

# WINNING THE GAME OF LIFE

## Growing People Change

- **For the Leader:**

- **Scripture Study:** 3 We are the circumcision. We are the ones who serve by God's Spirit and who boast in Christ Jesus. We don't put our confidence in rituals performed on the body, 4 though I have good reason to have this kind of confidence. If anyone else has reason to put their confidence in physical advantages, I have even more: 5 I was circumcised on the eighth day. I am from the people of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin. I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews. With respect to observing the Law, I'm a Pharisee. 6 With respect to devotion to the faith, I harassed the church. With respect to righteousness under the Law, I'm blameless. 7 These things were my assets, but I wrote them off as a loss for the sake of Christ. 8 But even beyond that, I consider everything a loss in comparison with the superior value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have lost everything for him, but what I lost I think of as sewer trash, so that I might gain Christ
- **If you're not familiar with the Jewish tradition and the story of the Israelites in the Old Testament, Paul's words in Philippians 3 can be confusing. Why is he talking about circumcision? Why does it matter what tribe he came from?**

**Circumcision:** Beginning with Abraham, God commands the males among God's chosen people, the Israelites, to be circumcised eight days after birth. Now, as the non-Jewish (gentile) people begin believing in Jesus and joining the church, some of the Jews think Gentiles should be circumcised too. Paul is disputing this attitude and using his own credentials as a faithful "lifetime" Jew to do so.

**From the people of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin:** Paul can trace his spiritual lineage all the way back to the establishment of the original twelve tribes of Israel. Benjamin was a favored tribe and produced the first king of Israel, Saul, who briefly entered our story last week. It's possible Saul/Paul was even named after him. Again, Paul is saying that if anyone has reason to boast in such things, it's him—but he's not boasting because knowing Christ is more important.

**With respect to devotion... I harassed the church:** Galatians 1:13, Paul says, "You heard about my previous life in Judaism, how severely I harassed God's church and tried to destroy it". His "credentials" in this area were well known.

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- **Discussion:** Read Philippians 3:4-8
  - Why do you think Paul listed all of his achievements? How do you think this may have affected his readers?
    - How do you think that Paul's religious accomplishments had profited him? Why would he now consider them to be a loss?
    - What do you think is the significance of Paul's comment that he wrote off his assets as a loss? Were they wrong in themselves?
    - How do you see that these verses illustrate Paul's transformation from pharisee to Christ follower?
  - Read Psalm 119:105. Describe a time experienced the bible being a light for your path and giving you direction for your life?
  - Why is baptism so important? (It is a testimony of how your life has changed as a result of your faith in Jesus Christ)
    - Have you ever shared your faith with someone else? How did that experience go?
    - Did you know that getting baptized is a way to share your faith with people?
    - Is anyone here interested in knowing more about baptism? (Make sure to let Nick know)
  - One of the ways to allow room for the Holy Spirit to mold you into God's will for your life is by taking time to connect with God. Everyone share some of the ways they make room for God in their lives.
  - List some ways that everyone as a group will commit to connecting with God this week and talk about how it went last week.
  - Pray together (Ask how we can pray for each member this week)