



Philippians 3:1-16

November 1, 2020

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

Begin with prayer. “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law” (Psalm 119:18).

[Q] Paul begins Philippians chapter 3 with the command to rejoice! Thankfulness is a beautiful way to start rejoicing when you may not feel like it. What are you thankful to God for this week?

Where's Your Confidence?

Read Philippians 3:1–6.

Paul begins this section by calling the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord but then warns them about the Judaizing opponents of the gospel (vv. 2–3). The Judaizers were people who insisted that Christians had to obey all the Old Testament ceremonial laws.¹

[Q] If anyone had impeccable credentials under Jewish law, Paul did. What did he rely on for God's approval, as a Jew? What similar things do people today think will make them acceptable to God?

Don't put your confidence in

- a ritual.
- your ethnicity.
- your rank.
- your tradition.
- your rule keeping.
- your zeal.
- your obedience to the law.

[Q] What three marks do those who are the real circumcision (those who belong to Christ) have?

1. How do they worship? See John 4:23-26. Do you worship by the Spirit of God? Explain.
2. In whom do they glory? See 1 Corinthians 1:28-30. Do you glory only in Christ Jesus? How does your life show it?
3. How much confidence do they put in the flesh? See Galatians 2:20. Do you put confidence in the flesh or trust in Christ alone for your salvation? How do you trust Him for day to day living?

¹ Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2285.

A New Way to Count

Read Philippians 3:7-11.

[Q] Paul no longer counts as gain who he is or what he has done. According to verse 8, who is he placing his confidence in now – and why?

[Q] What does it mean for us as followers of Jesus to “count everything a loss” (verse 8)? (See Luke 14:33.)

If you have time:

[Q] How can we get this righteousness described in Philippians 3:9?

Read Romans 3:20-24. In this passage, “declared righteous in God’s sight” means “made right with God.” “The law” (v. 20) means God’s law, the Ten Commandments.

1. Look at verse 20. What does “the law” do?
2. If the law can’t make us righteous in God’s sight (v. 20), how can we be made righteous? (v. 22)
3. How is that made possible? (v. 24)

[Q] What might you value more than knowing Christ? As you consider this question, how does your bank account, weekly schedule, and use of free time inform your answer? What would your spouse, children, or others close to you say if you asked them what they think is of surpassing worth to you?

[Q] How can you cultivate a heart that counts everything as loss compared with the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus? What do you need to re-evaluate?

Not Perfect but Press On!

Read Philippians 3:12–14.

[Q] What is “the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” and how does that prize provide incentive for “pressing on toward the goal”? (See Romans 6:23.)

[Q] What does “forget the past” (v. 13) mean? What was Paul’s past that he had to forget? How can either relying on past successes or getting stuck in regret keep us from pressing on?

I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.
Isaiah 43:25 (ESV)

Apply

[Q] This week, in what ways can you “press on toward the goal” of knowing Christ and becoming more like Him?