



# GEEKS UNDER GRACE

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## CREED II (2018) | *Moving Forward* | BIBLE STUDY

Facilitator Note: We encourage facilitators to take this Bible study and expound on it throughout the week, allowing it to be a springboard for deeper conversation and personal meditation.

### PRESS START

Creed II continues the story started in 2015's *Creed*, but the roots of that story began much earlier in 1976 in *Rocky*. For anyone keeping count, that makes this newest film the eighth in a long series that continues to inspire underdogs everywhere.

**Do you have a favorite film in the series so far? Have the new *Creed* films continued the legacy well in your opinion? With there being six *Rocky* films, how many more *Creed* stories do you think there could be? What else do you think lies ahead for Adonis Creed?**

### EQUIP

Adonis Creed and Rocky Balboa find themselves of different opinions after Adonis, the newly awarded heavyweight champion of the world, is called out and challenged by Viktor Drago, the son of former Russian boxer Ivan Drago. The elder Drago was single-handedly responsible for the death of Adonis' father and Rocky's friend Apollo Creed in *Rocky IV*, and this new challenge stems from decades of bad blood that followed. Adonis feels he must stand up and avenge his father (and satisfy his own pride) by taking Drago up on the match, but Rocky refuses to stand in the corner and watch another Creed die needlessly.

Instead, Rocky, losing the only meaningful relationship in his life with Adonis, is left to spend his time at his restaurant and complain at home about a light in front of his house the city won't fix. He can't build up the will to call his son, Robert, after several years of being estranged, knowing he has a grandson he's never met. After a crippling bout with Drago, Adonis is left to recover physically and mentally from the devastation. Both men are stuck in patterns of inaction, each with reasons held deeply for why they can't move forward. Many of us find ourselves in "holding patterns" in life as well, but scripture gives us reason to gather courage and press on.

### LEVEL UP

Paul gives us some great instruction in **Philippians 3:12-14**:

**Philippians 3:12-14 (NKJV)** *"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."*

What we need to see here from the passage and what is also illustrated by the film is if we know we need to do something and know there is somewhere we are supposed to be in God's plan, we have got to take some initiative and press toward it. Yes, God is our deliverer, but that doesn't mean He's going to deliver everything right into our lap. We have struggles all throughout life; I would even say every person has particular problems and afflictions we must deal with and overcome. Even Christ dealt with problems throughout His earthly ministry and was nailed unjustly upon a cross for our

sins. That sacrifice delivers believers, but it should also encourage, because we see Christ knows struggle and can help us through ours.

Paul makes it clear in those verses he doesn't pretend to have it all together; neither do our characters. Rocky knows every second of every day he should reach out to Robert, but still hangs the phone up before dialing. There is interesting symbolism in Rocky's preoccupation with the lamp burnt out near his front door. He calls the city repeatedly to fix the light, but if it is something that truly must be done, he could probably replace it himself. Doing so requires initiative, and the same applies to us.

In regards to his own sense of stasis, Adonis is dealing with a variety of factors after the devastating fight with Drago. Due to the technicality on Drago, Adonis never lost his title, but how will he defend it after suffering terrible injuries? With a daughter on the way, is it even the right thing to do to continue down this path of boxing, especially with Drago hungry for a rematch? On his way to healing, Adonis pulls up to his father's old Delphi Gym to get back on track, but he winds up driving off. Deep down, he feels compelled to do more, but still, he's held back. Only with time and the motivation of others does he get back into training (doing so at levels he could only dream of years prior).

Both of these characters show us we only move forward through initiative. Some might say every foolhardy endeavor involves initiative as well, and they'd be right. Still, doing the right thing requires us to be willing to move. Doubts and past mistakes are crippling to anyone, but especially to a Christian who is endeavoring to grow in their faith. Paul knew that, and his instruction tells us to press forward.

**Philippians 3:17-19 (NKJV)** *"Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things."*

In our path to progress, it's important to look towards good instruction and those practicing it themselves. Bad instruction, even from those we love, can be devastating. Viktor does everything in the film at the behest of his father, Ivan, who is pushing his son for a variety of bad reasons. Ivan wants to regain all he lost after losing to Rocky decades ago, but that involves him using Viktor. The film does show the two arrive at a better relationship together, and that's encouraging for any of us who know of others, especially our loved ones, who are on a wrong path currently. With the Lord's help and some encouragement, maybe they can get to where they need to be.

## MOD

**All of the characters we've looked at (Adonis, Rocky, Viktor, and Ivan) make a change by the film's end for the better. Whose journey did you most relate with? Have you struggled in similar ways to any of them?**

**Have you had ever found yourself unable to move forward in spiritual growth, knowing you needed to move forward? What was (or is) holding you back?**

**Are there things culturally impeding Christians from realizing their full potential as believers and servants of Jesus? What are some ways we can cut through these impediments?**

**Just like Adonis is put through intense training to prepare for his rematch, what are some disciplines we need to intensely work on to grow in our faith?**

## PRAY

### Does anyone have any prayer needs outside of what we discussed here?

God desires each of us reading this study, no matter how long we've been believers, to be growing in our faith. When it comes to activity and empowerment as believers, we should be progressing, and none of us should be at a stand-still. Let us pray God will stir in us an intense hunger to progress in His plans for our lives. There may be specific ministries and opportunities He desires us to be a part of. Let's begin praying now that the paths to these things become clearer to us and to others we know and love.

## THE NEXT LEVEL

**2 Corinthians 5:17** *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."*

**John 5:7-9 (NKJV)** *"The sick man answered Him, 'Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.' Jesus said to him, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk.' And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath."*

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