



REAL JOY

A STUDY
THROUGH
PHILIPPIANS

WEEK 8
MARCH 22

LIFE
GROUPS

GUIDE

RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH FAITH:

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 Christ

Philippians 3:8

GETTING STARTED

What is the bravest thing you have done in your life?

STORY BACKGROUND

Have you ever found yourself in the situation of saying “Goodbye” on the doorstep of a friend’s home, and then your conversation took a new direction and your departure was prolonged? This is the impression we are given as we begin reading Philippians 3. Paul begins by saying, *Finally, my brethren* (verse 1, NASB), and then launches into a lengthy warning about misplaced security.

When Paul referred to the false circumcision or *those who mutilate the flesh* (verse 2), he was talking about Judaism as a religious system, not physical circumcision. More specifically, he was warning them against being misled by teachers who might insist that following the traditions and laws of Moses were still required even after a person had placed their faith for salvation in Jesus Christ. You can hear Paul’s low opinion of those teachers in verse 2!

The congregation in Philippi was primarily Gentile, and the citizens were Roman. When Paul first went to Philippi, there was no synagogue in which to teach, but he found a group of God-fearing women meeting together by a riverbank to worship (Acts 16:9-15). It appears that the Jewish population was quite small; therefore, their understanding of the scriptures, and the laws of Moses was also limited. The church was about 12 years old when Paul wrote this letter. Without doubt they had been strengthened in their faith through Paul’s teaching when he revisited them on his third missionary journey. Even so, Paul was concerned that they would be vulnerable to false teachers whose impressive credentials in Judaism could persuade them to question their confidence in Jesus Christ, or to cultivate a spiritual “self-confidence” which would be equally detrimental to their life of faith.

FINDING JOY IN OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST



STORY: Philippians 3:1-11 (Read aloud)

MEMORY VERSE: Philippians 2:1-2

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.



HEAD LEVEL: These questions help us to examine what the Word tells us.

- According to 3:3, what are the three distinguishing marks of a genuine Christian?
- What stood out to you most vividly when you listened to this passage being read?



HEART LEVEL: These questions help us wrestle with what we believe.

- Paul gave seven sources of false confidence: ritual, ethnicity, rank, tradition, rule keeping, zeal, and obedience to the law. Which source is most enticing for you? Why?
- What were some of the things Paul had lost in order to gain Christ? What have you lost? Gained?
- What does it mean to *know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, being conformed to His death* (verse 10, NASB)?



HANDS LEVEL: These questions help us commit to a next step and live it out in our everyday lives.

- How are you able to test the teaching that is presented to you, to know if it is true or false?
- Who looks to you to help recognize truth from false teaching?

Next Week's Life Group: Real Joy: Finding Joy in Our Higher Calling

Next Week's Story: Philippians 3:12-4:1

Our Church's Definition of a Biblical Disciple of Jesus

A person who is committed to *following, being changed by,*
and *on mission* with Jesus (taken from Matthew 4:19).

The Purpose of Life Groups

Life Groups are where we connect with God and with others through relationships – growing in spiritual maturity as biblical disciples of Jesus and inspiring a culture of discipleship as we do life together. Life Groups are loving, safe, and interactive places where people can be authentic and vulnerable as they explore, experience, serve, and grow in relationship with Jesus, the Word, and others. (*Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 3:12-13, 10:23-25; 1 Thessalonians 5:11*)
