

Main Idea

True security and worth aren't found in achievement, behavior, or past success or failure. Paul calls us to release what once defined us and actively pursue knowing Jesus—avoiding both perfectionism and passivity—through a grace-fueled, forward-looking faith.

Group Goal - Help people identify what they are trusting in for worth and security, release the authority of the past, and take one concrete step toward pursuing Jesus.

Opening Question

- What is something you worked very hard for at one point in your life?

Leader note: This is not a trick question. Let people answer freely. You're listening for achievement, effort, or validation—not spiritual answers yet.

- When have you achieved something you thought would make you happy—but it didn't fully deliver?

Leader note: Don't over-comment here. Let the tension surface naturally.

Set the Frame – Leader Read

In Philippians 3, Paul warns us about putting confidence in achievement—religious or otherwise. He tells us that even the best accomplishments can't carry the weight of our soul. Instead, Paul invites us into a life of pursuing Christ—not perfection, not passivity, but grace-fueled pursuit.

- Have someone read Philippians 3:1–9.
- Have another person read Philippians 3:10–14.

Leader note: Ask the group to listen for repeated words or phrases as the verses are read.

Discussion: Achievement and Confidence

Paul lists his spiritual résumé and then calls it “loss.”

- In our world, what kinds of “résumés” do people build to feel secure or validated?

Leader note: If the group gets stuck, prompt with examples like career success, moral behavior, reputation, comparison to others, or even church involvement.

- How are you doing spiritually this month?
- Of the things that make you feel close or not close to God, how many are behaviors and sins? Things you're doing good or not doing bad?
 - *We ask this because so often the way we “grade” ourselves is based on what we ARE or ARE NOT doing. We feel close to God solely by behavior. This is a symptom of religious performance that Paul is talking about.*

- Why do you think achievement—especially religious achievement—is so tempting to trust?

Leader note: This is about feeling our current condition, not condemnation. Avoid correcting answers.

- Pastor Daniel said: “No achievement—religious or otherwise—can do what only Christ can do.”
- Where have you seen that proven true in your own life?

Leader note: If someone shares vulnerably, thank them. Don't rush to fix or spiritualize their answer.

Supporting Scripture to read and add to the discussion: Mark 8:36 - Jeremiah 9:23–24

Discussion: The Two Ditches

Paul seems to expose two unhealthy ways people live out faith.

- One is perfectionism—measuring faith by performance.
- The other is passivity—coasting spiritually because “I’m already saved.”
- Perfectionism or Passivity: Which ditch do you personally fall into more easily? Why?

Leader note: Normalize both answers. Many people feel pressure to say the “right” one.

- How does perfectionism affect relationships—with God or with others?

Leader note: Listen for words like pressure, comparison, judgment, exhaustion. Often times, we can be wounded by perfectionist religious people, it’s okay to discuss this.

- How does passivity slowly affect a person’s spiritual life?

Pastor Daniel often says, “when you coast you always coast downhill.” Meaning, we don’t climb closer in our pursuit if we coast.

- Where are you coasting in your spiritual life right now?

Supporting Scripture to read and add to the discussion: Galatians 5:1 - James 2:17

Discussion: Forgetting the Past = Authority

Paul says, “forgetting what is behind.”

- When you hear that phrase, what do you think he means?

Leader note: Let the group answer before you clarify.

Leader clarification: When Paul says “forgetting the past,” he is not talking about memory. He’s talking about authority. Does our past have authority over our present?

- What parts of your past tend to have the most authority over you today—failures, shame, regret, or even past success?

Leader note: Silence is okay here. Don’t rush it.

- How do past failures and wounds speak to you? What do they say?

Leader note: If someone struggles to answer, offer examples: “You’ll never change,” “You’re not good enough,” “You’ve already blown it.”

- On the flip side, how can past success also keep someone from growing?

Leader note: Listen for comfort, settling, pride, or lack of hunger.

Supporting Scripture to read and add to the discussion: 2 Corinthians 5:17 - Isaiah 43:18–19

Application: One Thing

Paul says, “But one thing I do...”

- If Paul asked you to name your “one thing” this season, what might it be?

Leader note: The answer here is a resounding, “KNOW JESUS”... which Paul says is his goal.

- What is one concrete step you could take this week to pursue Jesus more intentionally?

Leader note: Encourage specificity. “Be better” is not an action step. “Read my daily devotion to know Jesus more” is an actionable step. “be honest about my level of apathy” is a step. Provide room for that.

- Invite anyone who is comfortable to share their one step.

Leader note: Never force sharing. Affirm courage when people do share.

Closing Reflection and Prayer

Leader prompt: We’re not praying for perfection. We’re praying for hunger.

- Close in prayer, asking God to:
 - Release the authority of the past
 - Renew desire for Jesus
 - Give courage to press forward

Optional closing Scripture to read aloud: Hebrews 12:1–2