



from the inside out

MEMORY VERSE

10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death,
11 if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Philippians 3:10-12

BASIC STUDY

QUESTION 1

Read Philippians 3. Afterwards, review the Class Notes. Be sure and note anything you want to bring up in small group.

QUESTION 2

The “Christian Pharisees” were pushing circumcision. They believed that to be right with God you must be circumcised. Circumcision was the litmus test of the day.

- What is your litmus test du jour?
- What rule do people have to follow or else you are certain they are not really followers of Jesus?
- What rule do people have to follow or you can not be in fellowship with them?

Week 5 Home Study: God's Plan – Phil 3

- Paul says what rules you follow are not the litmus test of your righteousness. Paul says that the litmus test is “are they worshipping in the spirit of God? boasting in Christ Jesus? and having no confidence in the flesh?”
- Do you receive and live in grace, but hold others captive to the law?

QUESTION 3

Circumcision was a big issue in the early church. Under the Old Covenant, it had served as an initiation into the family of God for male children. Now under the New Covenant, its necessity is coming under question. Where does Paul stand on this issue?

What does he say about circumcision in verses 2-5?

What does he say about circumcision in Galatians 5:1-14?

What does he say about circumcision in Romans 2:25-29 – Is there a Spiritual Circumcision?

Should we circumcise our sons today? If so or if not – why?

How do we teach our sons (and daughters!) about Spiritual Circumcision?

Week 5 Home Study: God's Plan – Phil 3

QUESTION 4

Paul takes time out in his letter to tell them what a great Pharisee he had been. What does he tell them were his seven merits in verses 4-6?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Which of these can you say that you have attained?

If you haven't attained any or many of these things and Jesus said, "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20), then how are you going to enter the Kingdom of Heaven? (Hint: Paul tells about two ways of achieving righteousness in 3:9. Which one is the only real way?)

In reality, are you living by works or by faith?

QUESTION 5:

In Philippians 3:7-11, Paul is using the image of an accountant counting their profits and losses. When he summed his net worth as a Pharisee would do, he sees a lot of things in the Profit Column. But when he summed his net worth as a Follower of Jesus, he moves all those things that were once in the Profit Column into the Losses Column. Why don't those things count as profit anymore?

What is the one thing that Paul has discovered that belongs in the Profit Column that cancels all debt?

If you knew that you could never have a negative bank balance, what would you go do today with your money?

Week 5 Home Study: God's Plan – Phil 3

If you knew that you will never have a spiritual debt again, what would you go do today with your life?

DEEPER STUDY

QUESTION 6

What is the goal of Paul's life (verse 12-16)? Note: the "heavenly call" is not going to heaven when one dies, but living as slaves of Jesus.

What is the goal of your day today? The goal for the year? The goal for your life? Does it match up with what Paul thinks the goal should be for a follower of Christ?

QUESTION 7

Paul says, "Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us" (Philippians 3:17). Make two lists below. One of what people should imitate about you and one of what should they not imitate about you? How can your small group benefit from the "Should Column" and how can they help you with the "Should Not Column"?

Week 5 Home Study: God's Plan – Phil 3

QUESTION 8

Paul warns the Philippians in 3:17-19 about those he calls “many.” Describe the “many” by the four things Paul identifies them:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How does the person following Jesus contrast with “the many”? Hint: The many are the “Christian Pharisees.”

In what way are you intentionally not living like “the many?”

Week 5 Home Study: God's Plan – Phil 3

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP

DISCUSSION (9:45AM – 10:40AM)

- 9:45 am (5 min) – Say or read the memory verse together. Read the whole scripture.
- 9:50 am (10 min) – Does anyone have anything in particular that they wanted to discuss about the lesson this week?
- 10:00 am (10 min) – Do you believe that we encounter Pharisees today? If so, who are they? What do they teach? Why is it important to beware of them?
- 10:10 am (10 min) – Why do we need to forget the past (3:13) in order to press on toward the goals Christ has for us? How might the past (both the good and the bad) be holding you back from your future?
- 10:20 am (20 min) -- Ask “what has God been doing in your life this week?” Pray for each other.
- 10:39 am (1 min) -- Close by saying the Philippians Prayer:

Dear God, May our love abound more and more with knowledge and full discernment; so that we may choose the things that are excellent, so that in the day of Christ we may be sincere and blameless, being filled with the fruits of righteousness that come through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God. Amen