

Surrender

SURRENDER EVERYTHING TO CHRIST

Focal Verses • PHILIPPIANS 3:7-14

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: IDENTIFY the reason Paul did not take pride in his accomplishments; CONSIDER the value of our relationship with Jesus Christ; and DISCOVER ways to practice humility in our lives.

In Focus

Lottie was finally graduating with her doctorate. Her friends thought it would be nice to surprise her with a celebration. Many of her friends witnessed her graduate with her bachelor's degree, get married, become a widow, and raise three children, all while remaining actively involved in her grandchildren's lives. She maintained a career as a teacher, operated her own business, and is now graduating as Dr. Lottie! Lottie's friends were incredibly proud of her success.

Graduation day was here! Of course, Lottie was prepared, but she had no idea about the huge celebration her friends planned for her. As she walked through the door, tears of joy began to flow. She was surprised and grateful.

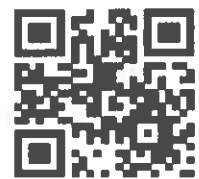
When it was time for Lottie to express her thanks, some were surprised at her response. She said, "I am so grateful! Thank you for this celebration! There were so many times I wanted to give up, but God saw me through. I love my family, I love my career, and I appreciate the business God allows me to operate. But the thing I am most grateful for is my salvation. I'm thankful I surrendered my life to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I thank God for the relationship I share with Him. My pursuit is that of God's plan, purpose, and prize. There is still so much more work to do."

In today's lesson, Paul describes that what he previously viewed as the greatest assets in his life are what he now realizes hold the least value in his life. What are the greatest assets you have gained since surrendering your life to Jesus Christ? Before becoming a Christian, what did you think were the greatest assets in life?

Keep in Mind

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"
(Philippians 3:13-14, KJV).

SCAN FOR VIDEO



Focal Verses

KJV **Philippians 3:7** But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his

sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of God's high calling in Christ Jesus.

The People, Places, and Times

Libertine. These people, who were a part of the early Christian church, believed they were essentially a soul or spirit. The body was only a temporary house, having no long-term value or significance. They held a dual view of life: spiritual matter as good and physical matter as worthless. The beliefs of the libertines were countered by the ascetics, who believed that the body was evil and tried to suppress it. Conversely, the libertines believed that the body was insignificant, therefore claiming the freedom to do with it as they pleased. Paul contended against both groups as he wrote to the Philippians to keep the good doctrines they were taught.

Benjamin. The tribe of Benjamin occupies the smallest territory of any of the twelve Hebrew tribes. Despite its size, the tribe played a significant role in Israel's history. Saul, the first ruler of Israel, was a Benjamite, as was the Apostle Paul.

How can we guard against overvaluing or undervaluing our physical bodies and genealogy?

Background

In Philippians 3, Paul warned the church about the dangers of a distorted religion. He railed against the problem of having confidence in the flesh versus the knowledge of Christ. With fatherly concern for the congregation, Paul warned them about people who could lead them astray. He was concerned about people who trusted more in themselves and their accomplishments. None, however, had reason to boast, according to Paul, for he had as much reason as anyone else, if not more. Paul had a background that was impressive by any standard, but especially by Hebrew standards. He understood from personal experience what it meant to have all the prized religious values, virtues, and achievements, only to discover that it was not the end all and be all of life. Paul was born out of the tribe of Benjamin and was circumcised on the eighth day, according to the Law. Paul was a Hebrew born of Hebrews. (Philippians 3:5–6). He was from the tribe that had remained loyal to the Davidic line during the reign of Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:23). He was trained and educated as a Pharisee, and he

used that knowledge to persecute the church. If anyone had reason to place confidence in their own ability and knowledge, it was Paul.

What accomplishments or attributes do people often grow prideful about?

At-A-Glance

1. All Gain Is Through Christ
(Philippians 3:7–11)
2. Warning Against False Perfection
(vv. 12–14)

In Depth

1. All Gain Is Through Christ (Philippians 3:7–11)

If ever a person had reason to have confidence in himself and his intellectual abilities, it was Paul. Yet, even though Paul had impeccable credentials that gave him standing in the Jewish hierarchy, he gave it all up when he encountered the Master. Paul was able to speak with authority concerning the worthlessness of something that he once valued highly. He told the Philippians about his own heritage and accomplishments (vv. 5–6). So devoted was he to his way of life that he gladly and eagerly persecuted those in the church. Obviously a man of great intellectual ability, Paul came to realize that no legalistic training or adherence could save anyone. He willingly walked away from a treasured lifestyle, held in high esteem by his family and community. What he now counted as loss was not a former state of wickedness, but of goodness. Yet whatever advantages Paul had in his former life were nothing in light of the salvation he was now granted through the saving knowledge of Christ Jesus. However, Paul did not understand freedom from legalism to translate to lawlessness. As it was when he was a Pharisee, righteousness remained his consuming goal. But

now he pursued righteousness from God, found through faith in Christ, not the self-righteousness of his previous life.

Therefore, our righteousness can only come through our faith in Christ. Paul wanted to know Christ and the power of His resurrection.

In order to live with Christ, we must die with Him. We cannot go back to the cross of Golgotha; however, the Christ who was victorious there can come to us and allow us to be conformed to Him and His ways.

What are some ways we see believers act self-righteously today?

2. Warning Against False Perfection (vv. 12–14)

After warning them about placing confidence in themselves, Paul proceeded to warn the Philippians about the dangers of perfectionism. Although Paul strove with all that he had to attain this righteousness, he made no claim to having already achieved it. He emphatically rejected any claim to perfection. He knew from personal experience the dangers of legalism and its tendency to produce a false sense of righteousness. Apparently, some at the Philippian church had deluded themselves with the notion that they were perfect. Paul emphasized that resurrection from the dead was not the only goal ahead. Even the goal that may be achieved in this life still lay ahead. Paul's goal is to attain the goal that Christ has set for him. Though unattained, perfection (completion) is his goal. He has begun the race, and is committed to finishing the course. In the meantime, he is concerned with avoiding the illusion of having actually attained the goal.

Since Christ grasped or took hold of Paul, he, in turn, wanted to grab hold of the perfection (completeness) that is Christ's goal for him. Conversion itself represents the beginning, not the completion of the goal. Salvation has both a beginning and a goal; it is a process, and a lifetime achievement. The King James

translation to the word “perfect” in verse 15 appears to contradict Paul’s insistence that he is not perfect. But what Paul meant here was that the mental attitude described in the previous sentences is the perfect attitude willing to admit shortcomings, open to correction, and willing to be re-created in Christ Jesus.

Paul advocates for completeness (perfection) in Christ, or ultimate fulfillment, to put it another way. The Philippians were admonished to remain true to this point of view so that they could make further progress. They must neither forget the goal nor suffer under the illusion that they have already attained it. Just as there was a danger in assuming perfection had been attained, Paul was well aware and equally concerned about those who treated the goal with total disregard.

How can we be committed to pursuing right living without falling into harmful perfectionism?

Search the Scriptures

1. Why did Paul now count the things of his former life as loss (Philippians 3:8)?
2. What was Paul committed to doing, even though he had not yet attained the goal (v. 12–13)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. How can we keep ourselves from placing our value in our personal achievements over God’s grace?
2. Is it possible to be content with where God has us in life and also trying to “press toward the mark” consistently? What does that look like?

Liberating Lesson

Far too often in our society, the goal of pursuing righteousness gets pushed aside. The pursuit of careers, homes, cars, and other material goods begins to consume us, often without conscious consent. Our capitalist society conditions us to prioritize money and material success over all

else and can cause us to ignore our relationships with God and one another. The system itself is not concerned with justice or just relationships and conditions but with productivity. Jesus cautioned us not to put up our treasures in places where moths eat, and thieves break in and steal (Matthew 6:19–20). The material things of this world are under the control of the world’s whims and are temporary and unfulfilling. Instead of our quest for things, a pursuit of Christ and His will in our lives and communities can yield true abundance in this life and the life to come.

Application for Activation

In what ways have you pushed your heavenly goal aside, giving way to earthly or material pursuits? If your life has gotten out of balance in terms of where you have placed your priorities, list some steps you can take to shift the balance correctly. List, in ranking order, the priorities your life should have, according to what pleases God.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

Sources:

Allen, Clifford J., gen. ed. *The Broadman Bible Commentary*. Vol. 11.
Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1971. 210.
Butler, Trent, gen. ed. *Holman Bible Dictionary*. Nashville, TN:
Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991. 165.

Say It Correctly

Apprehend. ap-ri-**HEND**.
Conformable. kuhn-**FOR**-muh-buhl.

Daily Bible Readings

DAY 288

Acts 1-2
Psalm 119:65-96

DAY 289

Acts 3-5
Psalm 119:97-136

DAY 290

Acts 6:1-15; 7:1-43
Psalm 119:137-160

DAY 291

Acts 7:44-60; 8:1-40
Psalm 119:161-176

DAY 292

Acts 9:1-43
Psalm 120

DAY 293

Acts 10:1-48
Psalm 121

DAY 294

Acts 11:1-30; 12:1-25
Psalm 122

Notes
