

The G-od Life Part 3: That's Rubbish

Objective: To challenge us to stop trying to earn God's favor and accept His grace through Jesus.

Read together:

Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. 2 Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. 10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:1-11

- Have you ever been a part of a church or religious group that was legalistic? What were the rules? How did that legalism make you feel about the church? How did it impact the way you view God?
- Every relationship has some 'rules.' Think about the different relationships you have. What rules apply to different relationships?
- How do the 'rules' in a relationship work? Do they define the relationship? Are they the basis for the relationship? Do they actually govern the relationship? (In other words, do you 'follow the rules' so that the others in the relationship will love you or do you 'follow the rules' out of love for the others?)
- Pastor Steve said that it is a relationship with Jesus rather than religion that brings real joy to our lives. Do you agree or disagree with that statement? Why?
- During the sermon we heard, "it doesn't matter who you are, what you have or what you have done, God loves you and wants a relationship with you." How does that make you feel? Does it change the way you view God or the way you understand your relationship with Him?
- Have you ever done things or not done things in an effort to win God's approval? How does it make you feel to know that Paul considered all of your best efforts as nothing more than garbage?
- How would knowing you have to earn God's love change the way you live your life?

Final Thought: Whatever you have been doing to earn God's approval, you can stop. Just focus on trusting Jesus and letting God love you.

