

# LESSON FIVE

## PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

### Philippians 3:1-11

As we begin chapter three of Philippians Paul makes a striking contrast between the life he once lived and the confidence he once had in the things which he now considers worthless.

Prayerfully read through Philippians chapter 3, verses 1 through 11.

1. Paul begins this chapter with the word finally. We usually think of this word as meaning “in conclusion” as though Paul were ready to wrap up his letter to the church in Philippi. However, in this case, since the letter continues on, we can look at the word as meaning, “and one more thing...” as Paul adds to what he has already told them by giving them this exhortation. What does Paul say in verse one that he wants them to do?

2. We can see by Paul’s statement in the second half of this verse that this is not the first time he has given them this exhortation. Paul has probably given them this exhortation when he was with them face to face. There are also places in this letter where we see him exhorting the church to “rejoice.” Where else has Paul said these words to them? Look through the entire letter and see if you can find them. Jot them down below.

3. In the second part of verse 1, Paul tells the church that, not only is to write the *same things again* no trouble to him, but it is also a **safeguard** for them. How does Deuteronomy 11:18-20 compliment this thought?

a. How is this a “**safeguard**” for us? (See Deuteronomy 4:9 and Psalm 103:2)

4. Back to Philippians, chapter three, who does Paul tell the church to be aware of in verse 2?

5. In verse 3, Paul makes a distinction between those of the “false circumcision” and those of the “true circumcision.” What does Paul say the difference is between them?

6. Looking at verses 4-6, what things does Paul list as the “confidences” he might have in his flesh?

7. What does he say in verse seven about these things in which he was once so confident?

a. What do the following verses reveal to us about our flesh? Look up Psalm 14:3 & 4; Psalm 39:4-6; Isaiah 64:6; Romans 7:8. Share the insights these verses give us concerning our flesh.

8. Paul makes an amazing declaration in Philippians 3:8. Read the verse and then write it down below.

a. Paul says he considers all he once thought of as **an advantage** to him to be a **disadvantage**, or a loss. In fact, what does he actually call these things he once took pride in as you look at the last half of verse eight?

b. Are there things you once thought of as an advantage to you that have now become “rubbish” in comparison to the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus? Can you name some of those things?

c. Are there things you still need to “lose” that are hindering your ability to gain a deeper knowledge of Christ? Is there something specific that you need to let go of?

9. Read verse 9 along with Ephesians 2:8 & 9. Write down in your own words what Paul is saying to this church in Philippi about his relationship with Christ.

10. In verse 10 Paul gives us four “GAINS” that he considers more important than any of his losses. The first one is “**to KNOW Christ.**”

The Greek word used here for “know” is ginosko. It’s a verb that means to come to a RESOLVED, SURE UNDERSTANDING of. Being a verb and not a noun, it is NOT something we **HAVE done**, or fully accomplished, but something we are in the **PROCESS of doing**. It means we are constantly “taking in knowledge” so that we can “come to KNOW,” to recognize and to understand.

Read the following Scriptures and share *what they reveal to you* about “**knowing Christ.**” Matthew 11:27; 1 Corinthians 2:13-14; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 1:17; Ephesians 3:17-20; 2 Peter 3:18.

11. The second “GAIN” Paul states, is to know “**the POWER of His RESURRECTION.**” After reading the following verses, how would you **describe** the “power of His resurrection” that Paul is speaking of in this verse? Romans 6:4; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:1 and 4-6.

12. The third “GAIN” Paul expresses is the “**participation in His sufferings.**” We know that there are some of Christ’s sufferings we cannot participate in. For instance, we cannot carry the sins of the world and pay the punishment for those sins. In light of this, what are the sufferings of Christ that Paul wants to participate in? See Philippians 2:7; John 6:38; John 15:13; Isaiah 53:3; John 15:19.

13. The fourth and last “GAIN” that Paul mentions in this verse may make us shutter even more than number three. To what does Paul want to be made **conformable** to?

a. After looking at the following Scriptures, **describe what this means** to you. Romans 6:4-11, 2 Corinthians 4:10, Galatians 2:20 & 6:14.

As we come to verse 11 it's important for us to note that Paul does not doubt the promise of the resurrection, but his expression is one of humility. The word used here for "resurrection" is also of great importance. It is a "unique intensive Greek compound verb" signifying **completion** and **finality**. Paul was previously speaking of the resurrection power we have **already been given** in verse 10, (Christ in us, empowering us to live through Him), now he speaks of the resurrection which will one **day leave mortality forever behind him**.

14. Look at 1 Corinthians 13:9-12, 1 John 3:2-3 and Revelation 21:3-5. How did Paul's focus on these things influence his daily life? What is the Lord speaking to your heart as you look at these things?

15. What was your greatest take-away from this lesson?

**"HE IS NO FOOL TO GIVE WHAT HE CANNOT KEEP TO GAIN WHAT HE CANNOT LOSE"**

Jim Elliott