

# Gleanings of Grace

## Philippians 3

### Lesson 11

In Philippians 3, Paul exhibited how through His amazing, transforming grace, God is able to change a **persecutor** of Jesus' people into a **pursuer** of the Person Jesus! Paul begins the chapter speaking of some men in derogatory terms; terms which before Christ would have described Paul well. Then he moved into describing the new Paul, a Paul who wanted nothing short of all Jesus wanted for him. May your study of this chapter inspire you and make your goals as were Paul's.

#### OBSERVATION: Read Philippians 3

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?

2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. We have listed below key words. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). Mark each of the key words each time they are used in the text. Remember to mark any personal pronouns that refer to *Jesus*, *God*, and *Holy Spirit*.

Key Words: *Jesus*, *God*, *Holy Spirit*, and *count(ed)/attain(ed)/lay(laid) hold*

3. Underline Paul's instructions to the Philippians (verses 1,2,16,17). List each instruction.
4. The term of conclusion *therefore* is used in Philippians 3:15. Mark the word and record what the conclusion is based upon.
5. The contrasting words *but*, *yet*, and *nevertheless* are used 6 times in Philippians 3. Mark the words. Choose one instance of their use and record what is being contrasted.

## **Background:**

1. Philippians is a book about joy. That joy is based on attitude. Philippians 3 is couched between chapters reminding us that our joy is a product of where we set our minds. Read the following verses and briefly record how applying the truths of them affect our thinking.

Philippians 1:6

Philippians 1:9

Philippians 1:21

Philippians 1:27

Philippians 2:3

Philippians 2:4

Philippians 2:5

Philippians 2:13

Philippians 2:16

Philippians 4:4

Philippians 4:6

Philippians 4:8

Philippians 4:9

Philippians 4:13

Philippians 4:19

2. What do you see as the main points of these verses?

## **Read Philippians 3:1-6 – False Gain**

1. In this section, Paul addressed the thinking that found confidence in the accomplishments of the flesh. What did he petition believers to *rejoice in*?
  - a. In what ways have you found your joy to be *in the Lord* rather than in your accomplishments?

2. There were those who were attempting to exert their influence upon the church. They believed that circumcision was necessary for any Jew who would commend himself to God. Paul called the believers to *beware* of these men who were doing the opposite of promoting good. What did Paul call them? Verse 2
  - a. Rather than those who kept legalistic ordinances, who did Paul say were the true *circumcision* (those truly right with God)? Verse 3
3. Paul presented his resume in the flesh in verses 4-6. What were a few things that he could have bragged about?
  - a. Why do accomplishments in the flesh have nothing to do with our standing in Christ?
  - b. What is the message of Romans 9:30-33?
4. Consider the accomplishments and defeats of your past. Why do they have nothing to do with your value in Christ? Challenge: Use Scripture to support your answer.

### **Read Philippians 3:7-11 - True Gain**

1. What did Paul say about those things that he had previously *counted as* gain?
  - a. The Pharisees would have been proud to claim the things that were *gain* to Paul. These things were not necessarily bad things. In what ways can they be a detriment to God's approval?
2. Reflect upon the word *count* as you record what Paul said about *counting* the good of his past. Verses 7,8
  - a. Consider the phrase, *for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ*.
    - 1.) Define the word *excellence*.

b. What is the message of Jeremiah 9:23,24?

1.) In what ways have you discovered the *excellency of knowing Christ*?

3. In contrast to the labels of your past (whether good or bad), what is your identity based upon now?

a. Use a few words or phrases that define your identity in Christ.

4. Scan Philippians 3:8-11 and list Paul's desires.

a. In what ways do you personally know the:

*the power of His resurrection?*

*the fellowship of His sufferings?*

5. *If, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead* (Philippians 3:11). Paul was speaking of his ultimate goal, being resurrected from the dead. In what ways does being mindful that Jesus has secured this promise for you affect your life?

a. Paul fervently believed and preached this truth. Record the words of Paul from Acts 23:6 as he stood before the religious leaders.

b. Paul did not doubt the fact that he would be *resurrected*. He was confident that one day he would be in heaven. Upon what do you base your confidence?

### **Read Philippians 3:12-16 – Pressing Toward True Gain**

1. Aware that he had not yet arrived at the perfection he would one day experience, what did Paul do?

a. In your own words, what does it mean to *press on*?

- b. Why did Paul *press on*?
  - 1.) Paul wanted to live in the purposes that Christ desired for him. God has a different purpose for each one of us. He also has some similar reasons for *laying hold* of us. What are some things God has saved you to do, according to His word?
  - 2.) What were Paul's instructions to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:12?
2. Paul, acknowledging that he *did not count himself to have apprehended*, what *one thing* did he *do*? Philippians 3:13
  - a. This may seem to be two things. Why is it important to see *forgetting those things which are behind* and *reaching forward to those things which are ahead* as a combined action?
    - 1.) This action reduces the power of the past and acknowledges the power of the future. In what ways are you challenged to identify with Paul's determination?
3. Paul used the powerful word *reaching* in verse 13. He used the weighty word *press* in verse 14. What does this say to you about Paul's determination?
  - a. What did Paul *press toward*?
  - b. Paul viewed *the upward call* of Christ as a *prize*. Consider this definition of *prize*: "a gift received as a prize or reward as result of having won in competition." Heaven will be filled with winners. Reflect upon this truth and record a few of your thoughts.
4. Philippians 3:15 begins with the word *therefore*, based on the truths Paul previously declared. What exhortation did Paul give to those who are *mature*?
  - a. This *reaching* and *pressing* that Paul wrote of is often only the goal of a mature believer. What encouragement does verse 15 offer those who "aren't quite there yet?"
    - 1.) What is our part in growing in Christian maturity?
5. Rather than give up, thinking Paul's goals are beyond us, explain in your own words the advice of verse 16.

## Read Philippians 3:17-21 – Ultimate Gain

1. One way to *reach forward* and to *press on* is to find those whose lives exemplify these goals and follow their example. Paul exhorts believers to *join in following* his *example*. According to Philippians 4:9, what will be the result for those follow Paul's example?
  - a. What are some examples that Paul set, that you admire?
  - b. Why might *peace* be a result of following people who are driven to *attain* all that Christ has called them to be and do?
2. Using verses 18,19 describe those who *set their mind on earthly things*.
  - a. These words describe those who oppose the grace of the cross. How can we, as believers, resemble some of their attitudes?
3. Rather than focus on the things of this earth, Paul chose to focus on his goal of heaven. According to Philippians 3:20,21, what was Paul looking forward to?
  - a. What are you looking forward to?

## REVIEW: Read Philippians 3

1. In what ways do the things you have in Christ outweigh the things of the flesh?
2. How do you view the goal of *the upward call of God in Christ Jesus* for your life?
3. What did you glean from this third chapter of Philippians?

*But the path of the just is like the shining sun,  
that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.*

*- Proverbs 4:18*

## Observation Worksheet

### Philippians 3

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe. <sup>2</sup> Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! <sup>3</sup> For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: <sup>5</sup> circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup> But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. <sup>8</sup> Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; <sup>10</sup> that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, <sup>11</sup> if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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, <sup>14</sup> I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. <sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. <sup>17</sup> Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. <sup>18</sup> 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: <sup>19</sup> whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things. <sup>20</sup> For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.





