
BELIEVER'S PRODUCTION

My husband is the youth pastor at our church. Every Tuesday we have youth group for the 7th – 12th graders. I love working with the teens! Their perspective is so unique. I learn so much from them and our experiences with them! If you have teenagers or remember being a teenager, you might remember that to a teen, the things they experience are their whole life. The things that surround them in high school are all they know and often times consume them. Their view of reality is limited to the things they see and experience.

It's my hope we can apply today's verse to our circumstances and gain a greater perspective on reality. Just like a high school student has a limited perspective, we often do too! When we look back, we realize where God has brought us. The things we thought were important when we were teens are now far from our minds. What is important to us now? What do we hold close to our hearts? What do we still need to let go of? I pray that God will show you today how He can change you for His glory!

Let's read our verse for today. Philippians 3:7 says,

“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.”

This week we began by looking at legalism versus spirituality and saw a list of Paul's qualifications for being the perfect Jew. Today we will see that Paul realized when he became a Christian that none of his qualifications mattered because they were done through the power of the flesh rather than through the power of the Holy Spirit. He tells us that the things he considered profit, his circumcision on the eighth day, his being part of the nation of Israel, his being part of the tribe of Benjamin, his being a Hebrew of Hebrews, his being a

Pharisee and his blamelessness according to the law, were all pointless! He realized that because of Christ, his own attempts at righteousness were actually loss and completely worthless.

Read Jesus' words in Matthew 16:26. Write the verse here.

So how are we to be successful? As Christians our success is determined by our production, but that production must be done according to God's design. Each of us is also given a different assignment and different gifts, so our production will look different.

Do you understand your “assignment” from God? What is it?

There is one key factor that is the same for all of us though. In order to do God's will, we must be under the control of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 says,

“For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

This passage tells us that after we are saved there are two types of production in our lives.

1) Non-Flammable: Works done under the control of the Holy Spirit. These works produce gold, silver and precious stones. These works will not be burned and will produce rewards at the judgment seat of Christ.

2) Flammable: Works done under the control of the flesh. These works produce wood, hay and stubble. These works will be burned and produce no rewards at the judgment seat of Christ.

Take time to read John 15:1-8. It establishes the Doctrine of Fruitful Production. Let's summarize.

Christ is the vine and the source of life, food and stability through which we can become productive. John 15:1a

God the Father is the vine keeper who prunes and cares for this productive vine. John 15:1b

There are four types of branches

- 1) No Fruit: John 15:2a
- 2) Fruit: John 15:2b
- 3) More Fruit: John 15:2c
- 4) Much Fruit: John 15:5, Galatians 5:22-23

Productivity is dependent upon three conditions.

- 1) Cleansing: The Word of God is the means of purification. John 15:3
- 2) Abiding: John 15:4-7
- 3) Obedience: John 15:10-12

Production is found in three areas.

- 1) Carrying out the Great Commission: Matthew 28:19-20
- 2) Personal Attitudes and Character: Galatians 5:22-23
- 3) Functioning with Your Gifts: Romans 12:6-8

We are responsible for presenting our bodies as living sacrifices. (Romans 12:1) It is God who gives the increase. We are not responsible for the results. (1 Corinthians 3:5-9) Our rewards for our productivity will be given as we follow God's leading in our lives. (2 Timothy 4:7-8)

As Paul learned the doctrine of grace, he realized his formerly impressive resume' meant nothing in regards to his salvation and righteous production.

Look at your own life. Think about all you've accomplished. How has God been a part of your accomplishments? Who do you give the credit to?

Do you remember our verse for today? "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ." Paul realized that his life before Christ meant nothing. His life outside fellowship with God was useless. The word of God gave him purpose. He realized that nothing he did before salvation would bring fulfillment. Nothing he did out of fellowship would bring righteousness. Have you realized that? Are you honest about the things that bring you meaning? Remember, nothing but a right relationship with God will bring you satisfaction, joy and peace.

REVIEW

- ~ Righteous works are done under the power of the Holy Spirit.
- ~ Righteous works produce gold, silver and precious stones. (Rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ.)
- ~ Unrighteous works produce wood, hay and stubble. (Works that are burned up at the Judgment Seat of Christ – No Reward.)
- ~ Doctrine of Fruitful Production