

## **GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES** (July 23, 2023)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

As I'm writing this, I looked up options for two different airlines, non-stop Seattle to London. The flights a month out, returning two weeks later. The first, Alaska, offered a main cabin seat for \$1,551.35, and a business class seat for \$9,092.35. (9-to-10-hour flights each way.)

The second, American, offered a basic economy seat (no changes allowed, you board last, a fee for each checked bag, you pay extra to choose your seat) for \$986.35. The First-class option cost \$13,092.35. (What's the deal with the 35 cents on all of these flights?) I can't personally justify shelling out \$7,500 to \$12,000 extra for a premium seat (I'd be thinking how much it was costing me per hour) and so I book the economy, coach, main cabin seat. When I fly, I do not look forward to the awkward conversation with the person next to me. It's a tight space, no easy exit. What's the appropriate line between being polite, and personal privacy? Typically, the conversation begins, "Hi, I'm so and so, what do you do?" In an attempt to connect we want to find out who the other person is by discovering what they do. But does what we do describe us adequately?

If someone wanted to get to know you, how would you describe yourself? If you are like me, I usually recite a litany of my family history, where I've come from, my schooling, my occupation, what I've accomplished, things I enjoy and may be good at. But does that information provide an adequate picture of who I really am?

The writer of this letter to the Philippian Christians, Paul, spent a good portion of chapter 3 describing who he was. In the process he laid out his credentials. Religiously, his background and accomplishments were impressive. His purpose ... to highlight that even if a person has the best of all possible resumes they fall short when it comes to their relationship with God, and what they need most in life. We may win awards and the applause of the crowd, others may be amazed by our titles and successes, but compared to Jesus all we hope will impress others counts for NOTHING, ABSOLUTELY NOTHING. Our value, our relationship with God, depends completely on Jesus, and what He offers us. When we understand this it is really good, great, news!

### **The Value of Knowing Christ** (Philippians 3:1-11)

<sup>3:1</sup> Finally, my brothers (and sisters), rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

<sup>2</sup> Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. <sup>3</sup> For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh — <sup>4</sup> though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh

also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith — <sup>10</sup> that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."

### **WHAT DOES IT SAY?**

1. What danger does Paul warn the Philippian Christians of?
2. How does Paul describe himself in this passage (list all the information he provides about himself)?
3. What does Paul claim about Jesus in this passage?

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

4. What does it mean, we "put no confidence in the flesh"?
5. What does it mean to "count everything as loss for the sake of Christ ... count them as rubbish ... that I may gain Christ"?
6. What does it mean to "not have a righteousness of my own"?

### **WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?**

7. What would you consider your greatest accomplishments?
8. What have you done, or what in your background, impresses God? What do you bring to God that wins Him over?
9. Are you at a point where you understand that you bring nothing, and God provides everything? Discuss honestly.

As you spend time praying remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God to help you understand all He freely offers you and what He has done for you. Ask God to help you know Him and His power. He loves you. He will help you.

### **Bible Study Suggestions** (some free copies at the Welcome Center)

1. "Philippians for Everyone". N.T. Wright
2. "Life Lessons from Philippians: Guide to Joy." Max Lucado