

# ***life group study guide***

October 9, 2016

## ***FORGET THE PAST***

**Big Idea:** God gives us new life not to strive for salvation, but to strive because of it.

Bible | Phil. 3:1-21, 4:1

The Apostle Paul described the Christian life as a focused life. This lesson is focused on self-exam to prove to ourselves that we are not distracted by “things” we see as important. It is also of great importance that we discard those Godly actions and efforts employed mistakenly to offset the sin in our lives and to gain us salvation. We must continually reach forward to those things that are ahead, “the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” The center of Paul’s life was Christ! Nothing else was important! For Paul his life was focused in this:

1. Jesus lived the life I couldn’t live
2. Died the death I should have died
3. And all who have faith in Jesus Christ - crucify their grandiose efforts to be good enough, and accept his life. This is Victory in Jesus!
4. We forget all that was behind us. Our sin, our failures, and our efforts to overcome them by good deeds – and instead come alive in Christ Jesus!
5. Now, we live our lives – both in good deeds and in suffering – in view of the resurrected Christ who reigns in Heaven. Not in light of our present sufferings and struggles.
6. We will repeat this till our last breath, where we will be resurrected and reign with him

That’s why in this passage Paul lets us know that his ultimate goal in life is to abandon his best efforts at self-salvation, and to pursue instead the glory of Jesus Christ crucified. Paul considers himself now dead to sin and alive in Christ. Paul is determined to encourage the Philippian church to pursue Christ. Not to suddenly do works-based righteousness, but because there is no one, and no thing that is worthy of our efforts than Christ.

1. It is important to examine our lives and determine what we have done that counts, and what we have done that isn’t important.
  - a. First it is important to look at our personal gold standard. What does success look like to you?
    - i. What has led you to this definition?
    - ii. What or who has influenced your vision of a successful life?
    - iii. Has God or His Word influenced your decision?

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Paul says in Philippians 3:7-9, "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count **all things** loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the **loss of all things**, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith."

- b. What have you given up or sacrificed to achieve your definition of success?
    - i. Are those things you have given up things that count?
    - ii. Could you say, "Nothing is important to me except focusing on Christ!"
    - iii. Is that practical, i.e., my wife, kids, job, house, car, etc?
    - iv. What or who occupies the actual center of your life? Is it money, friends, family, entertainment, football, reading, church, etc?
  - c. What is God's definition of success? Support your statement with Scripture.
    - i. How might achieving God's success be aided by forgetting both your failures and your achievements?
    - ii. What characteristics might you admire in an example to lead you to conforming to His success?
    - iii. Where is your citizenship? How does that look today (almost ready to vote)? How does that impact your compliance to national laws, military service, paying taxes that are used for evil purposes, forming opinions and defending ungodly laws?
2. If you cite your life before Christ, as Paul did (Philippians 3: 4-6), I suppose for many of you there is a list of some very outstanding accomplishments, including humanitarian acts, charitable gifts, citizenship awards; as you list your New Life achievements, is there a noticeable difference? Is it important or not? Why would it matter if it is by faith (grace) you are saved?
  3. What is the prize you are personally hot in pursuit of? Is it as important to you as the upward call of God?"

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