

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Resurrection Sunday, April 8, 2012

Passage: Philippians 3:7-11

Memory Passage: Romans 8:12-13

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Phil. 1:1-3:11.** As we approach Resurrection Sunday we will contemplate Phil. 3:7-11. We won't answer questions about all the verses that precede our text, but I want you to read from 1:1 to understand the context as we dig into 3:7-11. List and describe each mark of a true believer found in 3:3.

(b) Why does Paul say he, of all people, would have the right to claim confidence in the flesh (3:4-6)? What point is he making when he says he was, "circumcised on the eighth day?" What does he mean when he says, "as to the law, a Pharisee?" What does he mean when he says, "as to righteousness under the law, blameless?"

(c) In what ways are you tempted to place your confidence in the flesh? Think about your giftings, your talents, your upbringing, your church attendance, your theological knowledge, your education, your status in the community, the length of time you have been a believer or a member of the Bible Church, etc., and remember that *saying* that you believe you place no confidence in your flesh and actually *living* this belief might be two different things. Read and meditate on 2 Cor. 12:7-10 and write down 3 ways you will overcome this temptation through Christ during the next week.

(d) *Family:* Explain that we will leave Romans this week to prepare for Resurrection Sunday by looking at Philippians 3 where Paul explains that before Christ he had confidence in his flesh (the works he did) but now he puts his confidence in Christ alone for his righteousness. **Read Phil. 3:3** and write on your white board the 4 marks of a true Christian that Paul gives (these are given in opposition to the false teachers he mentions in v. 2). Explain each mark, writing a definition for each mark on your white board. If you need some help, check out **Rom 2:28-29, 4:6-12, 15:17-18, Gal. 3:7, 29 & John 4:23-24.**

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Phil. 3:7-11.** To what "gain" does Paul refer in v. 7? What does Paul mean when he says he counted his gain loss "for the sake of Christ" (remember the context!!!)? Why is this "knowing Christ" of "surpassing worth?"

(b) Verse 8 begins to help us answer the previous question. Why does Paul say he counts everything as loss? What has he gained? Notice the contrast between "loss" & "gain" in vs. 7-8. To what 2 types of gain does he refer? What place does "loss" have in the process of moving from one "gain" to the next "gain?"

(c) Review the answer you gave to question (c) yesterday. Have you truly "counted as loss" these fleshly gains? Paul's grammar in verse 8 shows us that he *continues* to count everything as loss. Are you continuously, day by day and moment by moment, counting your own righteousness to be nothing for the sake of knowing Christ? Revisit your list of 3 ways to overcome the temptation to put your confidence in the flesh (question (c) from yesterday) and ask the Lord to help you, as you live by the gospel through the power of Christ, to crucify the sin of self-righteousness so that you can live in the power of your status as one who has gained Christ.

(d) *Family:* **Read Phil. 3:7-8** asking your family to notice the words, "gain" & "loss." Now make 3 columns on your white board with the headings, "Gain," "Loss," and "Gain." Have your family examine vs. 4-6 and call out each of the fleshly confidences that Paul said he had a right to claim *if* confidence in the flesh was worth anything. Write these confidences in the first column (Paul refers to these as "gain I had" in v. 8a). Then ask, "According to vs. 7-8, what has Paul lost?" (All of these fleshly confidences, everything, & all things) Write these in the middle "loss" column. Now ask, "What did Paul gain when he considered everything in his life loss?" (the surpassing worth of knowing Christ and gaining Christ). Write these in the 3rd column. Now ask, "What fleshly gains might we or people we know claim for salvation?" (Doing good things, going to church, not doing bad things, making good grades, reading/watching/listening to the "right" things, supporting certain political ideas or people, etc.) Now ask, "Why must we consider all of these things loss, and what benefit does that bring us?" (our own righteousness, just like Paul's [vs. 4-6] will not save, and gaining Christ is the only way to salvation). Explain that in the rest of the week you will look at what benefits there are from gaining Christ.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Phil. 3:7-11.** Paul describes his relationship with Christ in three ways: To know Christ, to gain Christ, and to be found in Christ. Is there any difference between these 3? If so, what is the difference? If not, why does he use 3 different terms to describe the same reality?

(b) Does Paul mean that in order to be a Christian one must literally give up everything in one's life (v.8: "counted *everything* as loss," "suffered the loss of *all* things")? If not, what does he mean? Is what he means any less difficult or stark than actually, physically giving up everything?

(c) Is there any difference between the righteousness of which Paul speaks in v. 9 and the righteousness to which he refers in v. 6, and if so, explain the difference? About what doctrine is Paul teaching in v. 9?

(d) *Family*: Remind your family that last night you learned that our own righteousness will not save us, and the only way to be saved is to gain the righteousness of Christ through gaining Christ. Ask: “What is the requirement to go into space?” Encourage discussion and different answers, even leading them down paths that might be partly correct (e.g. “You must be an astronaut” or “You need lot’s of money”), but do not account for the fact that humans cannot just launch their bodies into space without rockets and a vehicle to carry them. Then explain that just as it is impossible for humans to go into space without being inside of a rocket-propelled ship, it is impossible for humans to live eternally with God without being inside of Christ. No rocket ship? No space. No righteousness of Christ? No heaven. Then **Read Phil. 3:9** and show them how it connects with v. 8, and how the righteousness spoken of in v. 9 is Christ’s righteousness but in v. 6 it was Paul’s law-keeping.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Phil. 3:7-11, Col. 1:29, Eph. 1:18-21, & Rom. 6:1-10.** After reading all 4 passages, explain what Paul means when he says, “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.” Be sure to interact with all 4 passages to explain this wonderful phrase! About what doctrine is Paul teaching in 3:10?

(b) Write down at least 5 specific ways that you will pursue living by the power of Christ’s resurrection in the coming days.

(c) *Family*: Ask, “What is the most powerful thing you can think of?” As various things are mentioned, write them on your white board and rank them as they are mentioned, leaving room at the top of the board to write “The Resurrection from the Dead.” If no one mentions it, ask, “What about the resurrection?” **Read Phil. 3:10** and tell them that part of knowing Christ is to experience the power of Christ’s resurrection in our daily lives. Then read the other 3 passages above and explain that this power is of immeasurable greatness and frees us from the power of sin and sets us free to minister in His name.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Phil. 3:7-11, 1:29-30, Rom. 8:17, & 2 Cor. 4:7-18.** Why does Paul want to share in Christ’s sufferings? How will this aid him in “becoming like Him in His death?” Why is this something Paul desires? Is this something that you desire? How can this become something that you pursue and for which you pray?

(b) How are sharing in Christ’s sufferings and becoming like Him in His death related to knowing the power of His resurrection? Why should you rejoice in this suffering (note that Paul commands the Philippians to “rejoice in the Lord” in 2:18, in the context of suffering, as well as 3:1 & 4:4)? Do you rejoice for the opportunity to share in Christ’s sufferings?

(c) According to v. 11, what is the outcome of this life of knowing Christ (though it may sound like it in English, Paul is not expressing doubt!)? Why is it necessary to share in Christ’s sufferings in order to one day attain resurrection from the dead?

(d) Paul communicates the #1 priority of his life in these verses: There is nothing greater than the surpassing knowledge of knowing Christ! Does your daily life reflect this priority? Do the decisions you make, the words you speak, the actions you initiate, the thoughts you think, all reflect that your ultimate priority in life is knowing Christ?

(e) *Family*: As is often the case, I am out of room! So spend this evening either (1) memorizing our memory verse, or (2) discussing (d) above and helping your family understand different ways of developing & maintaining this priority.

DATE: April 8, 2012

PASSAGE: Philippians 3:7-11

Knowing Christ

In Philippians 3:4-11 Paul contrasts his former confidence in the flesh with his current and future confidence in Christ for his righteousness.