

# Philippians

## CHAPTER 3:1-11

### Lesson 10

Philippians 3 begins with the word *finally*. This does not indicate that Paul is about to close his letter, but rather reveals that Paul is beginning a new section. *For the rest* is a more accurate translation. Here, Paul transitions from dealing with possible internal dissension in the church to the dangers that would assail them from without. He proceeds to contrast the thinking of those who endanger the church through Judaic legalism to the goal of knowing Christ. Paul had experienced both and rejoiced, not in his accomplishments, but *in the Lord*. In this paragraph division, Paul encourages the believers in Philippi to join in his rejoicing. As you study this section, may you unite with Paul's heart of rejoicing and his desire to *count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus*.

### Observation: Read Philippians 3

1. The contrasting word *but* is used 5 times in this chapter. Mark the word on your Observation Worksheet each time it is used. Choose one instance of its use and record what is being contrasted.
2. An important phrase, which occurs three times in the section we are studying this week, is *confidence in the flesh*. Mark this phrase in a distinctive way on your Observation Worksheet. List what chapter 3 teaches about *confidence in the flesh*.
3. The word *righteousness* is also used three times in Philippians 3:1-11. Mark this word on your Observation Worksheet and record what this section teaches about *righteousness*.
4. What has impressed you most as you read and meditated upon Philippians 3?

## Read Philippians 3:1-3

1. Complete the following sentence from Philippians 3:1 by filling in the blanks:

Finally, my brethren, \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Thus, Paul begins this section warning against those who rejoice and glory in their flesh. What does Galatians 6:14 say about boasting in anything but Jesus Christ?
  - b. What do you think it means to rejoice *in the Lord*?
2. Paul's ministry was primarily to the Gentiles. His ministry was opposed by those who believed that it was necessary for the Gentiles to submit to Jewish rules before they could be saved. What three words did Paul use in Philippians 3:2 to describe these Judaizers?
    - a. The word *dogs* was a term of reproach both among the Jews and the Greeks. The term *dogs* referred to their character. *Evil workers* denotes, not merely evil doers, but those who actually worked against the gospel of grace. The term *evil workers* referred to their conduct. *Mutilation* speaks of the mutilations that the pagans would inflict upon themselves in their religious rites. The Greek word Paul uses here, has been translated in other Bible versions as *concision*, a play on the word *circumcision*. Paul is inferring that those who were not of the true circumcision, true believers, were merely mutilated. The term *mutilation* referred to their creed. How does Colossians 2:9-11 refute their teaching?
    - b. What did Paul tell them to do about these men? (Philippians 3:2)

Challenge: Look up and define the word *beware*.

3. In Philippians 3:3, Paul asserts it is the Christian who is the truly circumcised. Record the three signs of true circumcision from this verse.
  - a. In what way would the false doctrine of relying on following the law for salvation rob the believers of their joy?

“These for sin could not atone. Thou must save, and Thou alone:  
In my hand no price I bring. Simply to Thy cross I cling.”

## Read Philippians 3:4-6

1. How does the last phrase of Philippians 3:3 relate to Philippians 3:4-6?
2. If a person could be saved by trusting in human qualifications, Paul certainly had the credentials. List them from verses 4-6.
  - a. Why do you think Paul chose to record these credentials?
3. Paul's background qualified him to expose the error of the false teachers. He surpassed these Judaizers, who considered themselves authorities in the Mosaic law, in every way. What do these verses say about Paul, the Pharisee?
  - a. Acts 23:6 (his heritage)
  - b. Acts 22:3 (his education) Gamaliel was the most respected Rabbi of that time.
  - c. Acts 26:5 (his commitment to Judaism)
4. In John 3, Nicodemus came to Jesus inquiring about salvation. What did Jesus tell him was the one single requirement? (John 3:7)

*"Free from the law, O happy condition,  
Jesus provides a perfect salvation.  
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,  
Grace has redeemed us once and for all."*

*- P.P. Bliss*

## Read Philippians 3:7-9

1. Paul had many things that, from a fleshly standpoint, he could have been very proud of. Because of his relationship with Christ, what did he *count* (consider) them?
2. According to verse 8, what was more important to Paul than any of his achievements or accomplishments?
  - a. To Paul, once he became acquainted with Jesus, everything else in life paled in comparison. The *knowledge of Christ* indicates personal, intimate knowledge of Him; not just knowing about Him. What word does Paul use to describe this?

Challenge: Look up other references in the New Testament which use the Greek word translated here as *excellence*. What did you glean from these verses about this word?

- b. What have you discovered personally about the *excellence* of knowing Christ?
3. According to Philippians 3:8,9, why was Paul willing to *suffer the loss of all things*?
4. Contrast the two kinds of *righteousness* described in verse 9.

My righteousness:

Christ's righteousness:
5. In what way does Paul's philosophy of life speak to you?

## Read Philippians 3:10-11

1. The Amplified Bible paraphrases Philippians 3:10 as follows: [*For my determined purpose is that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness even] to His death...* What was Paul's *determined purpose*?

2. Verse 10 reveals Paul's recognition that although our righteousness comes only by faith in Christ and is perfect and complete, we are to continue growing and developing in Christlikeness in every area of our life. According to verse 10, how are we to do this?

a. Record what the following verses say about:

*Knowing Him* (Jeremiah 9:24)

*The power of His resurrection* (Ephesians 1:19,20)

*Fellowship of His sufferings* (1 Peter 4:12,13)

*Conformity to His death* (Philippians 2:8)

3. *Knowing Him* should be the desire of all believers. From your own personal experience, what things have contributed to your *knowing Him*?

4. Philippians 3:11 does not mean that Paul doubted his own resurrection or that he believed that he could personally do something to *attain* it. *If by any means* reflects Paul's uncertainty as to by what means he would meet the Lord; by execution, by natural death, or by rapture. Regardless of the means, his desire was to be with Christ. Read Paul's perspective on death from Philippians 1:20-23 and compare it to Philippians 3:10,11.

a. The word used for *resurrection* in Philippians 3:11 was not used anywhere else in the New Testament. Some commentators believe that Paul may have been referring to his desire to be resurrected or taken out from a state in which he was dead in sins to one in which he was alive with the divine life of God motivating Him. Read Romans 7:13-25 and summarize Paul's dilemma and desire.

*For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness,  
Who has shone in our hearts to give  
the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.  
- 2 Corinthians 4:6*

## Review: Philippians 3:1-11

1. In Philippians 3:1, Paul exhorts believers to *rejoice in the Lord*. Write out one of your favorite verses about *joy* or *rejoicing*.
2. Why were the people of Philippians 3:2 a danger to the church?
3. Have you ever, somewhat like Paul before he was born again, placed your confidence in your own works and thought they were the path to God? Explain how your thinking has changed.
4. How has Paul's goal to *know Christ* impacted you?

**Think about it:** What do you need to start *counting as loss* for the sake of Christ?

5. Share something from this lesson that has been meaningful to you.

“The resurrection life does not mean that we are indifferent to any human tie or call,  
But that we have laid hold of a new source of power by which it may be fulfilled.  
Because He lives, we live also; His life constrains us;  
His Spirit fills us and sets our sites heavenward. “

**PHILIPPIANS**  
**Chapter Three - Observation Worksheet**

**1** 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. **2** Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! **3** For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, **4** though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: **5** circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; **6** concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. **7** But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. **8** 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 **9** 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; **10** that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, **11** if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. **12** 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. **13** 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, **14** I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. **15** 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. **16** Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. **17** Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. **18** 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: **19** whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things. **20** For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** 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.