



Brown CG Discussion Guide

To Be Content: In Our Power - Philippians 3:1-21
October 18th, 2020

I. Starter Context and Thoughts:

Do you ever wonder and contemplate the full meaning of being a Christian and that we are told we are “Citizens of Heaven and Not of this World”? How do I live in this world, but not let it begin to influence or take over my priorities, my focus and all of my goals? Have I done a good job in Christ eyes of keeping the right balance and not letting worldly things dominate what is important in my life? Do I spend too much time focusing and working toward worldly things as opposed to sanctifying and heavenly things?

II. Discussion of Scripture

Philippians 3:1-11 - Righteousness Through Faith in Christ

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.² Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.³ For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for 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; as to the law, a Pharisee;⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Brief Explanation of Philippians 3:1-11: Paul again reminds the Philippians that they need to rejoice. He is warning the church to look out for the dogs—These verses refer to the problem of the Judaizers in the early church. These were groups of legalistic Jews who claimed to believe in the gospel but added their own works and traditions to it. Paul uses himself as an example that all these things they were putting confidence in were not enough. He makes it clear that worldly achievements are meaningless. By the Judaizer’s own standards, he was the ultimate Jew. If anyone could save themselves by being a good Jew it was Paul.

Whatever gain Paul had, he counted it as loss for the sake of Christ. Before salvation he considered these things valuable. Afterward, he considered them a loss. The very best that the world has to offer and the very best that we can achieve is rubbish compared to what is truly important, knowing Christ.

Group Discussion:

1. In verse 2-3, who does Paul make such a point about? Why do you think this is so important for Christians?
2. What is Paul bragging in verse 4-6? What is Paul saying about “The Flesh”?
3. In Verse 7, what does Paul mean when he says “I counted as loss” for the sake of Christ?
4. In Verse 8, how does Paul compare Worldly achievements to knowing Jesus as Saviour? What does this say about our perspective of 1) Achieving worldly goals or results and 2) How we are to “see them” and accept them?
5. From Verse 9, Paul directly addresses our Salvation and how it is achieved?
6. What is the main point of Verses 9-11?

Philippians 3:12-21 - Straining Toward the Goal

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶ Only let us hold true to what we have attained. ¹⁷ Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸ For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Brief Explanation of Philippians 3:12-21 Paul realizes he hasn't achieved sanctification yet. He, like all believers is on the way, it's a journey. God works in Paul for the purpose of sanctifying him. Although we will never achieve perfection in this world, it should still be our goal. We are not to be complacent or willfully lazy, but pressing forward as accepting believers. Paul sets himself up as an example to the Philippians, not out of pride but out of a desire to see them grow in Christ. Lastly, our citizenship is in heaven. Paul reminds us that our core identity is as followers of Christ.

Group Discussion:

1. In verse 12-14, what does “I press on to make it my own” mean?
2. What is Paul referencing in verse 15 when he says that Mature Christians will think this way? Why does it take maturity to attain, perceive or see?
3. What is the contrast that Paul sets up by calling us the “Citizens of Heaven”? Who and what group is he contrasting this too?
4. In the broader context of contentment in our series, how are we to interpret these last few verses about sanctification and Citizens of heaven compared to as verse 19 says “having our minded set on earthly things”.