

A PHILIPPIANS STUDY

DISCUSSION GUIDE

November 19, 2023

PHILIPPIANS week 10 - Aaron McRae

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you **think more deeply** about the sermon and **engage with others** through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and **allow God to work** in your life as you apply what you discover.

➤ CONVERSATION STARTER

What is the most valuable thing you have?

➤ EXPLORATION

What determines how valuable something is? Price tag? Status? Popularity? Usefulness? Influence? There are so many different ways to measure value. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul wants to be sure that the church does not use the world's measurement for value or importance. There is a better way to determine the value of things, it is God's way.

Philippians 3:1-11 (From your bible, read aloud)

Paul starts by reminding them to "Rejoice in the Lord!" This is a command that he had made two times before in his letter and he clearly wants to emphasize that point. Throughout his writing, Paul reminds them that **joy** can be present even in trials, weakness, pain, suffering and even persecution.

Paul goes on to warn them that there were those among them who wanted to hold on to old traditions and rituals like circumcision so that they could judge whether or not a person was righteous. But Paul reminds them that the most important thing was to

have a heart that was fully submitted to God. As followers of Jesus, our confidence is not in our abilities or accomplishments, but in Christ.

Think back to last week, where did you spend your best energy?

We all have the same number of hours in a day and the same number of days in a week. We can choose how we will spend our time and energy. Paul's reminder is that the most important thing in life is knowing Christ. Our confidence is in Christ alone, not in our own accomplishments.

If there was ever a person who could boast in their accomplishments, it was Paul:

Paul's Reasons for Self-Confidence (vs 5-6)

1. Circumcised the 8th day= he belonged since birth
2. The people of Israel= God's chosen (and a little entitled)
3. Tribe of Benjamin= prominent & faithful tribe
4. A Hebrew of Hebrews= deeply committed (maybe judgmental too)
5. A Pharisee= influential & highly respected
6. Zealous, persecuting the church= passionate (but misguided)
7. Faultless in the law= a moral person (beware self-righteousness)

These were all things that would have been highly valued among God's people at that time, however, Paul does not boast about them. In fact, he puts no value in them at all. "***I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord...***"

If we truly believe that nothing compares to knowing Christ, then this can be reflected in the way we live our lives, the things we prioritize, the decisions we make, the way we spend our time and invest our money.

What are some ways that you prioritize knowing Christ in your daily life?

Paul's willingness to lose anything and everything for the sake of knowing Christ might look something like this: *Philippians 3:7-9*

OLD LIFE (-) vs NEW LIFE (+)

**Consider loss whatever were gains (-)
For the sake of Christ (+)**

**Consider everything a loss (-)
Because of the surpassing worth of Christ (+)**

**I have lost all things (-)
For Christ's sake (+)**

**I consider them garbage (-)
That I may gain Christ (+)**

In our present day this might look like:

- Choosing less pay & less notoriety to follow Jesus
- Choosing a life of service over a life of glamor
- Choosing a smaller house, older car, etc. in order to be more generous
- Choosing to live more simply in order to reduce distraction
- Choosing to forsake desires that do not line up with following Jesus

Paul makes it clear that nothing compares to knowing Christ. All his amazing accomplishments he considered to be "garbage" when compared to knowing Christ.

What sacrifices have you made in order to make Jesus your top priority?

Philippians 3:10-11 (From your bible, read aloud)

Intimacy with Jesus is the most important and the most incredible thing we have in this life! This motivation to know Christ is not an intellectual pursuit, just gathering facts. We can have a lot of information about Christ, but Paul is talking about something much deeper.

If you are going to humbly and faithfully follow Jesus there will be trouble, suffering, and even persecution. If you are committed to living sacrificially so that you may serve others, there will be painful moments, rejection & disappointment. It is also the most valuable gift we have to offer to others, and according to Paul it is the most fulfilling way of life.

Psalm 63:3 "Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you."

Take a moment to reflect on that verse, in what ways does your life currently reflect this truth? In what ways would you like to grow?

Our confidence does not ultimately come from our own abilities or resources. Our confidence comes from Christ alone.

Our Reasons for God-Confidence

1. Adopted by God & co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:14-17)
2. God's chosen & special people (1 Peter 2:9)
3. The Lord is faithful (2 Thessalonians 3:3)
4. God is committed to us until the end (Hebrews 12:2)
5. God's handiwork, created for good works (Ephesians 2:10)
6. The Spirit guides us into all truth (John 16:13)
7. Given new life in the Spirit (Romans 8:3-10)

> TAKE AWAY

Living a life that is fully committed to Jesus will be costly. However, there is great reward for those who make this courageous choice. Knowing and serving God is the greatest and most valuable part of life.

Take time to pray for one another that you would make your relationship with God your first and greatest priority this coming week.