

NL STUDY GUIDE

TO LIVE IS CHRIST

Part 4: Knowing

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October 15/16, 2016

PHILIPPIANS 3:7-14 (NIV)

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.

¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

SCRIPTURE

PHILIPPIANS 3:7-14 (NIV)

Watch this week's message online: nlchurch.com/watch.

OBSERVATION

Paul is now reflecting on all his religious accomplishments and achievements. Refusing to rest on his laurels, Paul continues to press forward to everything God has in store for him. He says everything he had done up that point was meaningless and that the ultimate achievement is to know Christ, the power found in his resurrection and the bond that comes in sharing in his suffering.

HISTORICAL NOTE

Paul's religious upbringing would have focused heavily on his Jewish identity and ritual obedience. In discussing these, Paul is not afraid to get raw with his readers, referring to religious accomplishments as "garbage." The Greek word here is "skybala," meaning filth or dung. Going from radical legalism to radical grace was a true leap for Paul!

- 1 Paul's ultimate pursuit was knowing Christ. What did this mean for him?
- 2 The most common conflict in the early church was between Gentiles and people who believed Gentiles need to convert to Judaism before coming to Christ. How is conflict addressed by Paul?
- 3 In Paul's day, circumcision was a cultural barrier to faith. What are some modern barriers to faith?

APPLICATION

When you apply something, you put it into practice. It's one thing to read the Bible, it's another thing to live it out. A practical application of what you just observed from today's study can help you discover just how much impact the Bible can have on every situation you may face!

In this section, discuss together ways you can apply what you've learned from the teaching and the Bible study. Then, think about some practical ways you can live out what you've learned.

- 1 How do we maintain a healthy view of past wins in faith but still keep pressing forward? What happens if we stay stuck in our faith?
- 2 Why do you think Paul uses such strong language? What are ways that we expect people to conform to our view of faith?
- 3 Paul talks about the prize waiting for him. What do you think the prize is? What is your goal in faith?

PRAYER

Use the space below to write out your prayer in response to today's message.
