

Philippians 3 Study Guide

Scriptures in Study Guide:

Scriptures this week are in the NIV (New International Version). To make things easier, the actual verses will be included in your daily lessons to help you with the missing words.

Background:

- Although Paul is writing from house arrest in a private residence, he was chained night and day to a Roman soldier. As discussed in **Philippians 1**, the church of Philippi has “supplied” for Paul’s need (by funds to cover his expenses) so that the cause of Christ would be able to “progress”.
- In **Philippians 2**, Paul outlined the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ, relating that with our own earthly walks as His disciples and discussed the role of Timothy and Epaproaditus within the cause of Christ.
- As we move into **Philippians 3**, Paul begins reiterating the source of our joy in the midst of uncomfortable circumstances. In the first part of this chapter, Paul will contrast the futility of man’s righteousness versus the sufficiency of God’s righteousness. In the chapter’s latter portion, Paul will invite his readers to follow his example of living above their circumstances and the turmoils around him in view of the prize set before them - being with our Lord Christ Jesus in heaven.

Day 1 (verses 1-3)

Pray God open your heart and understanding to what He would have you learn today from His Word.

Read **Philippians 3: 1-3** out loud and complete the following verses and questions.

3 **1** Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. **2** Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. **3** For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—

Verse 1:

- Further, my brothers and sisters, _____ in the Lord!
- Paul tells the Philippian believers (“my brothers and sisters”) that it is _____ trouble for me to _____ the same things to you _____, it is a _____ for you.
- **Question:** what is it for the Philippian believers that Paul write the same things to them (that they can have joy and rejoice in their suffering for the cause of Christ)? _____

Verse 2:

- Watch _____ for those dogs, those _____, those mutilators of the _____.
 - **“Dogs”** - this term signifies false teachers. Dogs, in the day of Paul, were hated creatures and not pets. They were not domestic and many times would attack.
 - **“Evil workers”** were those who were part of the religious system. Their works were their salvation in the form of self righteous acts and human effort. Our acts and efforts should naturally stem from our love of God so that others might know Him; not to make us feel better about ourselves.
 - **“Mutilation”** comes from “to cut” and “down”. Paul is contrasting the Jewish circumcision in contrast to true spiritual circumcision of the heart. This is also referred to as the “false circumcision” and this term segue into Paul’s definition (**verse 3**) of what authentic circumcision is in the eyes of God.

Verse 3:

- For it is we who are the _____,
- We who are the circumcision, serve God by _____ Spirit, who boast in _____ Jesus, and who put no _____ in the flesh—
- though I myself have _____ for such confidence
- If someone else _____ they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have _____:

Look up **Deuteronomy 30:6** and write it out here:

Questions:

- What do we learn, in **Deuteronomy 30:6**, of what our Lord God will do to our hearts?
_____.
- What is the purpose of our hearts being circumcised (according to **Deuteronomy 30:6**):
_____.
- What did Jesus say for us to do in **Mark 12:29-30**? _____.

Day 2 (verses 4-9)

Yesterday, in **Philippians 3:1-3**, Paul warned his fellow believers in the Philippian church about false teachers who worked against the cause of Christ. They were emptying out the work that Jesus did on the cross by requiring areas in order to divide the church. He begins to lay a foundation of why physical circumcision is not a requirement for salvation and that it is only through the work that Jesus Christ did on the cross.

Today, in **Philippians 3:4-9**, Paul will list why, if physical achievement were required, he could boast more than anyone. After listing those earthly areas, he will show how all are nothing compared to coming to know our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pray God open your heart and understanding to what He would have you learn today from His Word.
Read **Philippians 3: 4-9** out loud and complete the following verses and questions.

4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. **7** But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. **8** What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

Verse 5-6:

- Paul states that he has more reason to put “confidence in the flesh because, he was:
 - circumcised on the _____ day
 - of the people of _____,
 - of the _____ of Benjamin,
 - a Hebrew of _____;
 - in regard to the law, a _____;
 - as for zeal, _____ the church;
 - as for _____ based on the law, faultless.
- **Question:** as we look at what Paul lists here, in **Philippians 3:5-6**, what does it mean to “put confidence in the flesh” (flesh being human achievements)?
_____.

Verse 7:

- But whatever were _____ to me I now consider _____ for the sake of Christ.
- **Question:** Why do you think that Paul says that he can't count all his earthly achievements as "salvational assets" with God? _____.

Verse 8:

- What is more, I _____ everything a loss because of the _____ worth of knowing Christ Jesus _____ Lord,
- for whose _____ I have lost all things. I consider them _____, that I may _____ Christ

Verse 9:

- and be found _____ him, not having a _____ of my own that comes from the _____, but that which is _____ faith in Christ—
- the righteousness that comes from _____ on the basis of faith.

Question: What is Paul saying about where the basis of faith and our salvation truly come from since we can't rely on our human achievements or service in the church? :

Day 3 (verses 10-16)

Yesterday, in **Philippians 3:4-9**, Paul, listed his earthly qualifications for “deserving” to be part of the “circumcision”. He referred to this as us putting our “confidence in the flesh”. He states that all of that is nothing compared to being saved in Christ Jesus and none of those earthly achievements could ever earn him salvation. His righteousness, Paul proclaims is a righteousness that comes from Christ on the basis of faith.

Today, in **Philippians 3:10-16**, Paul will build upon how his desires have matured from the earthly accomplishments to wanting full and complete identification with Christ. This, he teaches his fellow believers, is his ultimate goal.

Pray God open your heart and understanding to what He would have you learn today from His Word.
Read **Philippians 3:10-16** out loud and complete the following verses and questions.

10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, **11** and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. **13** Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. **15** All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. **16** Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

Verse 10-11:

- I want to know _____
- —yes, to know the _____ of his resurrection and participation in his _____, becoming like him in his _____,
- and so, somehow, attaining to the _____ from the dead.

- Write out **Daniel 12:13** _____
_____.

- Write out **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** _____
_____.

- **Question:** What is the “resurrection from the dead”? _____

Verse 12:

- Not that I have already obtained all _____, or have already arrived at my _____, but I press on to take _____ of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

- **Questions:**
 - Based upon **Philippians 3:11**, what has Paul not “obtained” yet? _____
 - Why hasn’t Paul obtained the “resurrection of the dead” yet? _____

Verse 13-14:

- Brothers and _____, I do not consider myself _____ to have taken hold of it.
- But _____ thing I do: Forgetting what is _____ and straining toward what is _____,
- I press on toward the _____ to win the prize for which God has _____ me heavenward in Christ _____.

• **Questions:**

- What do you think are the “things” that Paul has to “forget” in order to reach forward to what is ahead? (See **Acts 9:1-2; Acts 26:11**) _____

- What do you think is the “prize” that Paul is pressing toward? (**2 Tim. 4:8**) _____

Day 4 (verses 15-17)

Yesterday, in **Philippians 3:10-16**, Paul, moved from his statement of his underserving gift of his salvation through Christ alone to his ultimate desire to be fully one when he physically died. He acknowledged that until that time, he would forget those things (both his earthly achievements and his godless decisions and strain forward to do whatever God had planned for him to do through his physical life. His gaze would be “heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Today, in **Philippians 3:15-17**, Paul will invite his fellow believers to follow his example of humility and surrender to God’s plan for their lives.

Pray God open your heart and understanding to what He would have you learn today from His Word.
Read **Philippians 3:15-17** out loud and complete the following verses and questions.

15 All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. **16** Only let us live up to what we have already attained. **17** Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.

Verse 15:

- All of us, then, who are _____ should take such a view of things.
 - **Question:** What do you think Paul means by “mature”? _____
- And if on some point you think _____, that too God will _____ clear to you.
- **Questions:**
 - Who will make this “view” clear to his fellow believers if they do not see it? Paul or God?
_____.
 - If God will take care of our issues with others, how can that truth effect how we handle the immaturity of some Christians around us? What can we physically do for someone who offends us? _____.

Verse 16:

- Only let us live _____ to what we have _____ attained.

Verse 17:

- Join together in _____ my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a _____, keep your eyes on _____ who live as we do.

Deep Dive:

- For the remainder of today, let's explore additional Scripture to gain further insight on Paul's expectation of these fellow believers' faith maturity. **Write out the following scriptures:**

Romans 14:1: _____

1 Corinthians 9:22 _____

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12: _____

Day 5 (verses 18-21)

Pray God open your heart and understanding to what He would have you learn today from His Word.
Read **Philippians 3:18-21** out loud and complete the following verses and questions.

18 For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. **19** Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. **20** But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Verse 18-19:

- For, as I have _____ told you before and now tell you again even with _____, many live as _____ of the cross of Christ.
- Their destiny is _____, their god is their _____, and their glory is in their _____.
- Their mind is set on _____ things.

• **Write Colossians 3:1-3:**

• **Questions:**

- In light of what we learn in **Colossians 3:1-3** (another “prison epistle” of Paul’s), why should we set our mind on “things above” and not on “earthly things”?

- Why, is Paul upset about these enemies of the cross of Christ? _____.
- What did the cross of Christ do for us? _____.

Verse 20-21:

- But our _____ is in heaven.
- And we _____ await a Savior from there, the Lord _____ Christ,
- who, by the _____ that enables him to bring _____ under his control,
- will _____ our lowly bodies so that they will be like _____ glorious body.

• **Questions:**

- Where is our citizenship? _____.
- What will our lowly bodies become? _____.
- Who will we be like when we receive “His glorious body”? _____.