

PURSUING THE MOST IMPORTANT GOAL

Philippians 3:10-21

When we've found great treasure –that enriches our life, makes us better people –we don't readily give it up, unless we find something better.

Paul found a great treasure as part of God's people:

He had committed his life to pursue religion **God** established.

What convinced him to give that up & pursue another path?

You'd have to be convinced something's a lot better!

Paul reveals *NEW* life goals

–for him & us–in Phil.

True spirituality 3:1-21

Responds to Judaizers' view that spirituality's achieved by "living by rules"

–by keeping Mosaic law.

He contrasts that with the...

Marks of true spirituality: 3:3 *"We are the [true] circumcision, [we] who worship by the Spirit of God, & who glory in Christ Jesus, & who put no confidence in the flesh"*

True spirituality is about...

=> Serving God **by the Spirit** –NOT by letter of law–rules!

=> Boasting about **Jesus** –what HE's done–NOT about us!

=> **Not trusting our efforts** to satisfy God!

Paul's attitude concern-ing achievements 7-9

"Whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸What's more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I've lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹& 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 & is by faith.”

He considers *his* achievements to be worthless, cp. with Jesus' righteousness applied to his account.

[So what are...] **HIS GOALS?**

10-11 *“I want to know Christ & the power of his resurrection & the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹& so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”*

[lit., “attain” [=> experience...]

He doesn't replace old activities with different activities.

He doesn't seek to accomplish *more*, or perform better.

He focuses on

4 GOALS FOR LIFE:

1. Know Jesus better

Focus on *relationship* –person-al experience with Jesus

He already knows Him– he wants to know Him better.

Paul's longing=> that of godly people of all ages:

Moses saw God in way no one ever had, face-to-face; yet he asks for more—to see God's glory –thirsts to know Him better

David– psalmist, worshiper – "man after God's heart" – thirsts to enjoy God's presence

Paul– Missionary, apostle, teacher – goal: *know Him*

Godly people of all ages thirst to know God better *walk with God!*

2nd goal: **10b** *“To know...*

power of his resurrection”

2. Experience God's life-transforming power

“Resurrection” isn't a reference to our future hope.

Paul desires a *new life/ transformation now.*

Only God's power—power that raised Jesus from dead
—produces such new life—in Paul and in *US!*

[3rd goal:] **3:10c** *“share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death”*

3. Enjoy fellowship/sharing participation with God & with godly people, that comes from suffering for His name.

Suffering binds God's people together

—we **SHARE** privilege of suffering for His name.

[4th goal] **3:11** *“somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.”*

=> 4. Experience in our life [in daily living] the results of being resurrected with Him.

—identified with Him in resurrection

=> having new life with Him!

That's **Paul desire**: to know Christ better, experience His power, share with others the blessings of suffering for His name, and enjoy new life together with Him.

PAUL'S PROGRESS 3:12-14 *“Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do:*

Forgetting what's behind & straining toward what's ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

He hasn't yet reached the goal!

He's still pursuing it

He's fixed his eyes on goal & is progressing!

He forgets past—pos. or neg.! Like runner...

Doesn't matter what lies behind—good or bad—

He stretches out to what still lies ahead

All that matters is what's ahead! Str-e-tch for the goal!

WHAT'S THE GOAL?

The prize (which is)

=> **The high calling of God** (which is)

=> **BE LIKE JESUS!**

Most important goal: deepen our relationship with Christ

=> experience His life-transforming power daily.

=> win prize

=> **become like HIM!**

Issue is NOT where we are in the race, but whether we're making progress

Are we closer to the goal now than we were yr ago?

PAUL'S EXHORTATION 3:15-21 [keep moving!]

Agree on this principle

3:15 *"All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. & if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you."*

If we're mature [1st p.=> him!

=>Phil. 3 goals & progressive purpose

If we're not yet mature, God may have to help us understand it.

NOT easy to accept!

[That we *only* progress as God gives power!

Walk on level already reached 3:16

“Only let us live up to what we have already attained.”

(“we”–1st p.) Even Paul!

Whatever level we’ve reached, live on that level!

Imitate people who walk as he does 17-21

Importance of role models 17 *“Join with others in following my example, brothers, & take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.”*

Carefully pick a model, then imitate them

There’s truth in warning not to focus on *people*.

Yet, we *are* to find people who model how to focus on God!

3 reasons to imitate him:

**1) Because many don't
walk that way 3:18-19**

“As I’ve often told you before & now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, & their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.”

Many people deny centrality of the cross; substitute list of rules as standard for living.

In spite of legalistic codes,
they don’t live that way.

What do enemies of Christ look like?

They deny the cross & preach legalism. YET, ...

Their God is their appetite

(the belly)

They live to satisfy their own desires.

To feed selves

– for self-satisfaction

They brag about the wrong things

– **things that should cause them shame.**

They set minds on earthly things

Follow world's philosophy & goals.

Imitate him...

2) Because of our heavenly citizenship

3:20a *“But our citizenship is in heaven”*

We're **not** earthlings!

Shouldn't act like it!

3) Because of our Lord's coming 20b-21

*“We eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,
²¹who, 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.**”*

We're waiting for His coming – *for our* deliverance

We're waiting for transformation into His glorious form.

By imitating godly leaders, WE learn to stand firm.

4:1 *“Therefore, my brothers, whom I love & long for, my joy & crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.”*

That's how we pursue godliness—model our life after people who faithfully follow Him.

How should we then live?

WHAT GOALS SHOULD WE PURSUE?

1. Walk in a closer relationship with Him

Spend more time with Him Meditate on His Word more

2. Experience His life-transforming power

Focus is NOT on externals [rules], but on internal transformation.
That comes from power of the Spirit; NOT our efforts.

3. Press on toward becoming like Him.

To win the prize => God's heavenly calling
=> to become Christlike.

Issue isn't *where we are* in the race;

Issue is *ARE WE MAKING PROGRESS?*

What might God want to change in our life?

Lay aside past, whether good or bad.

Press on toward goal—strain every muscle, to win prize.

Seek to be like Him!