep your eyes on people who live the way you do, people who follow Jesus. That's why we go to church as often as we can, buddy. We get close to other Christians so they can encourage us and teach us. Plus, it helps us recharge our spiritual batteries so we have more energy to love and serve others like our neighbors and classmates who are different from us. When you grabbed my hand back there, what did I do?"

"You charged ahead," said Amir.

“That’s what God encourages us to do. He said to press on toward the goal. We’re almost at the stadium now, and it will be a sea of blue jerseys!”

Amir was starting to get it. “So we press on through life until we get to heaven?”

“Amen, kiddo!” said Dad. “And God will get us there. Go old blue!”

Amir sang along, “Go old blue!”

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What made Amir scared?
- What does God tell us we can do when we feel scared?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What words would you use to comfort a friend who feels lonely as a Christian?
- What is one thing that motivates you to attend church services?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Amir’s dad taught him about belonging to heaven by talking about his blue jersey. Think of an alternative way to understand our citizenship in heaven. What does it look like?
- In what ways would your life improve if you always had in mind God’s encouragement to “press on” and “eagerly await heaven”?

Closing Prayer:

Monarch of all things, fit us for your mansions;
banish our weakness, heath and wholeness sending;
bring us to heaven, where your saints united joy without ending. Amen.
(*Christian Worship* 778:2)