Bible Study

**Philippians: Living with Joy**

**Chapter 3**

OUTLINE OF PHILIPPIANS

(Warren Wiersbe)

**DISCUSSION**

Chapter 3:1-11 Recap (1-3)

III. THE SPIRITUAL MIND—chapter 3

A. **Paul’s past—3:1–11**

**1. (the accountant—“I count”)**

B. Paul’s present—3:12–16

1.(the athlete—“I press”)

C. Paul’s future—3:17–21

1. (the alien—“I look”)–30

Paul says his life’s accomplishments pale in comparison to knowing Christ.

* Paul is a Jew by birth;
* Hebrew of Hebrews;
* Tribe of Benjamin;
* Pharisee (teacher of the Law);
* Zealous for God (persecuting the church);
* Blameless regarding the Jewish Law.

He has taken account of everything. Nothing for him is greater than knowing Christ.

*(v. 8) “More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.”*

This means much more than knowledge *about* Christ because Paul had that kind of historical information before he was saved.

To “know Christ” means to have a personal relationship with Him through faith. Salvation is knowing Him in a personal way.

(v. 10) Paul says his goal is to “know Christ…”

Paul wants to:

* Experience Christ’s resurrection power
* Be a partner in Christ’s suffering
* Go all the way with Christ to death itself

In Philippians 3, Paul is giving us his spiritual biography, his past (Phil. 3:1–11), his present (Phil. 3:12–16), and his future (Phil. 3:17–21).

In verses 1-11, Paul shares the new values he discovered when he met Christ.

In this section, Paul shares his spiritual vigor as he pressing toward the finish line of his Christian race.

**DISCOVERY**

III. THE SPIRITUAL MIND—chapter 3

A. Paul’s past—3:1–11

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Paul’s Present (vv 12-16)

In his letters, Paul uses many illustrations from the world to communicate truth about the Christian life.

Four are prominent:

* the military (“Put on the whole armor of God”),
* architecture (“You are the temple of God”),
* agriculture (“Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap”),
* and ***athletics***.

Paul uses **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** to illustrate the Christian life in verses 12-16, the imagery of a race.

(v. 12) *“Not that I have already reached the goal…”*

Paul wanted the Philippian saints to know that he had not yet reached the goal expressed in verse 10. What is that goal?

He was still actively pursuing that goal. Every Christ follower must come to accept that each of us is still actively pursuing the goal of fully knowing Christ.

Harry came out of the manager’s office with a look on his face dismal enough to wilt the roses on the secretary’s desk. “You didn’t get fired?” she asked. “No, it’s not that bad. But he sure did lay into me about my sales record. I can’t figure it out; for the past month I’ve been bringing in plenty of orders. I thought he’d compliment me, but instead he told me to get with it.” Later in the day, the secretary talked to her boss about Harry. The boss chuckled. “Harry is one of our best salesmen and I’d hate to lose him. But he tends to rest on his laurels and be satisfied with his performance. If I didn’t get him mad at me once a month, he’d never produce!”

Warren W. Wiersbe

Many Christians are self-satisfied because they compare their “running” with that of other Christians, usually those who are not making much progress.

Whenever we do this, the temptation to become proud and lazy increases.

Paul does not compare himself with other Christians (as we should not); he compares himself with himself and with Christ (as should we).

One mark of Christian maturity is honest self-evaluation and then striving to do better.

**Romans 12:3**

The Bible warns against a false estimate of our spiritual condition:

* The church at Sardis (Rev. 3:1) – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* The church at Laodicea (Rev. 3:17) – Boasted that they were rich, but in God’s sight they were wretched
* The church at Smyrna (Rev. 2:9) – thought they were poor, but God said they were really rich

We must be careful with self-evaluation because we can err in two directions:

* making ourselves better than we are,
* making ourselves worse than we really are.

Paul says I do not have it yet, but I am making every effort to attain it.

**Psalm 42:1-2**

(v. 13b) *“…But one thing I do…”*

“One thing” is a phrase that is important to the Christian life.

Consider these verses:

* Psalm 27:4 – David the Psalmist
* Mark 10:21 – The Rich Young Ruler
* Luke 10:42 – Mary and Martha
* John 9:25 – The Blind Man

Too many Christ followers are too involved in “*many things*,” when the secret of progress is to concentrate on “*one thing*.”

As Christ followers we must devote ourselves to “running the Christian race.” No athlete succeeds by doing *everything*; he succeeds by *specializing*.

There is a great story from Greek mythology which is fitting:

Atalanta offered to marry anyone who could outrun her—but those whom she overtook she speared. In one race Hippomenes (or Milanion) was given three of the golden apples of the Hesperides by the goddess Aphrodite; when he dropped them, Atalanta stopped to pick them up and so lost the race.

We must concentrate, keeping our eyes fixed on the goal and not allowing anything to distract us.

**Nehemiah 6:3; James 1:8**

Paul says, “…Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead…”

**DIRECTION**

Read Philippians 3

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