

TO LIVE IS CHRIST**Profit and Loss Statements****Philippians 3:1–11**

“What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord....” Philippians 3:8a

Day 1: Read Philippians 3:1–3.

1. Paul begins this section by reminding the Philippians once again about the source of joy; what is it? (Ps. 32:11; Jn. 15:9–11; Rom. 15:13) Our world seems to clamor for happiness; how does joy differ from happiness?
2. What exactly do the “dogs,” the “mutilators of the flesh,” want the Philippian Christians to do? Why is this a problem against which Paul wants to “safeguard” the flock in Philippi? (Gal. 3:1–7; 5:1–6)
3. Paul uses “dogs” to describe those belonging to the “false circumcision” (NAS) group. This was usually a derogatory term used to describe Gentiles, those outside of the covenant community. Why does he use such a harsh tone? (Gal. 2:4; 6:12–13; Rev. 22:14–15)

Day 2: Read Philippians 3:1–11.

4. When circumcision was first instituted by God, what was its purpose? (Gen.17:10–11) What greater time and reality was this sign pointing forward to? (Jer. 4:4; Jer. 9:25–26; Deut. 30:6)
5. Now that Christ has come, what does Paul state are the three marks that identify the truly circumcised people of God? (vs. 3)
6. What do you think is the point of the discussion about confidence beginning in verse 3b? Reflect on whether Paul believes you can have one foot in each of the confidence camps?

Day 3: Read Philippians 3:4–8.

7. What things did Paul formerly consider to be to his “profit” (vs. 7)?
8. Paul had invested a lot in these things. Why did he put them on the rubbish heap?

What kind of profit might he have been looking for in them?

What is the only thing that Paul lists now, in the profit column? (vs. 8)

9. What things do you consider to be to your own profit, before God or others? What are the things that you think give you a certain standing or that you use to reassure yourself when something goes wrong ("Well, at least I...")? Such things might be material possessions, relationships, abilities, or even virtues.
10. What did Paul's misplaced confidence in those things that were to his "profit" lead him to pursue? (vs. 6a)
11. Something happened in Paul's life to bring him to awareness that his confidence in his privileges attainments and self-righteousness was all wrong. What was that? (Paul was formerly known as Saul, see Acts 9:1–16.)
12. Write down your own story of Christ revealing himself to you, and consider sharing it with the group. If you don't have your own story, what are some things from Paul's experience that speak to you?

Day 4: Read Philippians 3:7–11.

13. Is there in fact "a righteousness of [one's] own that comes from the law" (vs. 9)? Discuss.
14. Reflect on some of Paul's other letters and elaborate on what is meant by "the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith" (known as justification). (2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 3:21–28; Rom. 5:6–9; Titus 3:3–8) What part do we play in this?
15. What three things does Paul want to know—not merely know about, but know deeply? (vs. 10) Why? (vs. 11) Would all three be on your list? If not, where do you struggle?

Day 5: Read Philippians 3:7–11.

16. Are we to think from the "somehow" in verse 11 that there is some doubt about whether believers will be raised from the dead? (1 Cor. 15:12–23; 1 Thess. 4:16–17)
17. How does resurrection power enable us to live differently? (Eph. 3:14–21; Col. 1:18–20) Take a moment to pray that God would "open the eyes of your heart" (Eph. 1:18) to believe that his resurrection power is available to you in a specific situation you are in the midst of.