



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 69

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

All law keeping, accomplishments, and merit are rubbish compared to Christ.



MONDAY

THE STORY: PHILIPPIANS 3:4b - 7

All religious works are worthless apart from Christ. Paul had every reason to boast about his religious accomplishments. Not only was he born a Jew, but he also followed the law given by God almost perfectly. He was a man so full of zeal that he persecuted Christians, who he believed threatened to undermine the Jewish traditions given by God.

Once God opened his eyes to see how inadequate his works really were in comparison to the work of Christ, Paul gladly gave up everything he was counting on for salvation. He considered it a loss. He basically gave up his occupation as a Jewish religious leader on the spot. In its place he gained a much greater calling. Instead of being an instructor of legalism, Paul became an instructor of grace!

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why are religious works worthless apart from Christ? (Nothing we could ever do, no matter how good, could take away the evil we have already done. In addition, none of our works, no matter how good they appear, are free from the stain of sin. Our motives are mixed with sin apart from Christ because we are looking, in some measure, to glorify ourselves and not the Lord.)

What kinds of things might some people do to try to make themselves feel or look more holy? (Every religious work, whether praying, reading our Bibles, or even going to church, can all be done for the wrong reasons. We should do those things because we want to glorify God, not so that we can be religious or holy or feel better about ourselves.)

PRAY:

Pray that God would save every member of your family so that you can pursue Christ with the same kind of passion Paul had.



TUESDAY

THE STORY: PHILIPPIANS 3:8,9

All accomplishments are rubbish compared to gaining Christ. Paul didn't stop with his religious works. He went on to say that he considered everything a loss compared to knowing Jesus. Often we find our identity and motivation in our gifts, knowledge, or accomplishments in life. If a person is a good football player, for instance, he might be tempted to think he is something special because of his ability to play well. Paul realized, though that our boasting in anything but Christ is sinful. It is not that our gifts, talents or accomplishments are bad, but they should not define us. Compared to Christ, Paul tells us they are rubbish. The word for "rubbish" means the scraps thrown to the dogs at the end of a feast.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Does Paul say our accomplishments are worthless? (Yes, but only in comparison to Christ. Paul is not saying we should stop doing good things. We should do all things for the glory of God.)

What accomplishments, gifts, or talents in your life tempt you to think you are special? (Parents, take the opportunity to answer first. We all like to take pride in what we do. Recognizing where these temptations are strongest can help us fight them.)

PRAY:

Pray that God would help you find your identity in Christ and His accomplishments on the cross instead of what you have done yourself.



**WEDNESDAY
WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?**

THE STORY: PHILIPPIANS 3:10, 11

Paul speaks as one who has endured much suffering for the sake of Christ. Rather than complain at the end of his days, Paul sees his own struggle through the lens of the gospel. Jesus suffered and died, and then He rose again. Paul reverses this order, placing resurrection before suffering. This is the path of all believers. First, we experience the joy of being saved to newness of life before we share in the sufferings of our Lord. We, like Paul, should not be surprised at suffering. It is a part of the path of every Christian - some certainly greater than others. Christ is the focus of Paul's life, and we only need to read a few sentences of Paul's letter to the Philippians to see the message of the gospel woven in again and again.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Are all men called to suffer for Christ? (Yes. First we are called, like Christ, to deny ourselves the passing pleasures of sin. Then, like Christ, we are to proclaim truth to an unbelieving world. Some will reject us and our message. Some may also suffer physical persecution and even death for the sake of our Lord and the gospel.)

When will we experience the fullness of the power of Christ's resurrection? (We will experience the resurrection the moment we die and go to heaven to be with our Lord. In that moment we will know. We will see Him!)

PRAY:

Pray that God gives grace to every member of your family to live for Christ until the day you rise to be with Christ.



THURSDAY

THE STORY: PHILIPPIANS 3:12-14

All of our future is defined by pursuing Christ. Paul's greatest desire was to know more about Jesus. He left all his accomplishments behind and pressed forward toward Christ. Our prize is heaven with Jesus. So we should live in such a way that we keep our destination, heaven with Christ, in view. When we keep heaven in view, earthly accomplishments and treasures do not easily tempt us. Paul was quick to mention that he was not perfect. Like us, he still struggled with sin. Paul pressed on to know Christ, realizing that one day he would see Jesus.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Can you remember a time when you were excited about something that would happen in the future? (Help your children remember. Perhaps they looked forward to a vacation, getting their training wheels off their bikes, or finishing a school year.)

Why should we be just as excited about our future with Christ? (We have so much to look forward to in heaven. There will be no sickness, no sin, no pain, and no tears. We will see Jesus and will rejoice with all the Christians who have gone before us.)

PRAY:

Pray that God would give each member of your family an increasing eagerness to be with Christ.



FRIDAY
ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

THE STORY: PSALM 34:8

Peter quotes this verse (1 Peter 2:3) as a way to describe our conversion. Jesus is our refuge from sin, and when we place our trust and hope in Him, we find refuge from judgment and death. In Christ we have life, joy, peace, and hope everlasting. By trusting in Christ we have forgiveness. There could be no greater taste of goodness than being freed from the punishment we deserve.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What does it mean to take refuge in something? (When we take refuge, we are looking for protection or shelter from some pending danger. If a tornado were reported to be traveling in your direction, you might take refuge in your basement or a secure room in the middle of your home.)

How do we take refuge in Christ? (Jesus saves us from the wrath of God we deserve for our sin. In Christ we have refuge from that judgment and from eternal death and hell.)

PRAY:

Thank the Father for sending His Son to be our refuge.