

LESSON 7: Learning to Count

(*Philippians 3:1-11*)

Circumstances and people can rob us of Joy, but so can things. Paul deals with this _____ in Chapter Three. It is Important to view the total message of this chapter before examining it In detail, as follows:

- Paul's Past, the accountant - "I count," new values
- Paul's Present, the athlete - "I press," new vigor
- Paul's Future, the alien - "I look," new vision

Paul is describing the spiritual mind. In *Philippians 3:18* and *19*, he speaks of those Christians who "_____,," but then in verse 20 he talks of the believer who "_____. " You will recall that the city of Philippi was actually a Roman Colony—a "Rome away from Rome." In the same sense God's people make up a colony of heaven on earth. Verse 20 says, "Our citizenship Is in heaven." We should look at earth from heaven's point of view.

The KEY WORD In *Philippians 3:1-11* is COUNT. Refer to *Philippians 3:7,8 and 13*. Two different Greek words are used, but the basic idea is the same: to evaluate, _____. "The unexamined life is not worth living," said Socrates, yet few sit down to consider seriously the _____ that control their decisions and direction. Today's people are the slaves of "things" and so do not experience Christian joy. It is easy to get wrapped up not only in the "things" we can see but also in the Intangible things such as

reputation, fame and achievement. Paul writes about "what things were gain to him" in verse 7. In verse 13 he mentions "things which are behind and things which are before."

In Paul's case, the things he lived for before he knew Christ seemed to be commendable: ____

_____, _____, _____, _____, _____

_____ and _____. But none of these things satisfied him or gave him acceptance with God. Like most religious people today, Paul had enough morality to keep him out of trouble, but not enough righteousness to get him into heaven. These "_____" kept him from Jesus. He had to lose his _____ to find salvation. After Saul met Jesus, his values changed. When he evaluated his wealth, he discovered that, apart from Jesus Christ, everything he lived for was only refuse.

Paul explains that there are only two kinds of righteousness, or spiritual wealth: works-righteousness or faith-righteousness. Only _____ - _____ is acceptable to God.

But he gained so much more:

1. The knowledge of Christ (v. 8). This is a _____ knowledge of Him.
2. The righteousness of Christ (v. 9). He discovered that his sins had been put to Christ's account on the cross, and Christ's _____ had been put to his _____. (*2 Corinthians 5:21*)
3. The fellowship of Christ (verses 10-11). When he became a Christian, it was not the end of his life but the real beginning.

4. He also learned his life could be a painful experience as he discovered the "fellowship of His suffering," learning how to lay down his life that others might receive from, God through him.

Now we look at PAUL THE ATHLETE: **Philippians 3:12-16**. In his letters Paul uses many illustrations from the world to communicate truth about the Christian life. Four are prominent: _____ ("Put on the armor of God" **Ephesians 6:11-18**); _____, **1 Corinthians 3:9**; _____, **Galatians 5:6**; _____ **Philippians 3:12-16**. The verb, "reaching forth," in verse 13 literally means " _____."

What are the essentials for winning the race and receiving the reward?

1. Dissatisfaction (**Philippians 3:12-13a**): **"Not as though I had already attained. . ."** This is the statement of a great Christian who never permitted himself to be satisfied with his _____. He was satisfied with Jesus (Philippians 3:10), but he was not satisfied with his Christian life. A sanctified dissatisfaction is the first essential to progress in the Christian race. (Do not confuse this dissatisfaction with competition with others.)
2. Devotion (**Philippians 3:13a**): **"this one thing I do..."** Too many Christians are too involved in "many things," when the secret of progress is to concentrate on "one thing."
3. Direction (**Philippians 3:13b**): **"Forgetting those things which are behind..."** It means "to no longer _____/_____." It means that we break the power of the past by living for the future. Too many Christians

are shackled with regrets of the past. They are trying to run the race _____
_____.

4. Determination (**Philippians 3:14**): *"I press..."* This same verb is translated "follow after" in verse 12, and it carries the idea of _____. The Greeks used it to describe a hunter eagerly pursuing his prey. There are two extremes to avoid here: 1. _____, and/or 2 _____. The Christian runner with the spiritual mind realizes that God must work in him if he is going to win the race.

_____, _____
(**John 15:5**). Toward what goal is the runner pressing with such spiritual determination?
"The mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (**Philippians 3:14**).

5. Discipline (**Philippians 3:15-16**): *"Let us walk by the same rule."* It is not enough to run hard and win the race. The runner must also obey the rules. In verses 15-16 Paul emphasizes the Importance to Christians of remembering the "spiritual rules" laid down in the Word. Paul has this idea in mind in **1 Corinthians 9:24-27**: "Any man who enters an athletic contest practices rigid self-control in training." His concern is not what spectators think but what the judges rule.

It is exciting to run the race "looking unto Jesus." It will be even more exciting when we experience that "upward calling," and Jesus returns to take us to heaven.