

## PHILIPPIANS Chapter 3:1-11

**1. From verse 1, why did Paul say that he tended to be repetitious in his teaching/writing?** It was not a bother (“not irksome”) for Paul to write to them again regarding this next topic and it was a safeguard for them. Periodically reviewing biblical truths helps us to grasp and apply them. A review of doctrine is healthy.

**2. Describe the Jewish teachers who Paul refers to in vs 2-4a** They were teachers who sought compliance by the Gentiles with the Old Testament law. They demanded the circumcision of Gentile converts along with such compliance (See Act 11:2, 15:1). It was a focus on external compliance rather than a reliance on God’s grace expressed through Christ (Rom 10:1-4 - an attempt to establish one’s own righteousness before God).

**a. What does Paul call them (vs 2)? Why (see 1 Cor 7:18-24, Gal 6:15 - what is Paul saying?)** “Dogs,” so called in describing their moral impurity is a basis for exclusion from the new Jerusalem (Rev 22:15). “Among the Greeks it was an epithet of impudence. Lat., *canis*, and Eng. “hound” are etymologically akin to it.”<sup>1</sup> “Mutilators of the flesh.” This term is almost an exact translation of the Greek. If one undergoes circumcision for reason of complying with the Old Covenant law, a law that has been already completely satisfied by the work of Christ, then it has no spiritual significance - it is only a needless surgical procedure. Mutilation. “Evil workers.” Troublesome, injurious, destructive evil. What a description of fruitless religion.

**b. In what did these people place their confidence?** Works of their flesh, compliance with the law. Their pedigree: Israelites, compliance with the law etc.

- **Why was it futile?** None of that can save. It can only damn the one who seeks to be justified in God’s eyes through their own efforts (Is 64:6).

- **Why was it destructive to genuine faith?** (Rom 3:20, 28; Gal 2:16; Gal 3:2-5). It can’t save. It can only point out the reality of our sin and inability to save ourselves.

**3. Had Paul chosen to stand on his own works, what did he have going for him (vs 4b-6).** He was outwardly compliant with the OT law. Circumcised on the eighth day (as required by the law - Gen 17:12), of Jewish parents (not the child of proselytes), an adherent to the law and outwardly, flawless.

**4. Why was this useless (Rom 10:1-4)?** It could not save him but only merit God’s judgment. He was attempting to stand before God in his own righteousness (Zech 3:1-5, Mtt 22:1-14, Rev 3:4-5, 18; 19:8 and maybe Rom 13:14 - We can only stand before Him clothed in His righteousness).

**a. How did Paul consider those things that once made him feel accomplished (vs 7-11)?**

- **What did he consider them now that he was born again (8b - if you can, look up the**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/Dictionary/viewTopic.cfm?topic=VT0000797>

**word, it is strong language)?** Loss (“damage” KJV), used to describe the loss of a ship and cargo. Those things Paul once valued he now considered loss; further he counted/ considered them “dung,” (excrement) compared to what he now had in Christ.

- **What did he exchange them for?** Knowing Christ and being known by Him through faith, standing in His righteousness as opposed to seeking to stand in that of the law.

**b. How did he want to know Christ (vs 10–11)?** He wanted to know Him through “thick and thin,” good times and bad, “in order that” (GK) he might attain the resurrection from the dead. We don’t sign up for the “good parts” version of Christianity but for knowing Christ in and through all things. More than that, to trust Him in all things and give thanks for them (Rom 8:28, 1 Thess 5:18).

## HOMEWORK

**Read Philippians yet again and from 3:12-21 answer the following questions:**

- 1. From 3:12, how did Paul view his own maturity as a believer?** As a work in progress.
  - a. Is there ever going to be a point where a believer can state that they have “arrived?”**  
**Explain.** No, we are still sinners though new creations and indwelt by His Spirit. Until the day we pass from this life, we will always have room for growth and maturity.
  - b. What did Paul show that he was resolved to do about his walk with God (vs 12)?** He was resolved to press on (“stretch/lean forward”) to realize the purpose for which God had called him. He has a purpose for each of us (Eph 2:10).
- 2. In verse 12, Paul mentions that he wanted to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of him. What does God desire for believers? (Rom 15:14, 1 Cor 12:7, Eph 2:10).**
  - a. Good works (See also Jn 15)
  - b. The counseling, admonishing, advising of believers by believers.
- 3. In Vs 13-14, what does Paul say that he is doing?** Forgetting what lay behind (all those things that he once thought important and that made him something. Pressing on to know and serve Christ.
  - a. How does this work out in our lives right now?** It is a constant choice that each believers must make on a daily basis.
  - b. What can get in the way (Heb 12:1-2)?** Sin, idolatry etc. What gets in our way when it comes to walking with God? What needs to go by the wayside?
- 4. From vs 15-16, how should we interact with others who may not see things quite the same way that we do biblically?** With grace. We are all going to get an adjustment to our theology the moment that we set foot in heaven. There needs to be unanimity in the essentials but grace in other things (Eph 4:1-6).
  - a. Look up and define the word “heresy.”** A belief that is contrary to the essential teaching (things necessary for salvation) of the faith.

**b. How is heresy different from a difference of opinion between believers? Explain!**

Believers can differ from one another in things that are not essential for salvation and yet maintain fellowship. The church in Corinth was rebuked by God for obsessing over emotions and experience. The church in Thessalonika was rebuked for putting out the Spirit's fire. Yet they are both believers. There is room in the body of Christ for diversity within boundaries.

**5. What good is the example of a believer's life and what limits its usefulness?** Much as long as they are seeking Christ. What limits our usefulness is those things that get in our way (Heb 12:1-2).

**6. How does the life of a believer differ from the life of an unbelieving religious person?**

Sometimes it doesn't differ much at all (Gal 5:19-23).

**a. In the living out of daily life?** The fruit that results from our choices (5:16-23). It is a daily, even moment by moment choice.

**b. In their ultimate end?** A vast difference in outcome (2 Pet 1:3-11).

**c. What promise is implied in vs 20-21 and what does this mean to you?** My ultimate destination and present citizenship is in heaven and my flawed, mortal body will be conformed to the glorified body of Christ.

## HOMEWORK

### Read Phil 4:1-8

**1. How should we stand firm (4:1)?** The first word "therefore" indicates that we should look to the preceding context for the answer:

**a.** We should beware of false teachers whose confidence is in the flesh (human works).

**b.** We should consider everything apart from Christ loss, rubbish, dung, compared with knowing Him and being His.

**c.** We should seek to know Jesus in all things, good and bad.

**d.** We should press on to lay hold of that for which Jesus laid hold of us.

- No one can ever say that they have "arrived."

- We need to stretch for what is ahead and forget what is behind.

**e.** We should focus on faith essentials (and on loving our neighbor) and trust God to make those things presently unclear to us clear in His time. Live up to what we know.

**f.** We should keep an eye on our leaders and see if they are living after the pattern God has given us (1 Tim 5:17-25).

- Some claim salvation but live for their appetites.

- Their mind is on earthly things.

**g.** Live with eternity in mind - our citizenship was in heaven and we are eagerly awaiting a Savior from there: the Lord Jesus Christ.

- He will transform our lowly (Abased, low estate, humiliated, vile, see also 1 Cor 15:50-58, 1 Jn 3:-2).

**2. What can we learn about Euodia (“fragrant, good smelling”) and Syntyche (“With Fate”) (4:2-3)?**

a. They had to be exhorted (*parakaleo* -to admonish, beg, entreat, call to one’s side/aid) to agree with each other (“be like minded”) in the Lord (Phil 2:1-4). They may have irritated each other or had an old feud or personality conflict. All we know for sure is that they needed to be urged to get along.

b. They had contended (or worked/labored along side) along side Paul and his other co-laborers at Philippi in his ministry.

**3. From verse 3, why are the Philippians exhorted to rejoice?**

a. The Lord is near.

b. Believers are to be anxious, distracted by, an anxious care) for nothing but in everything let their requests be made known (present/passive - the idea is continual) to God.

- in prayer
- petition/supplication
- with thanksgiving

**4. If we obey God and “continually keep on presenting our requests” to Him, what does the text promise?**

a. That God’s peace will guard our hearts and minds.

b. That God will do so in a manner beyond/surpassing human comprehension.

**5. What should be the focus of our minds?** Those things that honor God or draw us closer to Him. Whatever (“as much as”) is:

**a. Look up and define the words:**

- **true:** “true, unconcealed, truthful” (*agathos*)
- **noble:** “honest, serious, dignified,” “grave,” “seriousness of purpose, dignified.” (*semnos*)
- **right:** “righteous, straight, upright” (*dikaios*)
- **pure:** “pure from fault, chaste, modest, free from defilement” (*hagnos*)
- **lovely:** “Pleasing, agreeable, lovely” (*prospilēs*)
- **admirable:** “uttering words of good omen,” hence, “good sounding” - “things spoken in a kindly spirit” (*euphēmos*)
- **excellent:** “moral goodness, excellence” (*aretē*)
- **praiseworthy:** “approbation, commendation, praise,” (*epainos*)

**b. What does it mean to let one’s mind dwell on these things? See also 2 Cor 10:1-6.**

“To reckon, calculate, consider, dwell on.”

**c. Look up proverbs 4:23. How do you think this should this apply?** “Guard, watch over, your inner man.” In other words, think about what you are thinking about, and doing.”

**d. What about 1 Cor 6:9-11 and Eph 5:3-7?** As unbelievers we lived one way (e.g., Tit 3:3) but now we are “light in the Lord” (Eph 5:8). We should not live any longer as we did as unbeliever. That was then, this is now. Those who profess faith in Christ and yet have lives characterized by rebellion are probably not saved.

## **HOMEWORK**

**Read Chapter 4 again and answer the following questions:**

- 1. From the context of 4:10-20 what had the Philippians done (e.g., 2 Cor 11:7-12)?**
  
- 2. What is Paul saying about contentment in verses 10-13 (and 1 Tim 6:6-10, Prv 15:16, Heb 13:5)?**
  - a. What does God promise us (Mtt 6:25-34, 1 Tim 6:8)?**
  - b. Make a list of some things that He does not promise us.**
  
- 3. What did Paul see in the Philippian church's actions that gave him joy (Phil 1:3-6)?**
  
- 4. What should we remember (4:19, Mtt 6:8)?**
  
- 5. Finally, what did Paul want the Philippians to know regarding the spread of the gospel and their part in it (21-23)?**
  
- 6. What book do you wish to study next? :)**