

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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ON ACCOUNT
OF CHRIST

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Living Stream Ministry

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COUNTING ALL THINGS LOSS ON ACCOUNT OF CHRIST

Philippians 3:7 and 8 say, “But what things were gains to me, these I have counted loss on account of Christ. But surely I count also all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them refuse that I may gain Christ.” When we come to these verses, we come to the heart of the book of Philippians. Here we are initiated into the experience of Christ.

In verse 7 Paul speaks of “what things were gains to me.” These are the things mentioned in verses 5 and 6. The things that were gains to him Paul counted loss on account of Christ. All the different gains were counted as one loss by Paul because they all issued in one thing, that is, the loss of Christ, as indicated by “on account of Christ.” All the things which were once gains to Paul hindered him and held him back from participating in Christ and enjoying Him. Hence, on account of Christ, all the gains were a loss to him.

Whereas in [verse 7](#) Paul refers specifically to religious things, in [verse 8](#) he goes on to say, “I count also all things to be loss.” Paul counted as loss on account of Christ not only the things of his former religion, but all other things as well. In this booklet I have a particular burden to point out what these things include.

RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, AND CULTURE

Years ago, many of us were taught that the things in [Philippians 3:8](#) refer to worldly, material things. In a sense, this understanding is partly right. However, to interpret Paul’s word in this way is not very practical. According to [verses 5 and 6](#), Paul’s concept is not mainly related to material things. It is true, of course, that worldly, material things occupy people and keep them from experiencing Christ. However, Paul realized that the things which truly frustrate people from experiencing Christ are mainly the things of religion, philosophy, and culture. For the most part, the thoughtful, philosophical people are not occupied by material things. Those who are not thoughtful or philosophical are the ones usually distracted by material things. Those who are more philosophical care for religion, culture, and philosophy. When you go out to preach the

gospel, you will discover that religion, philosophy, and culture are the most powerful strongholds of resistance to the gospel.

Before Paul was converted, he was not one who loved material things. On the contrary, he was a person fully given to Jewish religion, philosophy, and culture. His whole being was for Judaism and everything included in it. Apparently Jews care for their religion. Actually they care much more for their culture and philosophy than for religion. The same is true, of course, for people of every race, culture, and nationality.

Let us review the items covered by Paul in [verses 5 and 6](#). He says that he was circumcised the eighth day, that he was of the race of Israel, that he was of the tribe of Benjamin, that he was a Hebrew of Hebrews, that concerning the law he was a Pharisee, that concerning zeal he persecuted the church, and that concerning the righteousness which is in the law, he was blameless. These items are related to religion, philosophy, and culture. This is a strong indication that as Paul was writing these verses he was conscious not of material things, but rather of religious, philosophical, and cultural things. At the time the book of Philippians was written, most of the people in the Roman Empire were

for religion, philosophy, or politics. In fact, the three main elements of Western culture, then as well as now, were Jewish religion, Greek philosophy, and Roman politics.

HOOKED BY SATAN

For thousands of years, Satan, the enemy of God, has been using religion, philosophy, and culture to possess people and to keep them from experiencing Christ. Man was made for Christ. God created man in the image of God ([Gen. 1:26](#)), and the image of God is Christ ([Col. 1:15](#)). Man was made in the image of God for Christ. But Satan uses religion, philosophy, and culture to hook people and to keep them from Christ. Although the more simple people may be hooked by material things, the more thoughtful ones are hooked by religion, philosophy, and culture. Actually it is the people who are occupied by these things who control the earth. The thoughtful, philosophical, and cultured ones are the most powerful ones. However, Satan has used religion, philosophy, and culture both to occupy these people and also to nail them on his wall.

Before Paul believed in Christ, he also was one hooked and nailed by Satan. He had been hooked by Jewish religion, philosophy, and culture. How

strong he was for Judaism! Perhaps there has not been another person more absolute for Jewish religion, philosophy, and culture. To people like Saul of Tarsus, wealth or material things mean nothing compared with their religion, philosophy, and culture.

If we get into Paul's spirit and thought in [Philippians 3](#), we shall realize that as he was writing he was thinking of religion, philosophy, and culture when he spoke of "all things." The "all things" in [verse 8](#) must certainly include the three categories of religious things, philosophical things, and cultural things. If we would drop our religion, philosophy, and culture, we would truly abandon everything. By dropping these categories of things, we would automatically drop the worldly, material things, which are actually dominated by religion, philosophy, and culture. Although it is easy to overcome the influence of material things, it is very difficult to overcome religion, philosophy, and culture. Those who love the Lord may easily abandon material things for His sake. But it is not easy for them to lay aside their particular thought and logic. You may love the Lord and seek Him for years without dropping one bit of your personal philosophy or logic.

NATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND DOMESTIC LOGIC

Every nationality and culture has its particular type of logic and philosophy. The British, for example, are noted for their diplomacy, which embodies their logic and philosophy. The Chinese and Japanese are steeped in their own national logic and philosophy. Every nationality is strong in its particular kind of cultural peculiarity. As a result of all the different kinds of logic and philosophy, Christ does not have a way with any group of people on earth today. He does not have a way either with those in the Orient or with those in the West. At the time of the Reformation, Christ tried to find a way with the Germans, but He was not successful. Later, He tried to find a way with the British, also without success. I repeat, there is not one group of people on earth with whom Christ has been able to fully have His way. People of every nationality have been taken over by Satan and hooked by him through religion, philosophy, and culture. It has been difficult for the Lord to find any group of people available to Him for His move on the earth.

It is important for us all to realize that we still

hold on to our national philosophy and domestic logic. Those from one part of the country hold on to their logic, and those from another region cling to their philosophy. Holding on to our domestic logic and national philosophy deprives us of Christ. In a sense, this drives Christ away from us in our experience. In a subtle, secret, and hidden way, the religious, philosophical, and cultural things occupy the believers, even the best of Christians, and keep them from the experience of Christ. Wherever you may go in the world today, you will find that Christ simply does not have a way with any nationality or group of people. In every part of the world, the national philosophy and the domestic logic are so strong that there is little ground in the believers for Christ. Years ago, I was invited to stay in a certain place as an honored guest. As I observed the way the people there behaved themselves, I was deeply impressed that because they were so strong in their religion, philosophy, and culture, Christ had no way to get through in them.

For the most part, people are willing to accept God's salvation for their personal benefit, but they are not willing to give full ground to Christ. In a sense, they receive salvation, but, experientially speaking, they may not receive Christ

and allow Him to have a free way in them. The cause of this problem is religion, philosophy, and culture.

If we would get into the depths of Paul's thought in [Philippians 3:7 and 8](#), we would realize that Paul was very concerned about the matters of religion, philosophy, and culture. His word about the dogs, the evil workers, and the concision in [verse 2](#) confirms this. The concision, a contemptuous term for circumcision, is a matter not only related to religion, but is a matter especially related to Jewish culture. Moreover, Jewish culture is based upon Jewish philosophy and logic. In [verse 3](#) Paul says that we are the circumcision, who serve by the Spirit of God, boast in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Then he goes on to give the reasons he once had for confidence in the flesh, listing seven items related to Jewish religion, philosophy, and culture. These are the very things Paul counted as loss on account of Christ. Do you know why he counted them loss? It is because they were all substitutes for Christ, hooks used by Satan to keep people from Christ and from the experience of Christ. How subtle is the enemy in keeping us from the experience of Christ!

Oh, the subtlety of the enemy needs to be

exposed! To some extent at least, we still have within us certain things which are a substitute for Christ in a subtle, secret way. These substitutes mainly involve religion, philosophy, and culture. As a result, we still are not fully and thoroughly occupied by Christ. We have not yet counted all things loss on account of Christ.

Many of us have known [Philippians 3:7 and 8](#) for years, and we are very familiar with these verses. However, we probably have not touched the depths of this part of [chapter three](#). Without this, we cannot be initiated into the genuine experience of Christ. You may have heard many messages on how Paul counted all things loss on account of Christ and on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. But has knowing these verses in an objective way brought you into the real experience of Christ? I believe that, if we are honest, we shall have to admit that we have not experienced Christ according to these verses. The reason for this lack of experience is that, until now, we have not probed into the depths of Paul's thought in this portion of the Word.

We cannot experience Christ if we only drop the worldly, material things. If this is our understanding of "all things" in [3:8](#), we are far from

the experience of Christ revealed here. These verses are not shallow. According to the context, Paul is not speaking of superficial, outward things. He is not concerned mainly with material things. His concept is much deeper and is related to religious, philosophical, and cultural things, even to our domestic logic and national philosophy, things hidden deep within us. As we have indicated, it is very difficult for us to set aside these things in order to give ground to Christ and experience Him. During my lifetime I have met many Christians. But I do not know many who have been able to drop their national philosophy and domestic logic in favor of the experience of Christ.

A PRACTICAL WORD

This word about our national philosophy and domestic logic is extremely practical. It exposes a hidden substitute for Christ and a subtle enemy of the experience of Christ. By the Lord's mercy and grace, may we learn to say that on account of Christ we count as loss our national philosophy and domestic logic, realizing that these things are a substitute for Christ and keep us from the deeper experience of Christ. Yes, we have experienced Christ to a certain degree, but

our experience has been severely limited and blocked by our national philosophy and domestic logic. Perhaps we can testify that we are free from the influence of religion. But who can say honestly that he is not hindered by his national philosophy or domestic logic? We must confess that we are still hindered by this subtle substitute for Christ, that Satan is still using our national philosophy and domestic logic to hook us, to occupy us, and to keep us from going further and deeper in the experience of Christ. May the enemy's subtlety be exposed and may we truly count all things loss, including our own philosophy and logic, on account of Christ and the experience and enjoyment of Him!

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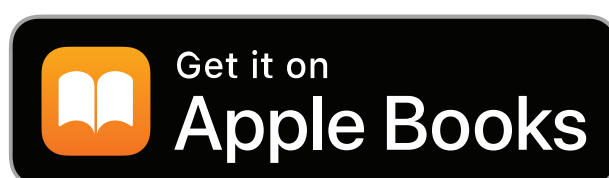
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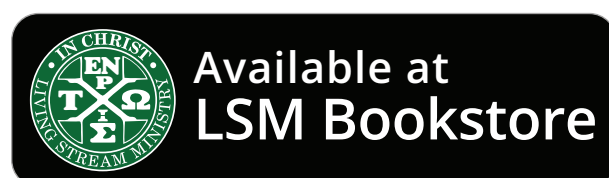
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THE EXCELLENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

Scripture Reading: [Phil. 3:5-8](#)

In [Philippians 3:8](#) Paul says, “I count also all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” In this booklet we shall consider the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE LAW AND CHRIST

As Paul was writing [3:5-8](#), he was no doubt mindful of the contrast between the law and Christ. Paul had much experience both with Christ and with the law. Through his experience, he gained a full knowledge both of Christ and of the law.

The law and Christ are two major factors in the composition of the Bible. In a sense, the Old Testament is composed mainly with the law as a basic factor. It may be regarded as a book of the law. The New Testament, on the contrary, is composed with Christ as the basic and governing

factor. Hence, the Old Testament is based on the law, and the New Testament is based on Christ.

Paul was very knowledgeable concerning both the law and Christ. Through his years in Judaism, he gained a detailed knowledge of the law. His knowledge was not that of an outsider, but of a very zealous insider. But by the time Paul wrote the book of Philippians, he had been transferred out from under the law into Christ. Furthermore, he had both the knowledge and the experience of the wonderful, all-inclusive, and extensive Person of Christ. Paul lived in this Person and could therefore speak of himself as a man in Christ ([2 Cor. 12:2](#)).

The phrase “as to” which may also be rendered “according to,” is used three times in [verses 5 and 6](#), referring to the law, zeal, and righteousness. The phrase “on account of,” which may also be rendered “because of,” is also used three times, in [verses 7 and 8](#), referring to Christ, the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and Christ again. Christ stands in contrast to the law, the zeal for it, and the righteousness in it. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ and Christ Himself are in contrast to all other things, including the law. On account of Christ and the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Paul gave

up the law, his zeal for it, the righteousness in it, and all other things. This indicates that Christ and the excellency of the knowledge of Him are far superior to the law and all other things.

According to [verse 8](#), Paul not only counted all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ and suffered the loss of all things, but he actually counted them to be refuse. The Greek word for refuse denotes dregs, rubbish, filth, what is thrown to the dogs; hence, dog food, dung. There is no comparison between such things and Christ.

It is important to realize that in [3:8](#) Paul does not speak of the excellency of Christ, but of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Many readers of Philippians take the word excellency to refer not to the knowledge of Christ, but to Christ Himself. However, Paul specifically and definitely speaks of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Paul's knowledge of Christ was excellent. On account of the excellency of this knowledge, he was willing to suffer the loss of all things.

In [verse 7](#) Paul says "on account of Christ," but in [verse 8](#) he goes further and says "on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." The addition of the words

“my Lord” indicates that as Paul was writing, he was filled with intimate, tender feelings concerning Christ. Tender feelings concerning the preciousness of the Lord Jesus rose up within him, causing him to speak of “Christ Jesus my Lord.” Paul placed great value on the excellency of the knowledge of his dear Lord Jesus Christ.

THE EXCELLENCY OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST

The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is derived from the excellency of His Person. The Jews consider the law of God given through Moses the most excellent thing in history. Hence, they are zealous for the law. Paul participated in that zeal. But when Christ was revealed to him by God ([Gal. 1:15-16](#)), he saw that the excellency, the supereminence, the supreme preciousness, the surpassing worth, of Christ far exceeded the excellency of the law. His knowledge of Christ issued in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. On account of this, not only did he count the law and the religion founded on the law to be loss, but he counted all things loss.

Here Paul speaks not directly of the excellency of Christ, but of the excellency of knowing Christ. The knowledge in [3:8](#) is not the

knowledge that belongs to Christ, the knowledge that Christ Himself has; it is our subjective knowing of Christ. To you, which is more excellent—the Person of Christ or your knowing Christ? According to doctrine or opinion, you may say that the Person of Christ is more excellent than the knowledge of Christ. However, Paul, speaking from his experience, could say that it is the knowledge of Christ which is more excellent.

We have pointed out that the excellency of the knowledge of Christ is derived from the excellency of His Person. There can be no doubt that in Himself Christ is excellent. But if we do not have the knowledge of Christ, how shall we know His excellency? If we lack the knowledge of Christ's excellency, His excellency will not mean anything to us.

Before Paul's experience on the road to Damascus, he did not have any knowledge of Christ. He treasured the law and regarded it as most excellent. Paul's zeal for the law was a sign of his appreciation of the law. His zeal came out of his appreciation. Paul certainly was proud of his excellent knowledge of the law. Even though Christ is infinitely more excellent than the law, Paul did not have the knowledge

of Christ. But at the time of his conversion, this excellent One was revealed to him. With this revelation of Christ, Paul began to have the knowledge of Christ. After he began to acquire the knowledge of Christ, Paul came to realize that the knowledge of the law received through Gamaliel was far inferior to the knowledge of Christ. Conscious of this comparison as he was writing [3:5-8](#), Paul could speak of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ and of suffering the loss of all things for the excellency of this knowledge.

To be sure, the excellency is in the very Person of Christ. But for our experience, our realization of this excellency depends on our knowledge. If we lack knowledge, there is simply no way for us to realize that this Person is so excellent. Only when we come to know His excellency do we have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. How precious is this excellency of the knowledge of Christ!

THE ALL-INCLUSIVENESS OF CHRIST

In the four books that make up the heart of the divine revelation—Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians—Paul opens the veil to show us who Christ is and what Christ is.

Christ is all-inclusive and all-extensive, the reality of every positive thing in the universe. He is the reality of God, man, eternity, light, and life. We simply do not have adequate words to declare who and what Christ is. Perhaps you have known only that Christ is the Son of God sent by the Father in His mercy to die on the cross for the salvation of sinners. You have known that He was born of a virgin, that He died on the cross, that He was raised from among the dead, and that He was exalted to the heavens. You believed in Him as your dear Redeemer and precious Savior, and in this way you were saved. Then you realized that you need Him to help you live in such a way as to glorify the Father. It is good to know Christ in this way, but this knowledge of Him is far too limited.

Forty-eight years ago, I also had such a limited knowledge of Christ. But beginning in 1932 the Lord has gradually been opening the veil that I may have a fuller knowledge of Him. Little by little, the veil has been taken away.

Only recently have I been impressed with the extensiveness of Christ. One day as I was speaking on the Christ revealed in Colossians, I spontaneously used the term extensive and pointed out that the revelation in Colossians concerning

Christ is extensive, even all-extensive, for Christ is more extensive than the whole universe. He is immeasurable, limitless. Hence, He is not only all-inclusive, but also all-extensive.

According to the Bible, Christ truly is all-inclusive. In 1932 I first began to see the all-inclusiveness of Christ and to minister along this line. Although Christ's all-inclusiveness is clearly revealed in the Bible, many believers are greatly surprised when they hear us speak of it.

[Colossians 2:16 and 17](#) say, "Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ." These verses indicate that Christ is our eating, drinking, feast, new moon, and Sabbath. He is the body, the reality, the substance, of all the positive things in the universe. He is the reality of the air we breathe, of the food we eat, and of the sunshine we enjoy. Furthermore, He is the reality of both the Triune God and of man.

When we teach that Christ is all-inclusive, the reality of all positive things in the universe, some go so far as to accuse us of teaching pantheism. They accuse us of identifying God with the material creation. We utterly repudiate

pantheism and declare that it is a devilish teaching. We do not preach pantheism in any way. However, according to the Bible, we do teach that Christ is God, man, and the reality of all positive things. But this does not mean that the material things in the universe are God Himself. We are not God and we never shall become God. Nevertheless, Christ is in us and, in a very real sense, He is even becoming us. [Colossians 3:10 and 11](#) say, “And having put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him Who created him; where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but Christ is all and in all.” These verses also point to the all-inclusiveness of Christ. In the new man, the Body, the church, there cannot be Greek and Jew. Likewise, there cannot be Chinese and American, German and French. In the new man Christ is all and in all. He is all the members and in all the members. This means that in the new man Christ is you and Christ is me. He truly is all-inclusive and all-extensive.

THE EXCELLENT KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

When Paul was still in Judaism, he was blind

to the all-inclusive Christ. Christ existed as the all-extensive One, but Paul was totally ignorant of Him. At that time, Paul had a thorough and excellent knowledge of the law. But one day, as he was on the road to Damascus, Christ appeared to him, called to him, and said, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” ([Acts 9:4](#)). Although Paul did not know Christ and was blind to Christ, he was nevertheless persecuting Him. After the Lord was revealed to him and he was converted, scales fell from his eyes. His eyes having been opened, he began to see Christ and to know Him. The more he saw Christ, the more he received the knowledge of Him. This is the reason he speaks in [Philippians 3:8](#) of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

There surely is such a thing as the excellency of knowing Christ. If you testify that Christ is excellent but do so without having the knowledge of Him, you will be speaking merely according to tradition. Actually your word will be uttered in ignorance. You will be speaking something you do not know, because you yourself have not received the excellent knowledge concerning Christ. Unless we have the excellent knowledge of Christ, we cannot say that Christ is excellent. We urgently need the excellent

knowledge of Christ. Paul was so desperate to have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ that he was willing to count all things loss on account of this knowledge.

Gaining the excellency of the knowledge of Christ may be illustrated by the experience of tourists shopping in Hong Kong. The merchants there know how to display their products, especially jade, in a way to make them very attractive to tourists. Often when tourists see precious items on display, they become excited. Furthermore, they acquire a knowledge of the excellency of these things. Before they entered the store, they did not know anything of the excellency of these precious items. But once they saw them and gained the excellency of the knowledge concerning them, they were willing to pay the price to possess them. In like manner, we need a revelation of Christ's excellency, of His supreme preciousness.

My burden is not related to doctrine; my burden is that we see a vision and receive a revelation of the excellency of Christ. If we have a revelation of Christ's excellency, we shall automatically have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

The excellency of the knowledge of Christ is

in 3:8, whereas the actual experience of Christ is in 3:10. The knowledge of Christ, however, is basic. By knowledge we actually mean a revelation, a vision, concerning Christ and His excellence. When Paul was blind and in religion, he could not see Christ; he could see only the law. Thus, he had the excellency of the knowledge of the law. But after Christ was revealed to him, he began to have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. He was captured by the excellency of knowing Christ, and for the sake of this knowledge, he was willing to drop all things and count them to be loss.

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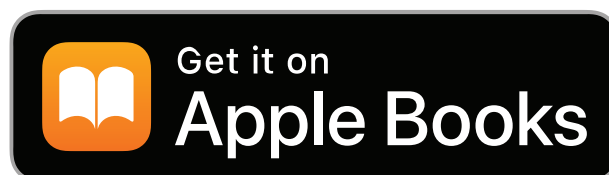
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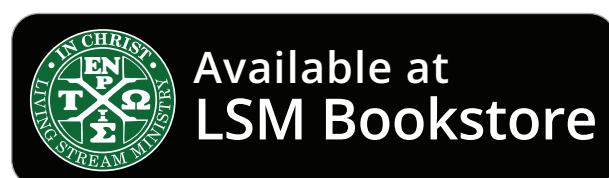
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TO BE FOUND IN CHRIST

Scripture Reading: [Phil. 3:8-9](#)

According to [Philippians 3:9](#), it was Paul's expectation and also his aspiration that he would always be found in Christ. If we would have a proper understanding of this verse, we should not isolate it from [verse 8](#). Rather, the end of [verse 8](#) must be read in connection with the beginning of [verse 9](#). "I have suffered the loss of all things," Paul declares, "and count them to be refuse that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God based on faith." Paul suffered the loss of all things and counted them to be refuse in order to gain Christ and be found in Him. Furthermore, Paul's desire was to be found in Christ in the condition of having the righteousness which is of God based on faith, not of having his own righteousness.

PAUL'S ASPIRATION

In [verse 9](#) we see that Paul's earnest desire was

to be found in Christ. In the past Paul was fully in the Jewish religion under the law and was always found by others in the law. But at his conversion he was transferred from the law and his former religion into Christ, and he became “a man in Christ” (2 Cor. 12:2). Now he expected to be found in Christ by all those who observed him—the Jews, the angels, and the demons. This indicates that he aspired to have his whole being immersed in Christ and saturated with Christ so that all who observed him could discover him in Christ. We also should aspire to be found by others in Christ. To be found in Christ actually means to be observed, seen, or discovered by others in Christ.

Before Paul was converted to Christ, he lived in the law and under the law. Whenever someone met Paul, that person found Paul in the law and enveloped by the law. Saul of Tarsus was a person altogether encased by the law, fully boxed in by it. He was living by the law, with the law, and under the law. But one day he was transferred out from under the law into Christ. Henceforth, whenever others saw him or observed him, they could tell that he had become a person in Christ. Paul was not in culture, philosophy, or religion. He was a person who lived in Christ, and his

aspiration and expectation were that he would be found by others in Christ. Paul suffered the loss of all things and counted them refuse in order to gain Christ on the one hand and to be found in Him on the other.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD BASED ON FAITH

In [verse 9](#) Paul does not speak merely in a general way, but in a very definite way. He says that he did not want to have his own righteousness, but he wanted the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God based on faith. “Not having my own righteousness...but...the righteousness which is of God” is the condition in which Paul desired to be found in Christ. He wanted to live not in his own righteousness, but in the righteousness of God, and to be found in such a transcendent condition, expressing God by living Christ, not by keeping the law.

Before Paul was saved, he had no idea that Christ could be his righteousness. The righteousness of the law is the righteousness which comes from man’s own effort to keep the law, as mentioned in [verse 6](#). Formerly, Paul lived in

that righteousness which was according to the law. Others could invariably find him enveloped by the righteousness of the law. But now Paul's desire was to be observed as a person living in Christ and having Christ as his righteousness.

The righteousness in which Paul wanted to be found was the righteousness "which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God based on faith." The expression "the faith of Christ" implies our believing in Christ. Such faith issues from our knowing and appreciating Christ. It is Christ Himself infused into us through our appreciation of Him, who becomes our faith in Him. Hence, it is also the faith of Christ that brings us into an organic union with Him.

The righteousness which is of God based on faith is that righteousness which is God Himself lived out of us to be our righteousness through our faith in Christ. Such righteousness is the expression of God, who lives in us. It is based on faith because it is on the basis, or condition, of faith. Faith is the basis, the condition, for us to receive and possess the righteousness out from God, the highest righteousness, which is Christ (1 Cor. 1:30).

A VISION OF THE PRECIOUSNESS OF CHRIST

It is one thing to have a doctrinal understanding of being found in Christ; it is quite another thing to be found in Christ in our daily living. If I were to visit you in your home, where would I find you? Would I find you in your good behavior or in Christ? Where we are when others observe us indicates the realm in which we live. If we live in our culture, we shall be found by others in culture. If we live in our good behavior, we shall be discovered by others in our behavior. In whatever realm we live, that is where we shall be seen, observed, and discovered by others. When Paul was still living by the law, he was found in the law. But one day he began to have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. He saw the vision that Christ must be his everything: love, kindness, humility, wisdom, patience, intention, attitude, and even his words, utterances, and expressions. On account of this excellency of the knowledge of Christ, he was willing to count all things to be loss. Furthermore, he suffered the loss of all things and counted them refuse in order to gain Christ and be found in Him.

We need to have a vision of the preciousness of Christ. Then we need to gain the very Christ we have seen. For example, suppose a person visits a jewelry store and sees many valuable items on display. To see these items is one thing, but to gain them is another. To know Christ is not merely to have the knowledge concerning Him, but to gain His very Person. Christ is the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead ([Col. 2:9](#)) and the reality of the shadows of all positive things ([Col. 2:16-17](#)). To gain Him is to experience, enjoy, and take possession of all His unsearchable riches ([Eph. 3:8](#)). As we gain Christ, we should also live in Him and become those who are in Him in experience. Then when others see us or observe us, they will find us in Christ. We shall not be found in our own virtues—we shall be found in Christ and in Him alone. Oh, that we may gain Him and be found in Him! May we be willing to suffer the loss of all things and count them refuse in order to be found in Christ.

If we gain Christ and live in Him, He as our righteousness will become our expression before both God and man. Then we shall not simply be found in Christ in a general way, but we shall be found in the very righteousness

which is Christ Himself lived out of us. Only when we are found in Christ will the Lord be satisfied. Likewise, those who serve the Lord will be pleased and satisfied only when the believers are found in Christ.

THE SIX-THOUSAND-YEAR TRADITION

If you visit another country and stay in a brother's home, you will probably find it impossible to avoid the national flavor prevailing there. The reason for this is that we are all still under the influence of six thousand years of tradition. When Paul wrote [Philippians 3](#), deep within him was the realization that the traditional forms of human living occupy everyone. Whether a person is sinful or not sinful, moral or immoral, that person is occupied by something other than Christ, by some element of the thousands of years of human history. We may call this the six-thousand-year human tradition.

The building up of the church has been hindered by this tradition for more than nineteen hundred years. The Lord Jesus said, "Behold, I come quickly" ([Rev. 22:12](#)). But more than nineteen centuries have passed, and still He has not come. How can the Lord come back when His

purpose on earth has not been accomplished? Satan, the subtle one, is lurking behind the six-thousand-year human tradition. Due to his influence, we live in this tradition instead of in Christ. With the exception of Paul, hardly anyone has ever touched this powerful stronghold. No matter how spiritual we may be, others rarely find us in Christ. Rather, they find us in something other than Christ, in some aspect of man's six thousand years of traditional living. During times of prayer, we may be released temporarily from this tradition. But even in our prayers it is sometimes possible to sense the flavor of the six-thousand-year tradition. What a serious situation this is!

If we would be found in Christ instead of in the thousands of years of tradition, we must be willing to forget our past, even our past Christian life, humble ourselves before the Lord, and ask Him to have mercy on us. We have come to the place where we are facing a huge rock standing in our way. For many of us, there seems to be no way to go on. Furthermore, many of us have come to a stage where it seems difficult for even the Lord to get through in us. This is very much related to the fact that when others see us, it is

very probable that they will find us in something other than Christ.

Should you visit a certain brother, you may not find him doing anything sinful or wrong. But, instead of finding him in Christ, you may find him in his good behavior or in his habitual way of living. I do not have the assurance that if you visit me at home, you will find me in Christ. On the contrary, you may observe that, as an elderly person, I live simply in my natural goodness. You may find me in so many things other than Christ.

The book of Philippians was written by Paul in his later ministry, not long before he was to depart from this earth. Hence, when Paul wrote this Epistle, he was quite mature. Nevertheless, he still did not have the assurance that he would be found by others in Christ. For this reason in [verses 8 and 9](#) he used the present tense, saying, “I count also all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord...and count them to be refuse that I may gain Christ and be found in Him.”

If we would be found in Christ, we need to be watchful moment by moment, continually on the alert to live in Christ. If we are not alert, we shall immediately be distracted from Christ and

live in something other than Christ. Our living may be very good, but in our experience we are not in Christ.

OUR UNIQUE EXPRESSION

We must not regard Paul's word in [3:8 and 9](#) as mere doctrine. We need to consider seriously before the Lord just where we are right now. Are we in Christ? As the angels and demons observe us, do they find us in Christ? When others meet us, where do they find us—in Christ or in some good thing that is not Christ Himself? Paul's word about being found in Christ is of great significance. Deep within Paul was the aspiration to be found in Christ.

May we all aspire to be found in Christ. We need to pray, "Lord, my desire is to be found in You. In everything I do day by day, I want to be found in You."

Paul could say that he counted all things as refuse in order to gain Christ and be found in Him. This is a very important statement. All that he says in [verses 5 through 7](#) help him to reveal his aspiration expressed in [verses 8 and 9](#). Let us pray that we may be found in Christ by our wife or husband, by our children and relatives, and by our neighbors, colleagues, and classmates.

If we are truly found in Christ, all other things will lose their hold on us. We shall no longer be under the influence of religion, philosophy, or culture. How marvelous to be found only in Christ! When we are found in Him, religion, philosophy, and culture are annulled.

To be found in Christ means that He is our unique expression. Because Paul could be found in Christ, Christ was his expression. In every aspect and from every angle, only Christ could be seen upon him. Paul's aspiration was that Christ would be his only expression. He did not want to be found in such natural virtues as humility, patience, and love. These were among the things that he counted refuse, trash, in order to gain Christ and be found in Him. Culture, human patience, natural love, and submission—all are refuse when compared to Christ. We should not aspire to be found in our own love for others or in our natural submission. Our earnest desire should be to be found only in Christ.

THE STANDARD OF GOD'S SALVATION

The standard of God's salvation is very high. Paul refers to this salvation when he says, "I know that for me this shall turn out to salvation

through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (1:19). Salvation here is Christ Himself, the very Christ in whom we may be found by others and even by angels and demons.

If we see the high standard of God’s salvation, we shall realize how desperately we need God’s mercy. We are far below His standard, for people can find us in many good things other than Christ. All these things belong to the six thousand years of human tradition. Satan, God’s enemy, uses this tradition as a means to occupy us, to frustrate us, and to keep us from the higher and richer experience of Christ. For this reason, in Philippians, a book on the experience of Christ according to God’s high standard, Paul expresses the aspiration that we would experience Christ to such an extent that we may be found in Him.

Oh, we all need to bow down before the Lord and pray, “Lord, have mercy on me. Cause Paul’s aspiration to become my aspiration also. O Lord, create in me the hunger and thirst to pursue after You that I may be found in You. I don’t want others to find me in anything other than Yourself. I want to be a person wholly in You, and I want others to find me in You.” May

the Lord grant us mercy that we may be found in Him!

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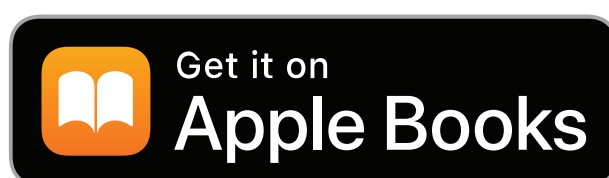
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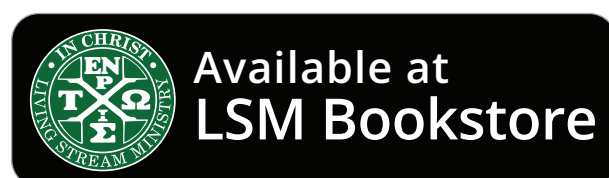
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SEEKING TO KNOW CHRIST

According to Paul's concept, if we would know Christ, we must first be found in Him ([Phil. 3:8-11](#)). Moreover, to be found in Him requires that we count all things loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ and then suffer the loss of all things and count them to be refuse. Only when we have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, a vision of the supreme preciousness and surpassing worth of Christ, shall we be willing to let go of everything else and count those things as refuse. Then we shall gain Christ and be found in Him. We shall be those who live in Christ and who are found by others in Christ. Being found in Him, we shall surely know Him.

REVELATION AND EXPERIENCE

Paul lived in a condition of not having his own righteousness but having the righteousness of God, in order to know (to experience) Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. To have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ in [Philippians 3:8](#) is

by revelation. But to know Him in [verse 10](#) is by experience—to have the experiential knowledge of Him, to experience Him in the full knowledge of Him. Paul first received the revelation of Christ and then sought for the experience of Christ—to know and enjoy Him in an experiential way.

After we receive the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, we shall be willing to suffer the loss of all things and count them refuse in order to gain Christ and be found in Him. As a result, we shall know Christ experientially. Therefore, [verse 9 of Philippians 3](#) comes out of [verse 8](#), and [verse 10](#) comes out of [verse 9](#). If we do not have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ ([v. 8](#)), we shall not be found in Christ ([v. 9](#)), for it is having the excellency of the knowledge of Christ which makes us willing to suffer the loss of all things and count them as refuse in order to gain Christ and be found in Him. Then, once we have gained Christ and are found in Him, we shall know Him ([v. 10](#)); that is, we shall enjoy Him and experience Him.

To gain Christ is one thing, and to experience Him is another. We may illustrate this difference by the difference between buying groceries and eating food which has been purchased

and prepared. Gaining Christ may be compared to buying groceries, and the experience of Christ may be compared to the eating of the food we have first purchased and cooked. However, before we buy any groceries, we must first have the excellency of the knowledge of groceries. Before we purchase anything, we are first attracted by the excellency of the knowledge of that thing. Thus, first we have the excellency of the knowledge of the groceries, then we gain them by buying them, and finally we enjoy the food by eating it. In like manner, Paul first received the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, then he paid the price to gain Christ and be found in Him, and finally he experienced Christ and enjoyed Him. Paul realized that to gain Christ and be found in Him always results in knowing Him, in enjoying and experiencing Him.

A HIGHER KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

Our experience of Christ can never surpass the excellency of our knowledge of Christ. Rather, the excellency of the knowledge of Christ always exceeds our experience of Christ. There has never been a case where a believer's experience of Christ surpassed his knowledge of Christ. If we do not have a higher knowledge of Christ,

we cannot have a higher experience of Christ. This is why it is very important that we not be limited by our past knowledge of Christ.

You may know that Christ is joy, peace, and rest. Before you were saved, you did not have the peace. But now that you have received the Lord, you have peace and joy. By no means do I belittle these aspects of the knowledge of Christ. I certainly enjoy the Lord Jesus as my peace, rest, and joy. Nevertheless, we should not be content with such a limited knowledge of Christ, but should advance in our knowledge of Him. Oh, how we need the excellency of knowing Christ!

The excellency of the knowledge of Christ will attract us to Christ and motivate us to lay aside everything other than Him. If we see the surpassing worth of Christ, we shall be willing to count as loss not only worldly, material things, but even our culture, religion, and philosophy. I repeat, it is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ which causes us to drop everything else so that we may gain Christ and be found in Him.

OUR SHORTAGE IN LIVING CHRIST

Our daily living is an indication of what we

are and where we are concerning the experience of Christ. We may talk a great deal about Christ, but in our daily living we may not actually be in Christ. Instead, we may be in our culture, national philosophy, or domestic logic. When we are in the church meetings or with the saints, we may have a lot to say about Christ. But in our daily life we may live in our national philosophy, domestic logic, or family concept.

Recently the Lord has pointed out to me my shortage in living Christ. Most of the confession I make to Him is related to this lack. Day by day, I spend too little time living one spirit with the Lord. Too much of the time I live in something other than Christ, in many good things that are not Christ Himself. Because this is our situation, all of us need the Lord to have mercy on us.

Both we and the Lord have come to a point of crisis. A critical situation definitely exists among many of us today. Yes, we have seen the vision that Christ is our life, that He is the life-giving Spirit, and that we are one spirit with Him, and we talk a great deal about Christ. However, in our practical life day by day, we do not live Christ every moment. We are not found by others in Christ continually. We may be very familiar with [Philippians 3:7-10](#). But how much

have we gained Christ, how much are we found in Christ, and how much do we experientially know Christ? Because of our urgent need to experience Christ, it is not my burden in this booklet to present Bible teachings. It is to minister Christ to the saints that they may grow in the divine life, which is Christ Himself, and may advance in the experience of Christ and enjoyment of Christ.

EXPERIENCING CHRIST IN THE POWER OF RESURRECTION

In [Philippians 3:10](#) Paul says, “To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” According to this verse, Paul aspired not only to know Christ, but also to know the power of Christ’s resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. The power of Christ’s resurrection is His resurrection life which raised Him from among the dead ([Eph. 1:19-20](#)). The reality of the power of Christ’s resurrection is the Spirit ([Rom. 1:4](#)). To know, to experience, this power requires identification with Christ’s death and conformity to it. Death is the base of resurrection. To experience the power of Christ’s

resurrection, we need to live a crucified life according to the pattern of His life. Our conformity to His death affords a base for the power of His resurrection to rise up that His divine life may be expressed in us.

The participation in Christ's sufferings—"the fellowship of His sufferings"—([Matt. 20:22-23](#); [Col. 1:24](#)) is a necessary condition for the experience of the power of His resurrection ([2 Tim. 2:11](#)) by being conformed to His death. With Christ, the sufferings and death came first, followed by the resurrection. With us, the power of His resurrection comes first, then the fellowship of His sufferings and conformity to His death. We first receive the power of His resurrection. Then by this power we are enabled to participate in His sufferings and live a crucified life in conformity to His death. Such sufferings are mainly for producing and building up the Body of Christ.

If we are not conformed to the death of Christ, we do not have the base for the experience of Christ. In order to experience Christ, we must be conformed to His death. But to be conformed to the death of Christ, we must have the fellowship of His sufferings. By participating in Christ's sufferings, we are ushered into a

position to experience the power of His resurrection. Then, when we experience the power of Christ's resurrection, we know Him.

In [Philippians 3](#) the sequence is knowing Christ, knowing the power of Christ's resurrection, knowing the fellowship of His sufferings, and being conformed to His death. But in our spiritual experience, the sequence is reversed. Daily we are conformed to Christ's death; then we participate in His sufferings, know the power of His resurrection, and, by knowing the power of resurrection, we know Christ Himself. According to Paul's sequence, first we receive the excellency of the knowledge of Christ by seeing the vision of Christ; second, we count all things to be refuse; third, we gain Christ and are found in Him; and fourth, we know Christ, experience Him.

THE CRUCIAL NEED FOR A VISION OF CHRIST

It is crucial that we see a vision of Christ and thereby receive the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. I can testify that by giving so many messages on Christ from the book of Colossians, I have been greatly helped to have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. The

knowledge of Christ contained in this book has made a deep impression on me. According to Colossians, Christ is the portion of the saints, the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation, the Head of the Body, and the Firstborn from among the dead. In Colossians we have a revelation of the all-inclusive and all-extensive Christ.

If we have gained the excellency of the knowledge of Christ from Colossians, we shall be able to testify not only that Christ is peace and joy, but that He is the portion of the saints, the mystery of God, and the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead. Yes, the book of Colossians does reveal that Christ is our peace. But in this book peace is not revealed in an ordinary way. Rather, in [Colossians 3:15](#) we see that the peace of Christ arbitrates in our hearts. Simply to say that Christ is peace does not require much excellency of knowledge concerning Christ. However, to know that Christ is the arbitrating peace in our hearts does require the excellency of the knowledge concerning Him.

In [Philippians 3](#) Paul uses a number of extraordinary expressions. In this chapter Paul does not say that Christ is our joy, peace, or rest. Rather, he speaks of gaining Christ and being

found in Him; of knowing Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of Christ's sufferings; and of being conformed to His death. First, we need to see all these matters. Then we need to pray that the Lord would grant us the grace to experience Him.

To know Christ in all these aspects is truly to experience Him and enjoy Him. We need to enjoy the fellowship of Christ's sufferings that we may be conformed to His death and know the power of His resurrection. For this, we need to forget the things which are behind and stretch forward to the things which are before ([Phil. 3:13](#)). May we all forget the things behind and go on to something higher, deeper, and more profound concerning Christ.

MORE KNOWLEDGE FOR MORE EXPERIENCE

In [Philippians 3:7-11](#) Paul brings us higher and higher. These verses are not all on the same level, but are like ascending steps of a staircase. Each verse brings us higher and higher until we reach the peak in [verse 11](#). I would encourage the saints to consider the points in these verses carefully and in detail. We need to ponder them with much prayer and pray-reading so that our

knowledge may increase more and more. We should not be content with simply an elementary knowledge of spiritual things. We need to learn what is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ and what it means to count all things to be refuse; what it is to gain Christ and be found in Him; what it is to know Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. We also need to grasp what it means to be conformed to the death of Christ. We need to ask the Lord to show us all these things. We need to inquire of Him concerning every matter in these verses. Because these matters are deep, we cannot understand them quickly or easily.

The book of Philippians is not an elementary writing; it is a book in the “graduate school” of spiritual experience. Thus, we should not be content merely with a general knowledge of this book. On the contrary, we need to become familiar with the extraordinary expressions Paul uses in this Epistle. Before we can have the experience, we must become familiar with Paul’s expressions. This will bring us out of our oldness and save us from being so common and general in speaking of Christ. May the Lord grant us mercy that we may have more knowledge

of Christ in order to have more experience of Him.

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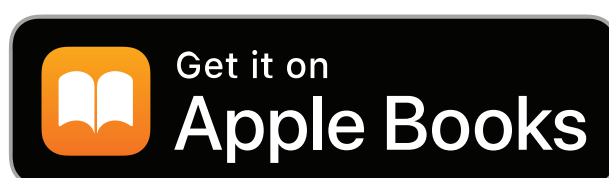
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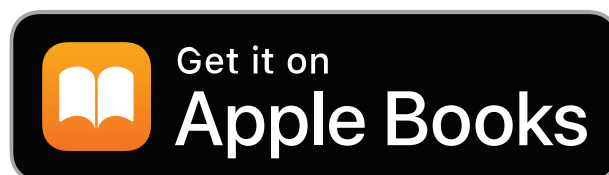
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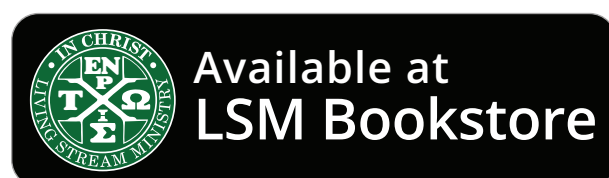
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CONFORMED TO CHRIST'S DEATH

It is easy to see that material things may be substitutes for Christ in our lives or may frustrate us from enjoying Him. But it is not easy to see that things that are not material, such as religion, philosophy, and culture, may also be substitutes for Christ. Throughout the years, I have met a good number of spiritual people of different nationalities who were genuine seekers of the Lord. However, although they were progressing spiritually to a certain extent, hardly any lived outside their national culture.

No matter how earnestly most believers may seek the Lord, they are still under the influence of their national characteristics. In their daily living, they are influenced more by their culture than by Christ. When Paul said that he counted all things loss ([Phil. 3:7-8](#)), he meant not only material things, but also things such as religion, philosophy, and culture. We may be willing to count material things as loss for Christ, but we may not count as loss our culture or our national characteristics. But religion, culture, and

national characteristics were among the things Paul counted to be trash, refuse, in order to gain Christ and be found in Him. These things may be very good, but they are not in resurrection and they are not in the new creation. Moreover, they are not of Christ or of the Spirit.

THE NEED FOR THE EXCELLENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

Even though we may love the Lord very much and daily take time to pray ourselves into the Spirit, in our actual living we may live in things other than Christ. We live this way automatically and spontaneously.

It is rather easy for us to apply Christ as our peace, joy, and rest. But when we consider higher aspects of Christ, we find them rather difficult to apply. For example, Christ is the mystery of God's economy. Although we may know Him as the mystery of God's economy ([Col. 1:25-29](#)), it is not easy for us to apply Him in this aspect in our daily walk. The gap between such an aspect of Christ and our daily living is extremely great. We also find it difficult to experience Christ as the body, the reality, of all the positive things ([Col. 2:17](#)). There is an urgent need for us to pray concerning this.

We desperately need to pray that we may see the excellency of the knowledge of Christ ([Phil. 3:8](#)). If we have such a knowledge in a real and practical way, all the elements of our human living which are not Christ Himself will be put to death. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ annuls the influence of our national characteristics and domestic philosophy. From my experience I can testify that the excellency of the knowledge of Christ kills all the good things that replace Christ in our daily living.

THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

In [Philippians 3:10](#) Paul speaks of the power of Christ's resurrection. The power of Christ's resurrection is His resurrection life that raised Him from among the dead ([Eph. 1:19-20](#)). Christ's divine life includes the element of resurrection. Even before He was resurrected, He could say to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life" ([John 11:25](#)). The reality of Christ's resurrection life is the Spirit. Resurrection is abstract and mysterious; no one can define it. But we can know the Spirit as the reality of resurrection. The Spirit of Christ is the reality of the resurrection of Christ. Thus, where the Spirit of Christ is, there

is resurrection. Because this Spirit is now within us, the power of Christ's resurrection is within us also.

We may use a carnation seed to illustrate the way resurrection life is released. Although a carnation seed is very small, it contains the life power capable of producing a carnation plant. Since this life element is already in the seed, there is no need for power to be added to the seed from without. The only thing necessary is that the seed fall into the earth and die. Should the seed pass through death, its shell will be broken, and life will be released, not from on high, but from within the seed.

CONFORMITY TO THE DEATH OF CHRIST

This illustration of a carnation seed is in keeping with the revelation of the New Testament. As reborn ones, we have the seed of God within us. According to [1 John 3:9](#), the seed of God remains in all those who have been born of God. This seed contains the divine life, and this life is the power of resurrection. In order for resurrection life to be released from within the seed, the outer shell of the seed must be broken. This requires suffering.

In [Philippians 3:10](#) Paul goes on to speak of the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and of being conformed to His death. The fellowship of Christ's sufferings is our participation in His sufferings. During His entire life, Christ underwent a process of breaking so that the life power could be released from within Him. In particular, He was broken when He died on the cross. The divine life seed has been planted into our being. Now we also need to be broken that the life power within the seed can be released. If our outer man is broken, the seed within us will be able to release its life power.

Eventually, this process of the breaking of the outer man will result in full conformity to the death of Christ. In this way the death of Christ becomes a model, or pattern, for our breaking. Then in our daily life we shall be able to apply Christ to our every need. If we need power, He will become power to us. If we need patience, He Himself will be our patience. This is to know Christ, to experience Him, and to enjoy Him.

In [Philippians 3:10](#) Paul uses the expression "being conformed to His death." This expression indicates that Paul desired to take Christ's death as the mold of his life. Christ's death is a mold to which we are conformed in much the

same way that dough is put in a cake mold and conformed to it. Paul continually lived a crucified life, a life under the cross, just as Christ did in His human living. Through such a life, the resurrection power is experienced and expressed. The mold of Christ's death refers to the continual putting to death of His human life that He might live by the life of God ([John 6:57](#)). Our life should be conformed to such a mold—dying to our human life in order to live the divine life. Being conformed to the death of Christ is the condition for knowing and experiencing Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings.

LIVING THE DIVINE LIFE BY THE HUMAN LIFE

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He lived a crucified life. Christ had two lives—the divine life and the human life. It was God's desire that the man Jesus live the divine life by means of His human life. God did not want Him simply to live out the human life. Rather, it was God's intention that the Lord Jesus live the divine life through the channel of the human life.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He always put His human life to death so that the divine

life within Him could be lived out. This is the pattern of Christ's death. In the eyes of man, the Lord Jesus was crucified at the end of His ministry. But in the eyes of God, He was crucified throughout His life on earth. This is proved by the fact that He was baptized when He came forth to minister, as an indication that He had put Himself into death. The Lord's baptism by John indicated that He was living His human life under the killing power of the cross. His was a life in which the human life was crucified, so that the divine life could be lived out. What a wonderful living the Lord Jesus had!

This wonderful living implies the pattern of Christ's death. According to this pattern, Christ continually put to death His human life so that His divine life could flow out. This is the mold of the life of Christ and the death of Christ.

There can be no doubt that the human life of the Lord Jesus was excellent. But even such an excellent human life was put to death for the sake of the release of the divine life. Please pay attention to the fact that the Lord's human life was not put to death because it was wrong in some way; it was put to death so that the divine life could be lived out. This was the reason the Lord's human life had to be rejected, broken, and put

to death. The principle should be the same with us today. As those who believe in Christ and who have been regenerated by the Spirit, we have both the human life and the divine life. No matter how good our human life may be, it must be put to death if the divine life is to be lived out.

Do not think that a believer is conformed to the death of Christ only at the time of martyrdom. No, being conformed to Christ's death should be our experience day by day. As we speak with our husband or wife, with our parents, with our children, or with those around us at work or school, we must put our natural life to death and not live according to it. If we put to death our natural life, we shall have the consciousness that we have another life, the divine life, within us. Once our outward natural life is put to death, the inner divine life will be released. Then in our experience we shall be conformed to Christ's death.

A SERIOUS PROBLEM

Most Christians only put to death the negative aspects of their natural life. They treasure the good aspects and seek to preserve them. Those of every nationality treasure their own national

characteristics and philosophy. The Chinese may pride themselves on their philosophical ethics, whereas Americans may boast of their frankness and openness. Hardly any Christians are willing to drop their national characteristics in order to live out the divine life. Although we may be willing to put so many other things to death, we hold these national characteristics as a priceless treasure. If we do not treasure these characteristics consciously, we do so subconsciously. As a result, a basic element of our natural life is not put to death. This element then becomes a huge rock hindering the release of the power of Christ's resurrection from within us.

Treasuring part of our natural life creates a serious problem with respect to the experience of Christ. We are not willing for a certain part of our being to be put to death and conformed to the death of Christ. Thus, this part of our natural life remains as a frustration to the release of the divine life. This is the reason that, after years of seeking the Lord and experiencing Him, we may reach a place where we find ourselves stopped and unable to go on. In the early stages of our Christian life, we may have grown rather quickly. But because the "rock" of our national characteristics remains within us, our growth in

life is now held back. Many of us can testify that this is precisely our situation.

The reason for our lack of progress is that we have not been conformed to Christ's death in a full way. Years ago, you may have had much more conformity to Christ's death than today. Because you have not progressed in being conformed to the death of Christ, your growth in life has been held back, and your experience of the power of Christ's resurrection has been severely limited. This hinders you from further and higher experiences of Christ. Thus, instead of speaking of up-to-date experiences, you try to live on your past experiences and speak of them again and again.

PROCESSED IN RESURRECTION

In [Philippians 3:11](#) Paul goes on to say, "If by any means I may attain to the out-resurrection from among the dead." To attain means to arrive at. This requires us to run triumphantly the race for the prize ([1 Cor. 9:24-26](#); [2 Tim. 4:7-8](#)).

The out-resurrection from among the dead denotes the outstanding resurrection, the extra-resurrection, which will be a prize to the overcoming saints. All believers who are dead in Christ will participate in the resurrection from

among the dead at the Lord's coming back (1 Thes. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:52). But the overcoming saints will enjoy an extra, outstanding portion of that resurrection. This is the "better resurrection" mentioned in Hebrews 11:35. The better resurrection is not only "the first resurrection" (Rev. 20:4-6), "the resurrection of life" (John 5:28-29), but also the out-resurrection, the resurrection in which the Lord's overcomers will receive the reward of the kingdom, which the Apostle Paul sought after.

To arrive at the out-resurrection means that our entire being has been gradually and continually resurrected. God first resurrected our deadened spirit (Eph. 2:5-6). Then from our spirit He proceeds to resurrect our soul (Rom. 8:6) and our mortal body (Rom. 8:11), until our entire being—spirit, soul, and body—is fully resurrected out of our old being by His life and with His life. This is a process in life through which we must pass and a race for us to run until we arrive at the out-resurrection as the prize. Hence, the out-resurrection should be the goal and destination of our Christian life. We can only reach this goal by being conformed to the death of Christ, by living a crucified life. In

the death of Christ we are processed in resurrection from the old creation to the new.

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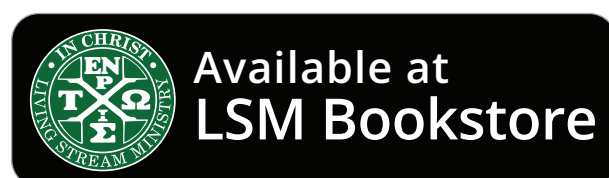
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GAINING CHRIST BY PURSUING HIM

Scripture Reading: [Phil. 3:12-14](#)

NOT YET PERFECTED, BUT PURSUING

In [Philippians 3:7-11](#) Paul gives us the way to experience Christ. In [verses 12 through 14](#) Paul applies to himself the things presented in [verses 7 through 11](#). In [verse 12](#) he says, “Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if also I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.” The Greek word rendered “perfected” also means completed or matured in life. Paul’s meaning here is that he was still growing, for he did not regard himself as one who had reached maturity. If Paul needed to say that he had not already obtained or was not already perfected, even though he had so much growth in life and so much experience of Christ, how much more should we have such an attitude about ourselves!

In [verse 12](#) Paul says, “I pursue, if also I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid

hold of by Christ Jesus.” The Greek word translated “lay hold of” may also be rendered gain, grasp, or get possession of. It may even be rendered seize. For simplicity, we shall use the word gain. Paul aspired to gain that for which he had been gained by Christ Jesus. At the time of his conversion Paul was gained by Christ. Christ had gained Paul with the intention that Paul would gain Him.

Not many Christians speak of their conversion in the way Paul spoke of his. Have you ever heard anyone say that at the time he was converted Christ gained him so that he might gain Christ? We need to realize that Christ has gained us that we might gain Him. Then we need to use Paul’s expression to uplift our conversation about conversion. Christ gained us not merely for the sake of forgiveness, redemption, salvation, or heaven. I repeat, He gained us for the definite purpose that we might gain Him.

Do you realize that you have been gained by Christ? At the time of your conversion, Christ laid hold of you, seized you, grasped you. When you were converted to Christ, He took full possession of you. Now it is impossible for you to escape His grasp. The Lord holds the whole earth in His hands. How do you expect to be able to run away

from Him? The Lord is very patient; He is not easily offended or angered. Sometimes Christians misrepresent the Lord Jesus and give others the impression that He will immediately become angry if they do something wrong. However, the Lord may bear with you quite a long time without becoming angry with you. He is not troubled by your attempts to escape from Him. He knows that once He has gained you, you cannot get away.

When we first called on the name of the Lord Jesus for our salvation, we were “hooked” by the Lord. It is a very important matter to call on the Lord, for when we call on Him, we are gained by Him. Once the Lord has gained us, there is no escaping from Him. Some have testified that they tried to get away from the Lord for many years, but eventually had to return to Him.

The Lord has taken possession of us so that we might take possession of Him. This was His purpose in grasping us. Christ wants us to gain Him. The Lord’s aim in His salvation is to seize us that we might take full possession of Him. Not even when Paul was writing to the Philippians did he regard himself as having gained Christ in a full way. Rather, he was still pursuing Christ in order to gain Him.

In [Philippians 3](#) Paul uses three Greek words that are rendered gained, obtained, and laid hold of. The meaning of these words is very close, for to obtain is to gain, and to gain is to lay hold of. The strongest of these expressions is lay hold of. Christ has laid hold of us that we might lay hold of Him. He has gained us that we might gain Him. Thus, the Christian life is a life of gaining Christ. How much have you gained of Christ? This is a crucial question. We grow in life by gaining Christ. The degree to which we have gained Christ is the degree to which we have grown with Christ. We all need to gain Christ in order to grow in life. Spiritual growth is measured by how much we have gained of Christ.

I hope that the saints will use [3:12](#) to improve their vocabulary concerning conversion and salvation. According to this verse, conversion means that Christ gains a person so that this person may gain Him. Gaining Christ is a life-long matter. Day by day our goal should be to gain Him. Even during his imprisonment, Paul was pursuing Christ in order to gain Him.

Paul's use of the little word "if" in [verse 12](#) indicates that he was not certain about his growth in life. It is right to be sure of our salvation, but not to be certain of our growth in life. If we have

the assurance that we have grown in life to an advanced degree, we probably have not grown to that extent. We should join Paul in saying, “*If also I may lay hold....*”

In [verses 13 and 14](#) Paul goes on to say, “Brothers, I do not yet reckon myself to have laid hold, but one thing—forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Even though Paul had experienced and gained Christ tremendously, he did not consider that he had experienced Him in full or gained Him to the uttermost. For this reason he was still advancing toward the goal—the gaining of Christ to the fullest extent.

In [verse 13](#) Paul speaks of forgetting the things behind. In order to gain Christ to the fullest extent, Paul not only forsook his experience in Judaism, but also refused to dwell on his past experiences of Christ and be limited by them. To dwell on our past experiences, no matter how real they may have been, frustrates our further pursuing after Christ.

In [verse 13](#) Paul tells us that he was stretching forward to the things which are before. He knew that Christ is unsearchably rich, that there is a

vast territory of His riches to be possessed. He was stretching forward to gain these riches and to advance further into this territory.

Paul was pursuing toward the goal for the prize. Christ is both the goal and the prize. The goal is the fullest enjoyment and gain of Christ, and the prize is the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom as a reward to the victorious runners of the New Testament race. In order to reach the goal for the prize, Paul was exercised to forget the things which are behind and to stretch forward to the things which are before. This is the way to gain Christ by pursuing Him.

Even though Paul was a matured saint and a very experienced apostle, he tells us that he had not already obtained and had not yet been perfected. He did not regard himself as one who had obtained the full enjoyment of Christ or the full maturity in life. He, of course, had obtained the common salvation by the common faith ([1 Tim. 1:14-16](#)), but he was still pursuing Christ in order to gain Him. Furthermore, Paul was also seeking Christ in order to have the extra portion of resurrection. In order to have this portion of resurrection, called the out-resurrection, we must

pursue, run the race, and finish our course triumphantly.

Like Paul, we have been regenerated, but we are not yet perfected, or matured, in life. At the time of our conversion, we were gained by Christ so that we may gain Him. Now as those who have not yet obtained and who have not yet been perfected, we are pursuing Christ.

THE WAY TO PURSUE

The first aspect of the way to pursue Christ is that we do not consider ourselves to have gained. Following this, we need to do one thing: forget the things which are behind and stretch forward to the things which are before.

The goal toward which we are pursuing is the full enjoyment of Christ, and the prize is the extra enjoyment of Christ. I believe this extra portion of the enjoyment of Christ will be in the millennial kingdom. In the millennial kingdom the overcomers will enjoy Christ in an extraordinary way. This extraordinary enjoyment of Christ corresponds to the out-resurrection in [verse 11](#). This out-resurrection can be illustrated by the experience of a few members of a high school graduating class. At the time of graduation, a few outstanding students will enjoy an

extra portion. Although hundreds of students may graduate at the same time, only a small number will enjoy this special portion. In like manner, all believers who die before the Lord comes back will be resurrected, but some will enjoy an extraordinary resurrection, an outstanding resurrection. Paul speaks of this as the out-resurrection from among the dead, a prize to those believers who are successful in running the New Testament race.

Many Christians hold the concept that as long as they are resurrected when the Lord comes back, they will not have any problems. This concept is wrong. The Bible reveals that all unbelievers will be resurrected. According to [John 5:28-29](#), there are two classes of resurrection: the first class is resurrection to life, and the second is resurrection to condemnation. All the believers who have died will be resurrected unto life, that is, unto salvation. However, the unbelievers will be resurrected after the millennium unto condemnation, unto perdition. In light of the principle that there is more than one kind of resurrection, we should not say that simply because a person will be resurrected he will not have any problems. Resurrected believers as well as unbelievers may still face a problem. There will be a

distinction not only between the resurrection of the believers and the unbelievers, but also a distinction among Christians at the time of resurrection. Yes, we shall all be resurrected. But many will participate in resurrection merely in a common way; they will not enjoy the out-resurrection. They will be like the majority of a high school graduating class. Others, however, will enjoy the extra portion of resurrection. They will be like the few out of the graduating class who enjoy an outstanding graduation.

Some Christians may not agree with the interpretation that the goal and the prize in [3:14](#) are related to the millennial kingdom. But no matter how we interpret this verse, the fact remains that there is a goal for us to reach and a prize for us to gain. I do not insist on my interpretation of this verse, but I would point you to the goal and the prize. In order to reach the goal and gain the prize, you must run in a proper way. Otherwise, you will come short of the goal and fail to receive the prize.

Do not be content with the fact that, as a believer, you will be resurrected. Yes, you will “graduate” in resurrection, but will you have the extra portion of resurrection? Do not be under the influence of the teaching popular with

Christians today that all believers will be kings in the millennium. All true believers are eternally saved. However, not all Christians will be on the same level as far as reward is concerned. The time Christ comes back will be the time of reward. Whether or not we receive a reward from Him depends on how we run the race today.

THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING

We have pointed out that the goal is the full enjoyment and gain of Christ and that the prize will be the uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom as a reward to the victorious runners of the New Testament race. This prize is the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The Greek word rendered high means above. The high calling is the calling by God from above, from the heavens. It is a heavenly calling ([Heb. 3:1](#)), corresponding to the heavenly citizenship in [verse 20](#), not an earthly one like that given to the children of Israel in the flesh. This high calling is to take possession of Christ, whereas the earthly calling to the children of Israel was to take possession of a physical land.

We have received not an earthly calling, but

a high calling, a heavenly calling. God has called us to gain Christ as our real land. In typology, God called Israel with an earthly calling to gain the good land. Now God has called us with a heavenly calling to gain Christ.

Once again I wish to emphasize that we need to take care of certain facts in [3:14](#). No matter how we may interpret Paul's word concerning the goal and the prize, we cannot deny that both are facts with certain points. Even if you do not agree with the interpretation that the prize is the top enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom, you still need to take care of the fact that there is a prize for you to obtain. To receive the prize we must reach the goal, and to reach the goal we must run the race. These facts are of great importance.

As we consider these facts, we need to apply them to our situation according to the context of [Philippians 3](#). In this chapter Paul shows us our need to gain Christ. Christ is the goal and also the prize. Do not be distracted by the effort to understand just what kind of prize you will obtain when you reach the goal. What is crucial is that you realize that, according to the divine revelation, God has set forth Christ as your goal

and prize. Furthermore, He has called you to stretch forth toward the goal.

Some Christians may argue that the prize in [3:14](#) does not refer to enjoyment in the millennial kingdom. Again I say, even if you disagree with this interpretation, you cannot avoid the fact that God does have a prize for us. According to the context of [Philippians 3](#), both the goal and the prize are Christ. Otherwise, why would Paul say that Christ had gained him so that he might gain Christ? In [verse 12](#) he says, “I pursue, if also I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.” Then in [verses 13 and 14](#) he continues, “Brothers, I do not yet reckon myself to have laid hold, but one thing—forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” I urge you to care for the fact that God has set up a goal and prepared a prize. I also urge you to care for the need to run a good race and to pursue Christ by forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forth to the things which are before. I believe that the things which are before are things concerning Christ and His Body, the church. Let us all forget the things

behind and pay attention to the bright future ahead of us, a future of gaining Christ and experiencing Him to the uttermost in His Body.

We should not be satisfied simply with Bible knowledge, not even with the knowledge of [Philippians 3](#). We need to have the actual pursuing of Christ. The Greek word for pursue can also be translated persecute. Before Paul was saved, he was persecuting Christ in a negative way. After he was saved, he pursued Christ to such an extent we may even say he persecuted Christ, but in a very positive way. To persecute a person is to trouble him and refuse to let him go. Before Paul was saved, he bothered Christ and would not let Him go, persecuting Him negatively. But after he was saved and had been gained by Christ, he still persecuted Him, but positively, for he refused to let Christ go. We also should persecute Christ in this way. This is to pursue Christ in order to gain Him. Do not let Christ go. Bother Him, persecute Him, in order to gain Him. To persecute Christ in this way is exhausting. As we persecute Christ, we should spend ourselves completely. Our whole being with all of our strength should be consumed in pursuing Christ. I hope that many will be impressed with the need to pursue Christ and be stirred up to

seek Him even in a persecuting way. Do not allow Christ to get away from you, but seek Him, pursue Him, persecute Him in such a positive way. Then you will gain Him.

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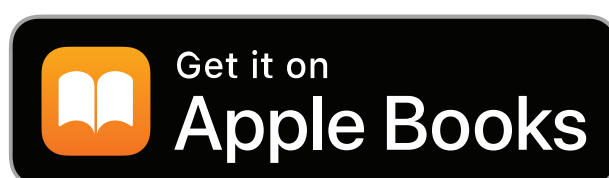
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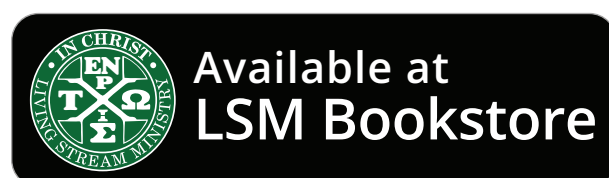
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A MIND TO PURSUE CHRIST

Scripture Reading: [Phil. 3:13-16](#)

In this booklet we shall be concerned mainly with [Philippians 3:15 and 16](#). In [verse 15](#) Paul says, “Let us therefore, as many as are full grown, have this mind; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, this also God shall reveal to you.” The Greek word rendered “full grown” means mature, perfect. Maturity is a matter of stages. We may be mature, but not mature in full. In [verse 15](#) Paul uses the expression “full grown” in a relative sense, meaning relatively mature, neither childish nor absolutely mature. Hence, further pursuing, further growth, is needed.

Those who are full grown still need a mind to pursue Christ. At the time Paul wrote the book of Philippians, he was full grown. However, he was still growing. This confirms that even the matter of full growth, or maturity, may be relative. Today none of us can say that we have reached the goal. Although we may not be childish and may actually be somewhat full grown, we still have not reached the goal.

THIS MIND

According to [verse 15](#), “as many as are full grown” should have “this mind.” This book’s dealing with the Philippian believers is focused on the mind, the leading part of the soul. It charges them to strive together for the gospel with one soul ([1:27](#)), to think the same thing, to be joined in soul, even to think the one thing ([2:2](#); [4:2](#)), to let the mind which was in Christ be in them ([2:5](#)), and to have this mind, a mind focused on the pursuing and gaining of Christ to the uttermost. When our mind is thus occupied, we have the same mind, thinking the same thing, even thinking the one thing—the fullest gain of Christ—joined in soul, like-souled ([2:20](#)), and with one soul.

Paul’s word in [verse 15](#) implies that if we do not have this mind, we may be childish. Not having this mind is a sign that we are not full grown. As we consider the situation among Christians today, we see a great deal of childishness. Not many believers have this mind, the mind to seek after the fullest enjoyment and gain of Christ. Imagine how marvelous the situation would be if all seeking Christians had a mind focused on pursuing Christ for the full enjoyment and gaining

of Him. If the seeking Christians were like this, the situation on earth would be excellent and wonderful. However, the situation among Christians today is confused and complicated. This is due to the fact that seeking Christians do not have this mind. Instead of seeking God's unique goal, they pursue other goals. These different goals cause trouble. We in the Lord's recovery should have one goal, and this goal should be to pursue Christ that we may have the fullest enjoyment of Him and may gain Him in full.

GOD'S UNIQUE GOAL

In [Philippians 3:15](#) Paul says that "if in anything you are otherwise minded, this also God shall reveal to you." Pursuing after Christ must be our goal. We should not be otherwise minded. God wants always to adjust our mind to His center by revealing to us the need of such a mind, a mind focused on the pursuing of Christ.

Paul's word in [verse 15](#) indicates his assurance that there was just one goal. Because of this assurance he could say that if in anything we were otherwise minded, this also God would reveal to us. Paul did not mean that Christians did not have other goals. What he said was that God would reveal this to them.

We all need to see God's unique goal. We thank the Lord that throughout the years God's goal has kept us from being distracted. It is very easy to be distracted in the Christian life, for there are many distracting factors surrounding us. If we do not have a fixed goal, the unique goal, the goal set up by God in eternity, and hold to it, we shall eventually be distracted. The only thing that can keep us on God's way is His unique goal—Christ for our highest enjoyment and ultimate gain. If we take this goal as our ultimate goal, we shall be preserved.

ONLY THIS

In [3:16](#) Paul goes on to say, “Only this, whereunto we have attained, by the same rule let us walk.” It is rather difficult to translate the Greek word rendered “only this” in a definite way. It may also be rendered but rather, nevertheless, or however. It is a concluding word to the preceding verses, charging us with only this: to walk by the same rule. The words “whereunto we have attained” modify walk.

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE

In [verse 16](#) the Greek word for walk is *stoicheo*, which means to walk orderly. It is derived from

steicho, which means to range in regular line, to march in military rank, to keep step, to conform to virtue and piety, as used in [Romans 4:12](#); [Galatians 5:25](#); [6:16](#). It is different from the word walk in [Philippians 3:17 and 18](#), which means to live, to deport oneself, to be occupied with, to walk about, as used in [Romans 6:4](#); [8:4](#); [13:13](#); [1 Corinthians 3:3](#); [Galatians 5:16](#); and [Ephesians 4:1, 17](#). By this word the apostle charges us to walk and order our lives by the same rule, in the same line, in the same path, in the same footsteps, whereunto we have attained, at the state to which we have attained. Whatever state we have attained to in our spiritual life, we all must walk by the same rule, in the same path, as the apostle did; that is, to pursue Christ toward the goal that we may gain Him to the fullest extent as the prize of God's calling from above.

The Greek word *stoicheo* is a verbal form of the noun which means element. We do not have an English equivalent for this word. In English we can use element as a noun, but not as a verb. One version adopts the rendering "observe the elements." This conveys much of the original meaning; however, I do not care to use the word observe here. Perhaps the Greek should be rendered "walk according to the elementary principles," since the

meaning is that the elementary principles become our walk. Among the ancient Greeks, there were, as there are today, societies or organizations which followed certain basic principles. There are also basic principles, basic elements, involved in being a Christian. These elements should become a Christian's walk. This was Paul's concept in using this particular word for walk in [3:16](#).

We have pointed out that this word is derived from a word which means to range in regular line or march in military rank. Paul uses this term in [Romans 4:12](#), where he speaks of "those who walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham." To walk in the steps of Abraham's faith is to conform to his faith, to conform ourselves to certain virtue or piety. This Greek word is very rich in meaning.

GAINED BY CHRIST TO GAIN CHRIST

Paul's main thought in [3:16](#) is that, as Christians, the most important principle of our Christian life should be to pursue Christ. Pursuing Christ, therefore, should be the major principle according to which we walk. Paul has already indicated this in [verse 12](#) by saying that he pursues in order to lay hold of that for which he has also been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

According to this verse, the principle of our conversion and salvation is that we have been gained by Christ in order to gain Him. This principle must become a basic and governing element in our Christian walk.

Unfortunately, many of today's Christians do not follow this governing principle. Instead of pursuing God's unique goal, they seek other things. For example, those in the Pentecostal movement or charismatic movement may seek power or spiritual gifts. They may pursue speaking in tongues, healing, or manifestations of other gifts. Those who have such pursuits are not following the basic principle of the Christian life. This principle is to pursue Christ that we may gain Him.

Christ has gained us not that we may gain gifts, but that we may gain Him. In one of his best hymns, A. B. Simpson says:

Once it was the blessing,
Now it is the Lord...
Once His gift I wanted,
Now, the Giver own;
Once I sought for healing,
Now Himself alone.

(Hymns, #513)

As this hymn indicates, the governing principle of the Christian life is not gifts or healing—it is Christ Himself. Realizing this, A. B. Simpson also put out a tract on this theme entitled “Himself.”

THE SAME PATH

It is crucial for us to see that the basic and governing principle of the Christian life is that we gain Christ. As many as are full grown, let us walk according to this rule, this elementary principle. Perhaps path is a better word than rule in [verse 16](#). If we use this word, the verse will read “by the same path let us walk.” This understanding is also based on the various meanings of the Greek word: to range in line, to march in military rank, to keep step, to conform to virtue and piety. Paul’s use of this Greek word indicates that by the same path we should walk according to the elementary principle.

EXTRAORDINARY EXPRESSIONS

In [3:7-16](#) Paul uses many unusual terms and expressions. In [verse 7](#) he says that certain “things were gains,” and he speaks of having counted such things loss on account of Christ. In no other book does Paul use these terms. In [verse 8](#) he

speaks of “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus,” a new and extraordinary expression. In this verse he says that he counts certain things to be refuse in order to gain Christ. The term “refuse” and the expression “gain Christ” are also unusual. In [verse 9](#) Paul goes on to speak of being “found in Him” and in [verse 10](#) of knowing Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. [Verse 10](#) also uses the extraordinary expression “conformed to His death.” In [verse 11](#) we find a unique term for resurrection—“the out-resurrection from among the dead.” The unique expressions in [verse 12](#) include “not that I have already obtained,” “already perfected,” “I pursue,” “lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of.” In [verse 13](#) Paul says, “forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,” and in [verse 14](#), “I pursue toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” The expressions in these verses are also new and even extraordinary. In [verse 15](#) Paul declares, “Let us therefore, as many as are full grown, have this mind.” The phrase “this mind” is unique. Can you find such an expression in any of Paul’s other Epistles? By “this mind” Paul means a mind focused on pursuing

Christ, a mind centered on enjoying Christ and gaining Him. In [verse 15](#) Paul goes on to speak of being otherwise minded, and in [verse 16](#) he uses the phrase “only this.” Both are new terms used here for the first time.

PURSUING CHRIST

As we have pointed out, in [verse 16](#) Paul speaks of walking by the same rule. We have also seen that the Greek word for walk in this verse means to walk according to the elementary principles. The governing principle of our Christian life should be the pursuing after the enjoyment of Christ and the experience of Christ. This principle will preserve us in the proper oneness. In the past we have said that the genuine ground of oneness keeps us in the real oneness. This is true, and we continue to proclaim this teaching today. However, the ground of unique oneness may be considered somewhat as an outward matter. Along with this, we need something inward to govern us and preserve us in the oneness. This inward matter is what Paul describes as “this mind”; it is also the unique path for our Christian walk. Both the unique mind and the unique path are related to pursuing Christ. Pursuing Christ in order to experience Him and enjoy Him

should be the basic and elementary principle of our Christian life.

How wonderful it would be if all Christians had this mind and walked in this path! The reason for the confusion and the divisions among Christians today is that so few are willing to walk according to this basic principle. Here in Philippians Paul did not deal with the problem of the church. His burden was to point out that our need is to pursue Christ. I believe that as Paul was writing this Epistle, he exhausted the vocabulary available to him to express his burden concerning the Christian walk. As Christians, we need to walk in a particular lane—the lane, the path, of pursuing Christ. We should care for “only this,” this “one thing,” not so many different doctrines and practices. But today believers are distracted by things such as prophecy, head covering, foot washing, the mode of baptism and the kind of water used, the type of bread used at the Lord’s table, and even the size of the cup used to contain the wine or grape juice. How poor is such a situation! If, by contrast, we would see that God has set up a goal for us and has prepared a prize for us, and if we would have the mind to pursue Christ, the world would be

turned to the Lord, and the Lord Jesus would have a way to come back soon.

Today's Christianity is without impact, power, and authority because it has been cut into pieces and made subject to confusion. What is the remedy for such a degraded situation? The remedy consists simply in pursuing our wonderful Christ. If we would all set our mind on pursuing Christ, there would be no problems.

Only Christ can enable believers of different nationalities and cultures to be truly one. Let us all pursue Christ to such an extent that we are willing to count as loss even our national philosophy and characteristics on account of Him. We should not allow these things to remain as rocks hidden deep within us, occupying a place which belongs to Christ. Our national characteristics are used by the enemy, Satan, as substitutes for Christ. The enemy uses them to keep Christ from having adequate ground in our being. May the Lord have mercy on us that we would have a mind to pursue Christ to the uttermost and to walk according to the elementary principle of the Christian life! This principle is that we pursue Christ, forgetting the things behind and stretching forward to the goal established by

God that we may obtain the prize He has prepared for us.

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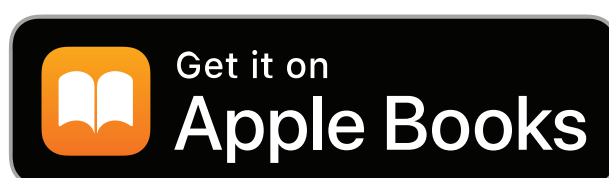
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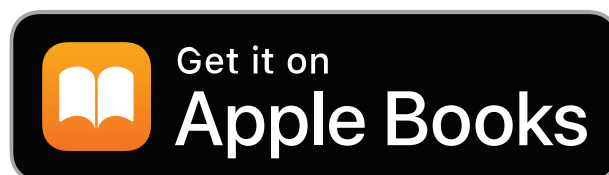
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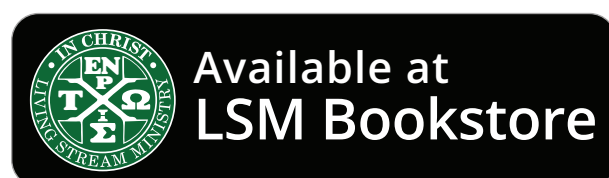
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AWAITING CHRIST FOR THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR BODY

In [chapters one and two of Philippians](#) Paul's intention was to have communication, fellowship, between him and the believers in Philippi that he might share his experience of Christ so that the believers might be encouraged to have a full participation in his enjoyment of Christ. At the beginning of [chapter three](#), Paul changes his emphasis. Although it is rather difficult to trace Paul's thought in this chapter, my burden in this message is to consider Paul's basic concept in [Philippians 3](#).

If we read this chapter carefully, we shall see that Paul refers to two groups of people who were exerting a strong influence in the Mediterranean area. The first group was the Judaizers, the Jewish religionists, who were zealous for their traditional religion. In [Philippians 3:2](#) Paul speaks of them as dogs, evil workers, the concision. The second group consisted of those who held to the Epicurean philosophy, which promoted

indulgence in the pleasure of eating and drinking and self-gratification in other things, all of which are contrary to the cross of Christ ([Phil. 3:18-19](#)). From [verse 2](#) we see that Judaizers were causing damage to the Philippian believers. From [verse 18](#) we see that those who practiced according to the Epicureans were also causing damage to them. The former was of Jewish origin; the latter, of a heathen source. Paul's underlying thought in this chapter is related to these two groups. As we shall see, in speaking of the Judaizers, Paul deals with the soul, especially with the mind, but in speaking of the Epicureans, he deals with the body. The Judaizers did not promote the enjoyment of material things. Rather, they zealously promoted their particular religious philosophy. Both religion and philosophy involve the mind. For the most part, religious people and philosophical people are not occupied with material things. They do not care to indulge themselves in such things as eating and drinking. On the contrary, they may even restrict themselves in these matters. The things to which Paul refers in [Philippians 3:3-7](#) are not material things, but things related to religion, philosophy, and culture, things which have much to do with our mind.

The believers in Philippi had been saved and regenerated in spirit, but there was still the need for them to care for their soul and body in a proper way. As Paul was writing [chapter three](#), deep within him was the intention to give certain instructions to the Philippian believers concerning how to deal with the soul and the body. Therefore, he first spoke of the Judaizers in order to edify the Philippians in dealing with the soul. Then he referred to the Epicureans in order to instruct the believers in dealing with the body.

TRANSFORMATION AND THE RENEWING OF THE MIND

If we would deal with the soul, we need to count as refuse all religious matters, philosophical things, and cultural elements, and we need to be transformed by the renewing of the mind. According to [Romans 12:2](#), the renewing of the mind is a basic aspect of transformation. The transformation of our soul depends to a great extent on the renewing of our mind. If our mind is not renewed, our soul will remain unchanged.

To say that our mind is renewed means that a change has taken place in our way of thinking. The thoughts of many believers are still occupied with religious, philosophical, and cultural

things, the very things mentioned by Paul in [Philippians 3:7 and 8](#). These matters are related to the psychological world, to the world of the soul. Many are also taken over by a natural way of thinking. Such saints may be good, but they are the same in soul today as they were many years ago. A primary reason for our lack of transformation is that a huge rock, the rock of national characteristics, is occupying our soul, taking the place that belongs to Christ. In the case of every one of us, national characteristics occupy our soul. Our soul has been taken over by this rock.

THE NEED FOR SURGERY ON OUR SOUL

We may also liken national characteristics that occupy our soul to a tumor which grows in a person's stomach until there is room for little else. In our psychological stomach a tumor has grown and has taken over nearly all the room which should be reserved for Christ. For this reason, our inner being cannot contain much spiritual food and it cannot function normally. Believers from every country, and even from different regions in a particular country, have a tumor characteristic of them. This tumor grows especially in our natural mind. It has grown to

such a degree that it has become part of our very constitution. Only the most skillful Surgeon—the Lord Jesus Himself—is able to remove the tumor hidden within us.

In [Philippians 3:1-16](#) Paul deals with this tumor; he operates on our soul, especially on our thinking. When he was Saul of Tarsus, Paul had a large tumor in his soul. This tumor influenced Paul's thoughts about the Jewish religion, law, circumcision, and tradition. But one day the Lord Jesus, the greatest Surgeon, operated on Paul, and a huge tumor was removed from his mind. However, with most of us, this surgery has not yet taken place. The tumor is still in our soul.

For a number of years I was bothered within by a question for which I was not able to find an answer. Why do Christians who truly love the Lord and seek Him earnestly go on year after year without growing in life? Even though they read the Bible faithfully, they do not see anything. Now I have at least part of the answer. The lack of growth in life and shortage of revelation in reading the Word are caused by a tumor in their psychological stomach.

In [Philippians 3:15](#) Paul says, “Let us therefore, as many as are full-grown, have this mind.” If we would have “this mind,” we must have a

mind without a tumor, a mind filled with Christ and occupied with seeking Christ, gaining Him, and enjoying Him. In order to have such a mind, we must be operated on by the Lord and have our psychological tumor removed. Oh, may the Lord show us how we need such a mind!

THE PHYSICAL BODY AND ITS ENJOYMENT

After dealing with the soul in [Philippians 3:1-16](#), Paul goes on to deal with the body in [3:17-21](#). These five verses deal with physical enjoyment, especially as practiced by the Epicureans. As genuine seekers of Christ, we need surgery to eliminate our religious and philosophical thoughts, and we also need a proper dealing with the physical body. In [verse 19](#) Paul speaks of those “whose god is the belly,” but in [verses 20 and 21](#) he says that we are awaiting the Lord Jesus Christ, “who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, conforming it to the body of His glory.” In these verses Paul deals with the physical body and its enjoyment.

Paul says in [verse 17](#), “Be imitators together of me, brothers, and observe attentively those who thus walk as you have us for an example.” The example here does not refer to what Paul

has covered in the foregoing verses. Instead, it is the example set by those who deal with the physical body in a proper way. How do we know that [verse 17](#) refers not to the things of the soul, but to the things of the body? We know it by the fact that [verse 18](#) begins with the word “for,” indicating that this verse is an explanation of [verse 17](#). [Verse 18](#) says, “For many walk, of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.” They were enemies of the cross of Christ, which has terminated the indulgence of the lusts of the physical body.

As we have pointed out, the Epicureans care for indulgence in the enjoyment of eating and drinking. Paul refers to this in [verse 19](#), which says, “Whose end is destruction, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.” In promoting the enjoyment of eating and drinking, the Epicureans were more concerned with physical indulgence than with ethics or morality. Today many take the way of the Epicureans to indulge in physical enjoyments. On the weekends some are so given to sports and physical pleasures that they forget everything else. Of the Epicureans Paul also says that they “set their minds on

earthly things.” By earthly things he means physical things, material things, matters of eating and drinking.

According to the book of Colossians, Paul did not agree with asceticism, with the practice of treating the body severely. But neither would he agree with the Epicurean indulgence in physical enjoyment. We need such things as food and clothing. Without them, we cannot live. However, we should not indulge ourselves in these things.

In [Philippians 4:11](#) Paul says, “I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content.” The Greek word rendered “content” is a Stoic term, indicating a practice opposite to that of the Epicureans. The Stoics taught that a person should be content in all circumstances, caring neither for enjoyment nor for suffering. Paul used this expression in testifying that he had learned the secret to be content. In principle, we Christians agree neither with the Epicureans nor with the ascetics. In a sense, we may somewhat stand with the Stoics.

CITIZENSHIP IN THE HEAVENS

In [Philippians 3:20](#) Paul goes on to say, “For our citizenship is in the heavens, from which

also we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” The Greek word rendered “citizenship” may also be rendered commonwealth or associations of life. Our national life is not in any earthly country; it is in the heavens. Our real citizenship, our true commonwealth, is in the heavens.

Because our citizenship is in the heavens, we should not be occupied with earthly things, with the physical things needed for our existence. We should not place such a high value on material things. This does not mean, of course, that we should not have proper food, clothing, housing, and transportation. We definitely need these things. But anything that goes beyond need falls into the category of indulgence. Such indulgence is to be condemned. If we love the earthly things needed for human life, this is an indication that we do not treasure our heavenly citizenship.

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE BODY

From the heavens we are eagerly awaiting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who “will transfigure the body of our humiliation, conforming it to the body of His glory, according to the operation of Him who is able even to subject all things

to Himself.” The transfiguration of our body will be the ultimate consummation of God’s salvation. In His salvation God first regenerated our spirit ([John 3:6](#)), now He is transforming our soul ([Rom. 12:2](#)), and, consummately, He will transfigure our body, making us the same as Christ in all three parts of our being.

In [Philippians 3:21](#) Paul refers to our body as “the body of our humiliation.” This describes our natural body, made of worthless dust ([Gen. 2:7](#)) and damaged by sin, weakness, sickness, and death ([Rom. 6:6](#); [7:24](#); [8:11](#)). But one day this body will be transfigured and conformed to the body of Christ’s glory. Christ’s body of glory is His resurrected body, saturated with God’s glory ([Luke 24:26](#)) and transcendent over corruption and death ([Rom. 6:9](#)).

No matter how we may feed and clothe our body and no matter what kind of automobile we use to transport it or dwelling place to house it, it is still a body of humiliation. You may allow your body to rest on the best and most expensive bed, but it is nonetheless a body of humiliation. However, we should not hate or despise our body. If we despise our body, we shall practice asceticism. In a very real sense, we should love our body for the Lord’s sake. We need to care for

the body without allowing it to indulge itself. One day, the Lord Jesus will come and transfigure the body of humiliation and conform it to the body of His glory.

In [Philippians 3:21](#) Paul says that the transfiguration of the body of humiliation is “according to the operation of Him who is able even to subject all things to Himself.” The transfiguration of our body is by the great power which subjects all things to the Lord ([Eph. 1:19-22](#)). This is the almighty power in the whole universe.

I believe that now we can grasp Paul’s basic thought in [Philippians 3](#). In this chapter Paul instructs us concerning both how to deal with the soul and how to deal with the body. To deal with the soul, we must count as loss all religious, philosophical, and cultural things so that Christ may occupy our entire being and that we may gain Him to the uttermost. To deal with our body, we should take care of our physical need, but not indulge in excessive physical enjoyment. Our aim should be to care for the body in a proper way that it may be healthy for the Lord’s expression. But our intention should not be to glorify the physical body through the over enjoyment of physical things. Our body is not to be glorified in this way, but is to be glorified at the

time of the Lord's coming back. At that time, He will transfigure our body of humiliation. Thus, we are waiting for Christ to come back that we may be brought into the ultimate consummation of God's salvation—the transfiguration of our body. Day by day, we are undergoing the process of transformation in our soul as we are waiting for the Lord to come to transfigure our body and thereby to bring us into the ultimate consummation of God's salvation.

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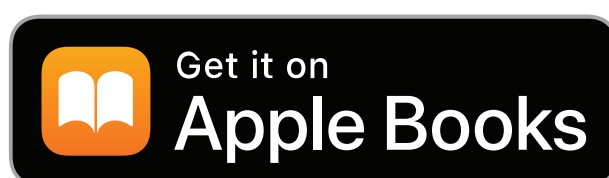
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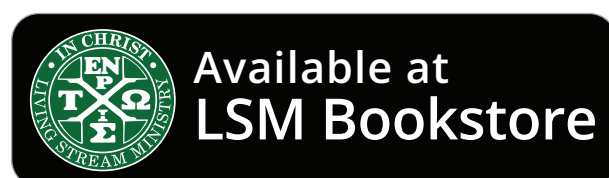
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THINKING THE SAME THING AND REJOICING IN THE LORD

TWO DEALINGS

In the first two chapters of Philippians we see the fellowship, the spiritual traffic, between the apostle and the believers. The third chapter is concerned with two kinds of dealing—the dealing with the soul and with the body. According to [Philippians 3](#), to deal with our soul in a proper way is to count as loss, even as refuse, all religious, philosophical, and cultural things. We may not realize that such things have been wrought into our soul. Our soul is not only filled with these elements, but even constituted of them. These things may be useful for society, but they are damaging to the Christian life. They are rocks occupying room in our being that belongs to Christ. Although you have received Christ, you may confine Him to your spirit and not allow Him to spread out into your soul. In your soul there may be no room for Christ. Your soul may have been filled with the things of religion, philosophy,

and culture, in particular with your national characteristics. Both in the Orient and the West, I have seen that every saint has been constituted of these things in the soul. But Paul was rescued by counting these things to be refuse. No longer would he treasure anything of religion, philosophy, or culture. In order to gain Christ, he was absolute in counting other things to be refuse.

In [Philippians 3](#) Paul deals with the body as well as the soul. He points out that the believers should not have excessive enjoyment in physical things.

A CONCLUDING WORD

After writing [chapter three](#), Paul's burden was discharged. Therefore, [chapter four](#) serves as a conclusion. In this conclusion, Paul does not present any additional main points. The contents of [chapter four](#) are related to what Paul has already written and are a confirmation of these points. Furthermore, the points in [chapter four](#) function as a charge to the believers.

[Philippians 4:1](#) says, "So then, my brothers, beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, beloved." The words "so then" indicate that what Paul is about to say is a conclusion.

Here Paul speaks of the brothers as the “beloved and longed for,” his “joy and crown.” These words indicate that Paul was filled with emotion, full of feeling. Twice he uses the word beloved. After referring to the believers as his beloved, he again addresses them as beloved ones. The believers were his joy within and his crown without. Joy is inward, whereas a crown is manifested outwardly. In this verse Paul was saying that the believers were both his inward happiness and his outward glory.

In [4:1](#) Paul charges the believers to “so stand firm in the Lord.” The expression “so stand” means to stand in a particular way, in the way presented in the foregoing chapters. In this verse Paul was urging the believers in Philippi to stand in the way he had shown them.

THINKING THE SAME THING

In [Philippians 4:2](#) Paul continues, “I beseech Euodias, and I beseech Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.” This verse indicates that these two sisters were dissenting from one another. They were not of the same mind. Hence, there was the exhortation to strive together with one soul for the gospel ([1:27](#)), to be joined in

soul, thinking the one thing (2:2), and to have the same mind to pursue after Christ (3:14-15).

According to [Philippians 4:3](#), these were very good sisters who had been helpful to Paul. Paul says of them that they “contended with me in the gospel, with both Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.” The Greek word rendered “contended” is an athletic term; it means to labor with, to strive together for, to wrestle in company with, as a team of athletes. These sisters were a help to Paul and the other workers, contending with them in the gospel. However, even these sisters needed help to be one by thinking the same thing in the Lord. According to the foregoing chapters, to think the same thing is related to pursuing Christ in order to gain Him and enjoy Him in full. Euodias and Syntyche were not pursuing Christ to the uttermost. Any who are tempted to be dissenting should heed Paul’s word to these sisters to think the same thing.

GENUINE YOKEFELLOW

In [Philippians 4:3](#) Paul uses the term yokefellow. In ancient times farmers used two oxen to pull a plow. The term yokefellow thus refers to being yoked together with another to bear a

common burden. In writing to the Philippians, Paul was seeking a genuine yokefellow, one who would bear the same burden as he, under the same yoke. If we do not seek Christ to the uttermost, we have not yet been yoked. Rather, we are still quite free in our thinking. If we have truly been yoked, we shall think the same thing as Paul. Those who had not been yoked together with Paul would not have been able to help him with Euodias and Syntyche. Paul was burdened to help these sisters to think the same thing—to pursue after Christ that they might gain Him and experience Him. But because Paul was in a Roman prison far away from Philippi, he needed someone there in Philippi to be yoked together with him to bear this burden. Paul expected that among the saints in Philippi there would be at least one who was the same as he was in pursuing Christ. Because Paul had been yoked, he had no freedom in his thought or concept. His mind had been yoked to think the one thing.

At any cost and by any means, Paul wanted to pursue Christ to the uttermost. This was his mind. Hence, his mentality had been absolutely yoked by Christ. Apart from Christ, he had no liberty to think anything. His mind had been fully yoked by Christ, in Christ, and with Christ.

As he was writing to the Philippians, he was looking for at least one saint who could work together with him to help the two dissenting sisters to think the same thing. This was a very practical word with which to conclude this Epistle.

In speaking of a “genuine yokefellow,” it seems as if Paul was saying, “I have written you this Epistle, but I don’t have the assurance that this letter will do the full job. I need someone among you who is genuinely yoked under the same mind to seek Christ. Such a one will be able to help these sisters to think the same thing. Anyone who wants to help them must first be yoked under the same mind as I have.” To have “this mind” and “to think the same thing” is to be a genuine yokefellow.

Today there is also the need for a genuine yokefellow. The Lord’s ministry is hated and rejected by many. You may accept this ministry and even love it, but to love the ministry is one thing, and to be yoked under the mind to pursue Christ is another. We all need to be yoked by having “this mind.”

Considering Paul’s word about a genuine yokefellow should remind us not to read the Bible in a superficial way and not to take things for granted. Paul’s expression “genuine yokefellow”

may seem insignificant; actually it is extremely important, for it is related to his charge to the Philippian believers to have this mind, to think the same thing, even to think the one thing. After issuing this charge, he mentions two sisters who were dissenting. Then he goes on to urge someone to labor together with him as a genuine yokefellow to assist Euodias and Syntyche to think the same thing, to turn from their dissension and set their minds on the pursuing of Christ.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REJOICING IN THE LORD

In [Philippians 4:4](#) Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.” Whether or not the believers were dissenting, they all had to rejoice. Those who would not rejoice were wrong, but those who could rejoice were right. I do not believe, however, that dissenting ones can rejoice very much. According to Paul’s word here, we should rejoice in the Lord always. This rejoicing affords us the strength for the oneness spoken of in [verses 2 and 3](#). In order for Euodias and Syntyche to think the same thing, it was necessary for them to learn to rejoice. Rejoicing in the Lord is also the secret of having the excellent

characteristics listed in [verses 5 through 9](#). If we would have the virtues found in these verses, we need to rejoice in the Lord. To rejoice in the Lord is a very important matter.

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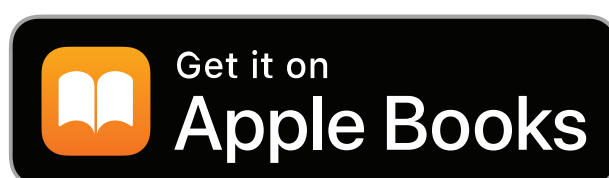
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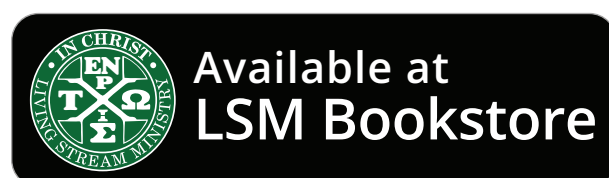
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PAUL'S GREETINGS AND HIS BLESSING

In the closing verses of [chapter four of Philippians](#) Paul extends a brief word of greetings ([vv. 21-22](#)) and blessing ([v. 23](#)).

THE APOSTLE GREETING EVERY SAINT IN CHRIST

In [Philippians 4:20](#) Paul exclaims, “Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen.” Then in [verse 21](#) he goes on to say, “Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you.” Paul’s words of greeting here are related to what he says in [verse 20](#) about glory to our God and Father. This indicates that he greeted the saints with the very weight of glory spoken of in [verse 20](#).

When we send greetings to others, or ask others to greet certain ones on our behalf, we may greet them with our best regards or with our love. However, Paul did not greet the saints in Philippi in a superficial way, merely with his best regards or with his love. I believe that what was within

him as he wrote this word of greeting was God's rich supply and glory. Paul had just written, "And my God shall fill every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (v. 19). No doubt this was the substance of his greetings to the saints. He wanted every saint to be greeted in Christ in this way.

THE BROTHERS WHO WERE WITH THE APOSTLE GREETING THE SAINTS

In [Philippians 4:21](#) Paul also says, "The brothers who are with me greet you." The brothers who were with Paul certainly must have greeted the saints in the same way Paul did. This means that they greeted the believers not with their best regards, but with the assurance of God's repayment and with His glory.

We may even say that Paul and those with him greeted the saints in Christ Jesus with the entire contents of the whole book of Philippians. This means that Paul and the others greeted them with all the words in this book. The very fact that Paul simply said to greet every saint in Christ, not specifying in what way the saints should be greeted, implies that he greeted them with all the points covered in this Epistle. Hence,

in [verse 21](#) Paul was actually saying, “Greet every saint in Christ according to all the things I have written in this Epistle.” Any saint who would not receive all these points could not have a share in Paul’s greeting. Those who would participate in his greeting must first enjoy all the points covered in this Epistle. These points were Paul’s best regards sent to them. Paul’s best regards to the saints were that they would live Christ, magnify Christ, take Christ as their pattern, hold forth Christ, count all things loss in order to gain Christ and be found in Him, pursue Christ, lay hold of Christ, and do all things in Christ. Seen in the context of the whole book, Paul greeted every saint with all the profound aspects of the experience of Christ.

A further indication that this was Paul’s concept in sending greetings to the saints is that in [verse 21](#) he uses the expression “in Christ Jesus.” This phrase implies the contents of the whole book, for, as we have pointed out again and again, this book deals with the experience of Christ and in Christ. Paul wanted the saints to be greeted in the very Christ whom we live, magnify, take as our pattern, hold forth as the word of life, and pursue. In reading [verse 21](#) we should be impressed not only with the words

“every saint,” but especially with the expression “every saint in Christ Jesus.” Paul and those with him greeted the saints in Christ Jesus with the whole contents of the book of Philippians.

**ALL THE SAINTS IN ROME,
ESPECIALLY THOSE
OF CAESAR’S HOUSEHOLD,
GREETING THE SAINTS IN PHILIPPI**

In [Philippians 4:22](#) Paul continues, “All the saints greet you, and especially those of Caesar’s household.” Caesar’s household included all who were attached to the palace of Nero. Some of these were converted through contact with Paul and became believers in Christ in Rome.

The expression “those of Caesar’s household” is both puzzling and encouraging. It is puzzling because we are not altogether sure to whom it refers; it is encouraging because it shows the furtherance of the gospel. The gospel had spread even into the household of Caesar Nero. God’s move in His economy had gained even some of Caesar’s household. Many commentators do not have the boldness to say that certain relatives of Nero were actually saved. Rather, for the most part, they claim that “Caesar’s household” refers to Nero’s royal guard, for, according to the custom

of the time, the royal guard was counted as part of Caesar's household. We need to be clear that this is simply an interpretation. In [verse 22](#) Paul does not say "the royal guard"; he says "Caesar's household." Based upon his use of the word "household," we believe that certain members of Nero's family actually were saved. What a tremendous victory! This indicates how worthwhile it is to have fellowship which results in the furtherance of the gospel, in the spread of God's move on earth for His economy.

It is significant that in writing to the Philippians Paul deliberately refers to "those of Caesar's household." I believe that Paul had fellowship with these ones, perhaps even telling them that he was writing a letter to the believers in Philippi. Then those brothers and sisters must have asked Paul to send their greetings to the saints in Philippi. This was the reason Paul could say, "All the saints greet you, and *especially* those of Caesar's household."

THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

In his word of blessing Paul says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit." Grace is God in Christ as our supply and enjoyment

conveyed to us and realized through the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ ([Phil. 1:19](#)). To experience Christ as Paul did we need this grace.

Grace is God Himself in Christ as our life supply and enjoyment. This supply and enjoyment is conveyed to us by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and it is realized by us through this Spirit. When Paul says, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit,” he means that the supply and enjoyment of the Triune God by and through the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ should be with us. When we have such a supply, we enjoy and experience the Triune God all day long.

WITH OUR SPIRIT

According to Paul’s word in [Philippians 4:23](#), the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is with our spirit. The spirit here is our regenerated spirit indwelt by the Spirit of Christ. It is in this spirit of ours that we enjoy Christ and experience Him as Paul did.

In [2 Corinthians 13:14](#) Paul says, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” Love is the source, grace is the course, and

fellowship is the flow. Here we have Christ the Son, God the Father, and the Spirit—the enjoyment of the Triune God. Furthermore, in this verse we have the dispensing of the Triune God into us as love, grace, and fellowship. However, these three are actually one; they are all related to the enjoyment of the Triune God. By means of love as the source, grace as the course, and fellowship as the flow, the Triune God dispenses Himself into our being to become our enjoyment. This is the grace which is with our spirit. How wonderful that the Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit now indwells our spirit! This marvelous enjoyment is with our spirit.

If we would enjoy the grace which is with our spirit, we need to exercise our spirit. The way to exercise the spirit is to pray, pray-read the Word, and call on the name of the Lord Jesus. Whenever we call on the Lord Jesus or pray to God the Father, we automatically exercise our spirit. This is very different, however, from praying in a religious, formal manner. That kind of prayer does not require the exercise of the spirit, but simply exercises the mentality. In contrast, when we call on the Lord, pray in a proper way, and pray-read the Word, we truly exercise our spirit. Exercising our spirit in this way is the secret to enjoying

the grace which is with our spirit. As one who has been reading the Bible and studying it for more than fifty years, I can testify that nothing brings me into more enjoyment of the Triune God than pray-reading the Word. Oh, we all need more exercise of the spirit to enjoy the Lord!

We know that man has three parts: the spirit, the soul, and the body. Bodily exercise is necessary and profitable. When I exercise physically, I sleep better at night. It is hardly necessary to speak of the exercise of the soul, especially of the mind, since this is emphasized so much in the schools. But there is a great need to emphasize the need to exercise the spirit.

The church is a spiritual gymnasium where we can exercise our spirit. The more we exercise the spirit, the more we shall be healthy and strong in our entire being. Our physical body will be healthy, our mind will be sober and keen, and our spirit will be energized. I can testify that day by day I have bodily exercise, psychological exercise, and spiritual exercise. Again I say, the exercise of the spirit is the secret, the unique way, to participate in the very grace which is the Triune God as the all-inclusive Spirit. As we enjoy Him, we become healthy and strong in our spirit and in our whole being.

We thank God that, in His mercy, He has brought a good number of us into the enjoyment of the Triune God through the exercise of the spirit by prayer, pray-reading, and calling on the dear and excellent name of the Lord Jesus. In this way we have the church life full of rejoicing, full of the enjoyment of the Triune God.

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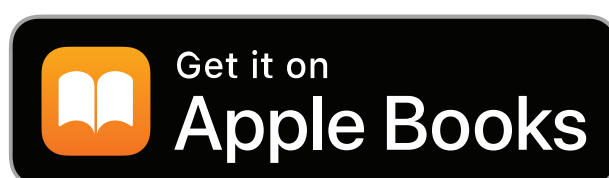
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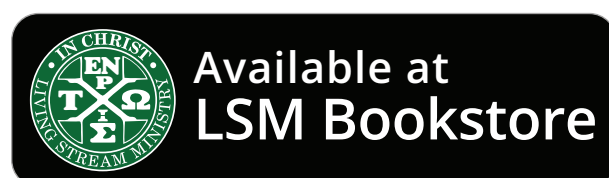
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DOING EVERYTHING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

In [Colossians 3:17](#) Paul charges us to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. In [Philippians 4:13](#) he testifies, “I can do all things in Him who empowers me.” It is somewhat easy to understand what it means to be able to do all things in the Lord who empowers us, but it is quite difficult to understand what it means to do all things in the name of the Lord. The name, of course, denotes a person. When we call someone by name, that person responds. Hence, a name denotes a person. Apart from the person, the name is empty and meaningless. Because the name denotes a person, to do things in the name of the Lord must mean to do things in His person.

PRAYING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

In [John 15:16](#) the Lord Jesus says, “Whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.” Here the Lord speaks of asking the Father in the Lord’s name. [John 14:13 and 14](#) say, “And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that

the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.” According to the basic truth revealed in [John 14 and 15](#), to be in the Lord’s name means to be one with the Lord, to live by the Lord, and to let the Lord live in us. The Lord came in the name of the Father and did things in the Father’s name ([John 5:43](#); [10:25](#)). This means that He was one with the Father ([John 10:30](#)) and lived because of the Father ([John 6:57](#)), and the Father worked in Him ([John 14:10](#)). In the Gospels, the Lord as the expression of the Father did things in the Father’s name. In the Acts, the disciples as the expression of the Lord did even greater things ([John 14:12](#)) in His name. Therefore, to be in the Lord’s name means to be one with Him in actuality.

In [John 5:43](#) the Lord Jesus says, “I have come in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me.” The fact that the Lord came in the name of the Father means that He came with the Father and in the Father. When He came, the Father came also. Furthermore, according to [John 10:25](#), the Lord Jesus said, “I told you, and you do not believe; the works which I do in the name of My Father, these testify concerning Me.” For the Lord to do works in the name of the Father is to be one with the Father and to do

things in the person of the Father. For this reason, the Lord Jesus could say, “I and the Father are one” ([John 10:30](#)). In [John 6:57](#) the Lord Jesus said that the living Father sent Him and that He lived because of the Father. The thought here is that the Lord Jesus was one with the Father and therefore was in the person of the Father and in the Father’s name. All these verses indicate that, according to biblical usage, to be in a person’s name means to be one with that person.

EXPERIENCING CHRIST SUBJECTIVELY

The Bible reveals that God’s desire and intention is to work Christ into us. What could be more subjective than having Christ wrought into our very being? Paul refers to this when he speaks of Christ making His home in our hearts ([Eph. 3:17](#)). As the extensive, all-inclusive One, the One anointed by God, Christ wants not only to dwell in us, but also to make His home in us. This certainly is a subjective matter. The root of the Greek word rendered “make home” in [Ephesians 3:17](#) is the same as that for house. It is not adequate merely to speak of Christ dwelling in us, for this does not convey the full meaning of the Greek word. We must say that Christ wants to house Himself, make His home, in us. The experience

of Christ housing Himself in us is indeed very subjective.

COINHERENCE

I wish to emphasize once again that to be in the name of the Lord means to be in the person of the Lord Jesus. When Christ the Son came in the name of the Father, He came in the person of the Father. We should not think that when the Lord Jesus came, only the Son came and not the Father also. No, when the Son came, the Father came in Him and with Him. [John 14:23](#) proves this: “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.” On the one hand, here the Lord speaks of the Father loving us; on the other hand, He speaks of the Father and the Son coming to us and making an abode with us. According to this verse, if we love the Son, the Father will love us. Then the Father and the Son will make an abode with us. This indicates that when the Son comes to us, the Father comes also. However, this does not mean that the Father comes alongside the Son. The Father comes in the Son, in the way of coinherence, of mutual indwelling. [John 14:11](#) speaks of the Son being in the Father and the Father being in the

Son. The little word “in” is very important, for it points to the matter of coinherence. The Lord came in the Father and with the Father in Him. This is what it means to say that the Son came in the name of the Father.

It is vital for us to see that to be in the name of the Lord Jesus means that we are one with Him, that we are in Him and He in us. As the Son is in the Father and the Father in the Son in the way of coinherence, we also must be one with the Lord in this way. We and the Lord Jesus should coinhere; that is, we need to be in Him and have Him in us. Then truly we shall be in the Lord’s name.

SATURATED WITH THE WORD

In [Colossians 3:17](#) Paul says, “And in everything, whatever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” Doing all things in the name of the Lord Jesus is related to letting the word of Christ saturate us and permeate us. We are filled, saturated, and permeated with the Word by praying, singing, and psalming the Word and giving thanks to God the Father for the Word. In this way we stir up our whole being, our mind, will, emotion, and spirit.

The word of Christ is actually the embodiment of Christ. Thus, when the Word as the embodiment of Christ is mingled with our inner being, inwardly we are one with Christ. It is at such a time that we can spontaneously do things in the name of the Lord. Because the Lord has saturated us, permeated us, and mingled Himself with us, making us one with Him, we can do all things in His name. To do things in the Lord's name means to do things in Him.

[Colossians 3:17](#) corresponds to [Philippians 4:13](#), where Paul tells us that he can do all things in the One who empowers him. If the words “in Him” are not to be simply terminology but a practicality and a reality to us, we need to let the word of Christ saturate our whole being. When the word of Christ enters into us and stirs us inwardly, we are truly one with Christ. We are in Him actually and experientially. Then just as we live by the food we have eaten, digested, and assimilated, we shall do all things in the name of the One with whom we have been permeated, saturated, and mingled and with whom we are one in a practical way.

ONE WITH THE LORD

In [Colossians 3:18—4:1](#) Paul gives a charge to

wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves, and masters. The wives are to be subject to their husbands, the husbands are to love their wives, the children are to obey their parents, the fathers are not to provoke their children, the slaves are to obey their masters, and the masters are to grant their slaves that which is just and equal. But how is a wife to submit to her husband, or a husband to love his wife? The only way to submit or to love is to be in the name of the Lord, to be one with the Lord.

Notice that [3:18—4:1](#) is the direct continuation of Paul's word in [verses 16 and 17](#). This means that if we are not in the name of the Lord Jesus, one with Him by having the word of Christ dwell in us richly, we cannot submit or love. The fulfillment of all the charges given by Paul in this portion of Colossians comes out of being "in the name of the Lord Jesus." If a sister is mingled with the Lord and one with Him, she will spontaneously submit to her husband. Likewise, if a husband is mingled with the Lord, he will automatically love his wife. In like manner, a child will honor his parents, a father will refrain from provoking his children, a slave will obey his master, and a master will give to his slave what is just and equal. This means that a

wife must submit to her husband in the name of the Lord, and a husband must love his wife also in the name of the Lord. Furthermore, children should obey their parents, parents should care for their children, servants should obey their masters, and masters should be fair to their slaves—all in the name of the Lord.

In [4:2](#) Paul goes on to say, “Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving.” Having become one with the Lord by singing, psalming, praying, and thanking, we need to preserve this oneness by persevering in prayer. By prayer we preserve the oneness, the mingling with the Lord. To persevere in prayer is to pray continually, unceasingly. This is necessary if we are to live Christ.

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIVING

In [Ephesians 5:18](#) Paul tells us to be filled in our spirit. With what should our spirit be filled? We need to be filled in spirit with the rich word of Christ. When we let the word of Christ inhabit us richly, this word will saturate us and produce an inner filling. We shall be filled with the riches of Christ contained in the Word, filled even unto all the fullness of God. When a brother is filled in this way, God will love his wife through him. Likewise, when children are

filled like this, their honoring of their parents will be with the fullness of God.

We have seen from the Bible that the Triune God wants to come into us, mingle Himself with us, and uplift us to the heavens that we may live with Him and be one with Him. If this is our experience, then everything we do will be in the name of the Lord Jesus. What a blessing it is to see this marvelous truth! It will take eternity to make known how much we have been blessed by the Lord in seeing this. Oh, what a blessing that we can do all things in the name of the Triune God! If a sister submits to her husband in the name of the Triune God, her submission will be wonderful and divine, altogether different from submission that is according to the ethics of Confucius. Her submission will not be by the natural human life, but by the divine life which has been wrought into her.

It is a wonderful fact that as believers we possess the divine nature. [Second Peter 1:4](#) says that we are partakers of the divine nature. The way to enlarge the sphere of the divine nature within us is to take the word of Christ not only by reading, but also by praying, singing, psalming, and thanking. If the word of Christ is to dwell in us richly, we need to open our entire

being and exercise our spirit. Then the Word will enter into us, stir us up, and become mingled with us, causing us to be one with the Lord in an actual and practical way. As a result, we shall do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus. Spontaneously we shall live Christ. We shall be one with Christ in deeds and words.

Therefore, to do all things in the Lord's name is to do all things in oneness with the Lord by reading, praying, singing, and psalming the Word, exercising our spirit to be mingled with the Word and thereby to become one with Christ experientially. Then we shall live Christ, doing all things in His name. This is the normal Christian living.

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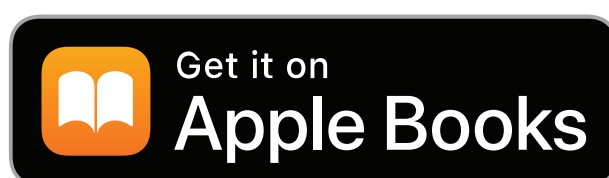
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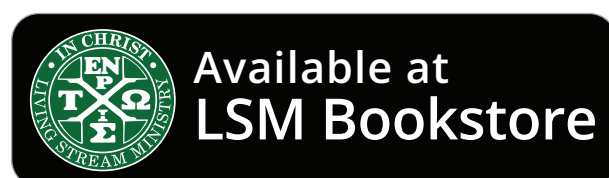
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TO BE FOUND IN CHRIST IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

[Philippians 3:9](#) says, “And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God based on faith.” According to this verse, Paul’s own righteousness was intimately related to the law. If we are to be found in Christ, we must fulfill the condition of not having our own righteousness which is of the law, but a righteousness which is not our own—that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God based on faith. In the righteousness of God we may be found in Christ, and this righteousness is through the faith of Christ.

THE EXCELLENCY OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

In [Philippians 3:8](#) Paul speaks of “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.” The

excellency of the knowledge of Christ does not refer to Christ's knowledge; it refers to our knowledge of Christ. It is the knowledge by which we know what kind of Christ He is. This knowledge has its excellency.

Paul obtained the excellency of the knowledge of Christ through revelation. When he was in Judaism, he was under the law. His vision and his thought were occupied with the law. Paul earnestly sought the knowledge of the law and pursued it. To him, the knowledge of the law was so excellent that he was even willing to sacrifice for it. But one day on the road to Damascus, the Lord opened Paul's eyes to see God's economy concerning Christ. From that time onward Paul turned from the excellency of the knowledge of the law to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

In the four books of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians Christ is revealed not only as the all-inclusive One, but also as the all-extensive One. Christ Himself is the breadth, length, height, and depth. As such, His dimensions are immeasurable. Who can measure this height or depth? Peter received the revelation concerning Christ as the Son of the living God for the building up of the church. However, Peter

did not see as much concerning Christ as Paul did. The revelation given to Paul issued in an excellent knowledge of the extensiveness of Christ.

On account of the excellency of this knowledge, Paul was willing to suffer the loss of all things and count them to be refuse. In other words, after seeing the revelation concerning Christ, all other things became refuse, trash, dung. Spontaneously he realized that not only religion was refuse, dog food, but culture was refuse as well. Why did Paul count all things loss? It was because of the excellency of the knowledge of the extensive, all-inclusive Christ. Furthermore, he was willing to count all things loss in order to gain Christ.

TO GAIN CHRIST AND BE FOUND IN HIM

To have the revelation concerning Christ does not mean we have already gained Christ. After seeing the revelation, there was the need for Paul to pursue in order to gain Christ. Likewise, we may have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, but Christ may not yet be ours in our experience. Therefore, like Paul, we need to pursue Christ that we may gain Him.

At the end of [Philippians 3:8](#) Paul speaks of gaining Christ, and in [verse 9](#) he speaks of being found in Him. These are two aspects of one thing. Paul desired to gain Christ and be found in Him. To have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ is one thing. However, it is another thing to gain Him and be found in Him. Although I may have seen the revelation concerning the extensiveness and all-inclusiveness of Christ, I may be found in ethics, culture, or good behavior and not in Christ. If someone visits you at home, will you be found in Christ? You may declare, “Hallelujah, I am in Christ! I have been transferred out of Adam and into Christ.” However, this may be merely a declaration, not a fact of actual experience.

In [Philippians 2:14](#) Paul says, “Do all things without murmurings and reasonings.” Instead of being found in Christ, we may be found in our murmurings and reasonings. For example, a wife may murmur to her husband, and he may react by reasoning. In such a case, neither the wife nor the husband is found in Christ.

Most of the time we are found in our culture, self-imposed religion, and self-made philosophy. We may make up a certain policy for ourselves to follow in our married life or in the

church life. Hence, others may find us not in Christ, but in our self-made policy concerning married life and the church life. This policy may be the source of much of our murmuring, reasoning, and criticizing. We may also use this policy as a yardstick for measuring others. Oh, it is crucial that, having the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, we gain Him and be found in Him!

A NECESSARY CONDITION

We have pointed out that there is a certain requirement or condition for being found in Christ. This condition is that we do not have our own righteousness which is of the law, but that we have the righteousness which is of God based on faith. It may seem to us at times that we are found in Christ. However, there will be no reality in these times unless we fulfill the condition of having the righteousness of God through the faith of Christ. To repeat, we need to be found in Christ in the righteousness of God through the faith of Christ. The phrase “in the righteousness of God” points to the fact that this is the condition of being found in Christ in reality. Thus, the crucial aspect of the condition is the righteousness of God.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD AND OUR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS

At this point I would like to present a new definition, or interpretation, of righteousness as found in [Philippians 3:9](#). In this verse righteousness signifies a daily living which is right with God and man. Speaking of his past, Paul says in [3:6](#) that “as to the righteousness which is in the law,” he had become blameless. Before he was transferred into Christ, he was a Pharisee blameless in the law. Paul thought that in his daily living he was right with man and God. Actually, he was not right with God at all. The righteousness which signifies a living that is truly right with God and man must be a righteousness which is of God. The expression “righteousness of God” does not simply mean that righteousness belongs to God; it also means that this righteousness is God Himself. For example, the terms life of God, light of God, and love of God do not mean merely that life, light, and love belong to God. The life of God is God Himself. The same is true of the light of God and the love of God. God Himself is light and love. In principle, this is also true of the righteousness of God. Just as the life of God and the light of God

are God Himself, so the righteousness of God is God Himself. Therefore, the living which is right with both God and man must be God as our expression in our daily living, God Himself lived out through us.

This becomes more clear when we consider what it means to speak of our own righteousness. Our own righteousness is the expression of ourselves, the expression of “I.” My righteousness is just the living out of me. But the righteousness of God is God lived out from us. It is God becoming our daily living and expression. When we love others, our love is God expressed. Furthermore, our humility is not mere ethical humility; it is a divine humility, God Himself living out of us. If we are to be found in Christ, we must be in such a condition that God is expressed through us and becomes our daily living.

When I was young, I thought that the righteousness in [verse 9](#) referred to the righteousness God gives us through justification. However, for many years I sensed deep within that this was not the accurate meaning of righteousness here. One day I realized that the righteousness of God in [3:9](#) is actually God Himself becoming our daily living. If we would have this righteousness, we

must have a living which is the expression of God. We must fulfill this condition in order to be found in Christ in reality.

THE FAITH OF CHRIST

How can the righteousness of God become our daily living? This can take place only through the faith of Christ. Just as the righteousness of God is God Himself, so the faith of Christ is Christ Himself. The faith of Christ is not simply something which belongs to Christ; it is actually Christ Himself. Only through the hearing of the Word can the faith of Christ become ours. Through the Word we are infused with the element of Christ. At the same time, we experience the function of the Spirit. The issue of this infusion and function is the faith which brings about an organic union between us and the Triune God. This faith, which is really Christ Himself, causes us to be organically united with God. In such an organic union we and God are one spirit. We live, and God lives in us. God lives, and we live in Him.

We should not think that we are in God but God is not in us, or that God is in us but we are not in God. On the contrary, there is a mutual relationship between us and God: we are in God,

and God is in us. For this reason the Lord Jesus could say, “Abide in Me and I in you” ([John 15:4](#)).

By means of the organic union which joins us to the Triune God and makes us one spirit with Him, we have the righteousness of God. This righteousness of God definitely is not of the law. It is altogether of faith. In the organic union produced by faith we live out God, and God lives out from within us and becomes righteousness to us. When we are in this righteousness, we are in the proper condition to be found in Christ. The thought here is very deep. But if we see it, we would experience the highest aspect of God’s salvation and be rescued from all other things. May we all aspire to gain Christ and to be found in Him in such a condition.

THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD

To have a proper understanding of [Philippians 3:9](#), we should consider it according to the context of the whole book of Philippians. In [1:19](#) Paul speaks of the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This bountiful supply does not merely belong to the Spirit; it is actually the Spirit Himself. In the same principle the expression “the Spirit of Jesus Christ” does not mean that the Spirit simply belongs to Christ; it means

that the Spirit is Christ. Just as the Son of God is God Himself, so the Spirit of Christ is Christ Himself. Christ is the Spirit, and the Spirit is the bountiful supply.

In [Philippians 2:16](#) Paul goes on to speak of the word of life. Once again we see that the word here does not simply belong to life, but actually is life. In New Testament usage, the word of life is life itself. [First John 1:1](#) mentions the Word of life, and in [John 6:63](#) the Lord Jesus says that the words He speaks are life. In the book of Philip-pians, on the one hand we have the Spirit of Jesus Christ as the supply and, on the other hand, the word of life as the means.

We need to consider [Philippians 1 through 3](#) as a whole and put together the supply of the Spirit, the word of life, and the righteousness which is of God based on faith. When in our experience we have the Spirit, the word, and faith, we are infused with God Himself. Then the very God who has been infused into us becomes our daily living, the living which Paul describes as the righteousness of God.

INFUSED WITH GOD

When we have the supply of the Spirit, the word of life, and the righteousness of God

through faith, we are infused with God. This infused God will then be lived out of us as our daily life. This kind of daily life can be called the righteousness of God. This is not merely the gaining of Christ; it is the experience and enjoyment of Christ in a very practical way. This is to be found in Christ under the condition of enjoying God's infusion that we may live Him out through the supply of the Spirit, the word of life, and the righteousness of God through faith. I am fully persuaded and assured that this was Paul's concept when he composed the book of Philip-
pians.

Paul was very experienced in this matter. From the word of life and through the supply of the Spirit he obtained faith. This faith brought him God's infusion. Spontaneously Paul lived God out as his daily living and could be found in Christ, having the righteousness of God. It was Paul's expectation and also his aspiration that he would always be found in Christ in such a condition. Paul desired not only to gain Christ, but also to be found in Him in such a marvelous condition that people could recognize that he was a man living out God. As such a person, Paul was not a man in culture, religion, philosophy,

ethics, or morality; he was absolutely a man in Christ who lived out God as his daily life.

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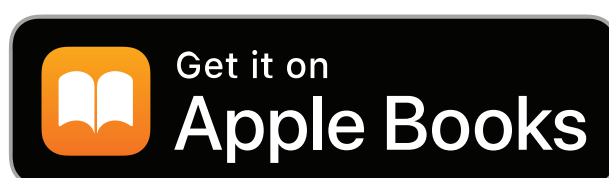
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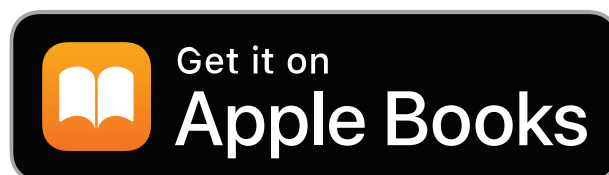
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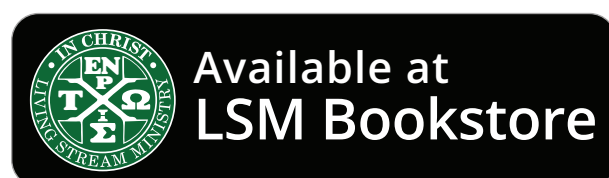
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TO OBTAIN CHRIST BY EXPERIENCING THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

In [Philippians 3:7 through 16](#) Paul uses at least three different Greek words to express the thought of gaining. In [verse 8](#) he says that he suffered the loss of all things and counted them refuse that he “may gain Christ.” The Greek word means to secure, to obtain, to lay hold of. In [verse 12](#) Paul uses two other words which mean obtain and lay hold of. Thus, he speaks of gaining, obtaining, and laying hold of Christ. To lay hold means to grasp or to take possession. Paul’s desire was not only to gain Christ, but also to obtain Him and even lay hold of Him.

According to [verse 12](#), Paul’s desire was to lay hold of that for which he had been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. On the way to Damascus, Paul inquired of the One who had appeared to him, “Who are You, Lord?” ([Acts 9:5](#)). When the Lord answered, “I am Jesus,” He laid hold of Paul. Now in Philippians Paul can say that he was seeking

to lay hold of that for which Christ had laid hold of him.

When we were saved, Christ laid hold of us. Perhaps we did not realize this at first. But as all those who have tried to escape His grasp realize, it is impossible to run away from Him. Christ has indeed laid hold of us so that we may now gain Him, obtain Him, and lay hold of Him.

THREE STAGES OF SECURING CHRIST

Paul's use of three different Greek words to express the idea of gaining indicates the Lord's desire that we gain Him, obtain Him, and lay hold of Him. Some readers may think that these expressions are mere repetitions. However, instead of being repetitious, they point to three stages of the securing of Christ. In [Philippians 3:8](#) Paul says, "I have suffered the loss of all things and count them refuse that I may gain Christ." This marks the beginning of securing the Lord. In [verse 10](#) Paul goes on to say, "To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." Here we have the second stage, the process of obtaining Christ. What we have in this verse is actually the way to obtain Him. Eventually, in the third stage, we lay hold of Christ

(v. 12). This is the completion of the securing of Christ.

We all have experienced the first stage, for we all have gained Christ. When we believed in the Lord and received Him, we gained Him. This was the beginning of our gaining of Christ. Now we need to gain Him continually. To gain Christ continually is to obtain Him. Eventually the completion of this process is that we lay hold of Christ.

We know from [Philippians 3:12](#) that Paul did not regard himself as one who had already obtained. Here Paul seems to be saying, “I have not yet obtained, but I am on the way. I am in the process of obtaining Christ that I may lay hold of Him.”

In [verses 8, 10, and 12 of Philippians 3](#) we see the initial gaining of Christ, the continual gaining of Him, which is the obtaining, and the completion of the obtaining, which is the laying hold of Christ. In this booklet I am not burdened to cover either the initial gaining of Christ or the final laying hold of Him. My burden is related to the process of the continual obtaining of Christ, the process which takes place between the initial gaining of Christ and the final laying hold of Him.

SUFFERING FOR THE BODY

This process of obtaining Christ, as revealed in [Philippians 3:10](#), is to know Him by knowing the power of His resurrection. However, if we would know the power of Christ's resurrection, we must share in His sufferings and know the fellowship of His sufferings.

In a very real sense, Christ's sufferings have not yet been completed. When some hear this, they may say, "Christ died, was buried, and was resurrected once for all. Now He is on the throne. How can you say that His sufferings have not been completed?" Consider Paul's word in [Colossians 1:24](#): "Now I rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf, and fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church." To be sure, Christ is on the throne, but there is still a lack with respect to His sufferings. As the Head, Christ's sufferings are complete. But the sufferings of Christ for the Body are not yet finished. Such sufferings are also called "His sufferings." Furthermore, in [Colossians 1:24](#) Paul regarded his own sufferings as the filling up of what is lacking of Christ's sufferings for His Body. For this reason, Paul indicates in [Philippians 3:10](#) that we need to share in Christ's

sufferings. The sufferings of Christ for His Body are still going on, and we need to share in them. When Christ was on earth, He suffered. As those who follow Him, we must share in His sufferings for His Body. If we would know Christ by experiencing the power of His resurrection, we must share His sufferings. The process of obtaining Christ is related to His resurrection, His sufferings, and His death. To know Him we must share His sufferings and be conformed to His death that we may experience the power of His resurrection.

FREE FROM EARTHLY ENTANGLEMENTS

[Philippians 3:10](#) opens with the infinitive “to know Him.” This infinitive is related to a compound predicate found in [verses 8](#) and [9](#): “that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him.” First we need to suffer the loss of all things and count them as refuse that we may gain Christ. To gain Christ in this way is not simply to believe in Him or receive Him. It is to count all things as loss, to suffer the loss of all things, and then to count them as refuse. Paul was one who suffered the loss of all things and counted them refuse. He was free from all earthly entanglements. To gain

Christ he had given up everything, including religion and culture, and counted it all as refuse, trash, dog food. Therefore, the way was clear for Paul to gain Christ and to be found in Him in order to know Him.

The rendering “to know Him” is a literal translation of the Greek. Many versions, however, do not use the infinitive. Instead, they say “that I may know Him,” or “in order that I may know Him.” Nevertheless, according to the Greek, Paul was saying that he wanted to gain Christ and be found in Him to know Him. Like Paul, we need to be free from all earthly entanglements and also count everything as refuse. Then we shall be able to say, “Lord Jesus, I care only for You. I want to gain You, be found in You, and know You.”

We have pointed out that the obtaining in [Philippians 3:12](#) is a continuation of the gaining of Christ in [verse 8](#). Paul’s desire was to gain Christ in order to know Him and obtain Him. Paul was seeking to gain Christ that he might obtain Him by knowing Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings.

CHRIST’S RESURRECTION AND SUFFERINGS

“To know Him” refers to knowing Christ in a

general way. But knowing the power of Christ's resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings and being conformed to His death are details related to knowing Christ. Actually to know Christ here means to know the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. When Paul speaks of the power of Christ's resurrection, he has in mind something different from the power manifested in the resurrection of Lazarus. The resurrection of Lazarus is very different from the power of Christ's resurrection. Eventually, Lazarus died and was again buried in the tomb, but Christ's resurrection was a resurrection that brought Him to the throne. Paul is speaking of a resurrection that can be called *Christ's* resurrection. He wanted to know the power of *His* resurrection.

In [Philippians 3:10](#) Paul mentions the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. It is possible to suffer without participating in Christ's sufferings. For example, someone may lose his job because he fails to work properly, and this may cause him to suffer. But this suffering has nothing to do with Christ's sufferings.

There is also a difference between those sufferings which are for our transformation and those which are for the Body. Paul's word in

[Philippians 3:10](#) does not refer to suffering for transformation. If we compare [Philippians 3:10](#) with [Colossians 1:24](#), we shall see that the sufferings about which he is speaking here are those which make up the lack of Christ's afflictions for the Body. It is when we suffer for the Body that we shall experience the power of Christ's resurrection. No doubt, sufferings are needed for us to be transformed. But we should not identify such sufferings with the sufferings of Christ, for He did not suffer in this way.

In the book of Romans Paul does not speak of suffering as a discipline. However, he refers to transformation and conformation. [Romans 8:28](#) says that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God. Certain Bible teachers place great emphasis on this verse without connecting it to the following verse, which indicates that God's intention is to have us conformed to the image of His Son. This conformation is the result of transformation. All things work together for our good that we may be transformed and conformed to the image of the Son of God. No doubt, this process involves suffering, suffering which helps us become mature sons. As we undergo this kind of suffering, we also can

experience the power of Christ's resurrection, but not as much as when we suffer for the Body.

Just as there is more than one kind of suffering, there is more than one kind of resurrection. All the dead will be resurrected, some to the "resurrection of life" and others to the "resurrection of judgment" ([John 5:29](#)). The kind of resurrection with which we are concerned in this message is Christ's resurrection and its power. Not many Christians know the power of this unique resurrection.

Knowing the power of Christ's resurrection is related to knowing the fellowship of His sufferings. Paul experienced the power of Christ's resurrection in this way. When we suffer for the sake of the Body in the name of Christ, we also shall experience the power of His resurrection. I can testify that when I am bold to stand for the Lord, I experience anointing and empowering.

CONFORMED TO HIS DEATH

As we partake of Christ's sufferings for the Body, we are conformed to His death. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He was dead to everything other than God, including His family and relatives. The Lord lived a crucified life; He continually put His natural life to death. By living

such a crucified life, He was alive to God and lived Him.

When we are willing to suffer for Christ and His Body, we also shall be dead to everything other than Him, and we shall live only to Him. Then we shall truly be conformed to His death, for we shall share in His death. Day by day we shall experience the power of His resurrection. This is the way to know Christ in an experiential way. By knowing Christ in this way, experiencing Him in the power of His resurrection, we obtain Him.

THE REALITY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

The reality of the power of Christ's resurrection is the Spirit. [Romans 1:4](#) proves this by saying that Christ was "designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness out of the resurrection of the dead." Furthermore, [Romans 8:11](#) says, "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from among the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from among the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you." Both verses indicate that the Spirit is the reality of the power of Christ's resurrection. Actually, Christ Himself is

the power of His resurrection, and the Spirit is Christ in resurrection. We need to experience this power that we may obtain Christ.

THE INTRINSIC POWER OF THE DIVINE LIFE

What we need to experience for the Body is not God's creating power, but the power of Christ's resurrection. Resurrection power is not an outward, physical power; it is an inward, intrinsic power. As such, it is a life power. If we would obtain Christ, we must experience this intrinsic life power. The more we experience the power of Christ's resurrection, the more we obtain Him. Thus, we obtain Him by experiencing the power of His resurrection.

To exhibit the intrinsic power of His resurrection, Christ first became a man. Then He died and visited Hades, the realm of the dead. Through His resurrection the intrinsic power of life within Him was manifested. Angels cannot experience this power. But we, human beings of blood and flesh, can experience it, if we share in Christ's sufferings and are conformed to His death.

As the One who has passed through death, never to die again, Christ has manifested in His

resurrection the intrinsic power of the divine life. This is the power of His resurrection. By experiencing the power of Christ's resurrection we obtain Christ in reality.

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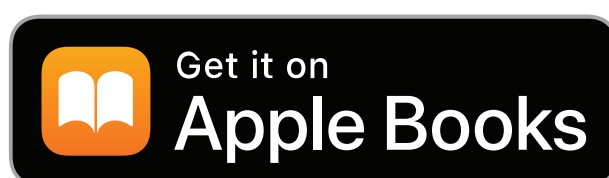
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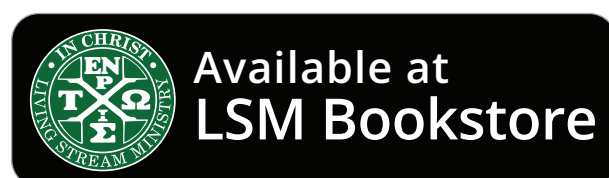
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THE GOAL OF GOD'S HEAVENLY CALLING

In [Philippians 3:10-14](#) Paul emphasizes the out-resurrection. [Verse 11](#) says, “If by any means I may attain to the out-resurrection from among the dead.” Paul’s endeavor was to attain to this outstanding resurrection. In [verse 12](#) he goes on to say, “Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if also I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus.” Here Paul admits that he had not yet attained the out-resurrection, but he continued to pursue that he might lay hold of it. For this out-resurrection, Christ had laid hold of him, and now Paul’s desire was to lay hold of the out-resurrection. The purpose of Christ in laying hold of him was that he might obtain the out-resurrection. Hence, in [verses 11 and 12](#) the out-resurrection is Paul’s goal, the object of his pursuit.

In [verses 13 and 14](#) Paul continues, “Brothers, I do not yet reckon myself to have laid hold, but one thing—forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are

before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Here we see that Paul did not reckon himself to have laid hold of the out-resurrection already. However, he pursued toward the goal, the goal of the out-resurrection, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

THE GOAL AND THE PRIZE

There is a difference between the goal and the prize. Paul pursued toward the goal for the prize of God’s high calling. Every calling has a purpose with a goal. What are the purpose and goal of God’s high calling? The expression “high calling” used here does not mean that the calling is high; it means that this calling is from above, that is, from the heavens. Literally translated, the Greek means “the above calling.” In [Hebrews 3:1](#) Paul uses the term “heavenly calling.” The out-resurrection is both the purpose and the goal of God’s heavenly calling. Therefore, if we consider [Philippians 3:10-14](#) carefully, we shall realize that the out-resurrection is Paul’s subject.

The term “out-resurrection” is found in the Bible only in [Philippians 3:11](#). The Greek prefix *ek* means “out.” Here Paul adds this prefix to the

usual Greek word for resurrection. What was his reason for doing this? According to his vision and experience, Paul realized that God's intention in the universe is altogether related to something which is new, something in resurrection, but resurrection in a very particular sense, not resurrection in an ordinary sense.

OUT OF THE OLD CREATION AND INTO THE NEW CREATION

The common meaning of resurrection is that something dies and comes to life again. Lazarus was resurrected in this way. He had died, had been buried, and had even begun to smell bad. Then the Lord Jesus came and cried out, "Lazarus, come forth!" and Lazarus came out of the tomb ([John 11:43-44](#)). Was the resurrection of Lazarus a case of the out-resurrection? No. Even though Lazarus was raised from the dead and came to life again, nothing of the new creation was wrought into him. Instead, he continued to be a person in the old creation. At most, Lazarus experienced restoration; he was restored from death to the natural life. But he was neither regenerated at that time nor did he receive a new constitution. The fact that Lazarus was not brought into the new creation through resurrection is

proved in that one day he died again and his once-resurrected body was laid once more in a tomb.

The out-resurrection in [Philippians 3:11](#) is very different from the resurrection of Lazarus. Did Paul expect to return to the tomb once he obtained the out-resurrection? Certainly not! The resurrection Paul was pursuing in [Philippians 3](#) was something absolutely apart from the old creation and in the new creation.

PAUL'S GOAL

According to grammar, the out-resurrection in [Philippians 3:11](#) is the goal of what Paul is seeking in [Philippians 3:10](#). In these verses Paul says, “To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if by any means I may attain to the out-resurrection from among the dead.” In [verse 10](#) we see that Paul aspired to know Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death. He wanted to know Christ, experience Christ, and enjoy Christ. Paul's goal is found in [verse 11](#)—attaining to the out-resurrection. In fact, this is the goal not only of [verse 10](#), but also of [verses 8 and 9 of Philippians 3](#). Paul counted

all things refuse in order to gain Christ (v. 8) and be found in Him (v. 9), to know Christ, the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, that he might attain to the out-resurrection. According to grammar, this is the proper interpretation of verses 8 through 11. Paul's goal was to attain to the out-resurrection.

In this booklet we need to consider how to attain this goal of the out-resurrection. For this, we must know Christ in the power of His resurrection, we must know Him in the fellowship of His sufferings, and we must know Him by being conformed to His death.

DYING TO THE OLD CREATION AND LIVING TO GOD

By incarnation the Lord Jesus took on human nature. He put on a body of blood and flesh. Did this body belong to the old creation or the new creation? Blood and flesh are part of the old creation. [First Corinthians 15:50](#) says that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." This includes the flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus. The principle here is that nothing which belongs to the old creation has anything to do with the kingdom of God. Therefore, the body

taken on by the Lord Jesus belonged to the old creation.

During His years on earth, the Lord Jesus lived a human life. Was the Lord's human living part of the old creation or of the new creation? Although the Lord Jesus had a body of flesh and blood belonging to the old creation and although He lived in the environment of the old creation, the life He lived did not belong to the old creation. On the contrary, the life lived by the Lord Jesus belonged wholly to the new creation. But how could He, a person with a body belonging to the old creation and dwelling in the environment of the old creation, live a life that belonged to the new creation? He could do this by continually dying to His old creation body and environment and living to God.

We should not think that the Lord Jesus died only when He was crucified. No, He began to die, to live a crucified life, as soon as He was born. The Lord surely lived a human life, but it was a crucified life. By living a crucified life He died to the old creation.

The Lord's living of a crucified life is illustrated by an incident which took place when He was twelve years of age. When His mother and father found Him after spending days looking

for Him, His mother said, “Child, why did You treat us like this? Behold, Your father and I are greatly distressed seeking You.” ([Luke 2:48](#)). The Lord Jesus replied, “Why is it that you were seeking Me? Did you not know that I must be in the things of My Father?” ([v. 49](#)). Here we see that even at the age of twelve the Lord was living a crucified life. Through His mother, Mary, He had received the life of the old creation. But instead of living according to this old creation life, He died to it and lived according to another life, according to the life of His Father.

[John 6:57](#) helps us to understand this. Here the Lord Jesus said, “The living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father.” Yes, the Lord Jesus lived, but He lived by the Father. The Father lived in Him, and He lived the Father. He lived a life which is divine and eternal, God’s life lived out in the old creation. Such a living is the element of the new creation.

Paul speaks twice of the new creation. In [Galatians 6:15](#) he says, “For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.” In [2 Corinthians 5:17](#) he declares, “So that if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation.” When did this new creation begin? The old creation began in [Genesis 1:1](#), a verse which says, “In

the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (lit.). The new creation had its beginning when the Lord Jesus began to live another life, a crucified life. He lived the life of the new creation while in a body belonging to the old creation and in the environment of the old creation. As He lived in this way, He was continually dying to everything of the old creation.

One day, with the help of Satan and his followers, the body of the Lord Jesus was put to death actually and absolutely. Then His old creation body was buried in a tomb. After three days this body was resurrected. However, there was a great difference between the resurrected body of Lazarus and the resurrected body of Jesus Christ. The resurrected body of Lazarus was unchanged; it still belonged to the old creation. But the resurrected body of Jesus Christ was changed both in nature and in form. As a body in the old creation, it was a body of flesh and blood, but as a body in the new creation, it became a spiritual body.

KNOWING CHRIST IN RESURRECTION

This incarnated, crucified, and resurrected Christ has become a seed sown into us. The

Christ we have received is not a natural Christ, but a resurrected and transformed Christ. Peter knew Christ in the flesh, when He was still in the old creation body. But the Christ we experience today is a Christ altogether in the new creation. Deep within, perhaps subconsciously, we may secretly wish that we had lived at the time of Peter, John, and James, for they were with the Lord in the flesh. However, it is far better to know Christ in the power, sphere, and element of His resurrection and in the fellowship of His sufferings.

CONFORMED TO CHRIST'S DEATH

We may despise the old creation and want to be free from it. But the more we loathe it, the more it clings to us. Only in the Body can we be free from the old creation. Only when we are occupied with the Body and by the Body are we able to be free from spending so much time thinking about ourselves. Paul was so occupied with the Body that in his being there was no capacity for him to consider his own things. Because Paul was so concerned for the Body, he shared in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. In this way he was conformed to the death of Christ.

There are four important matters in [Philippians 3:10](#): to know Christ, to know the power of His resurrection, to know the fellowship of His sufferings, and to be conformed to His death. Actually, being conformed to Christ's death is related to knowing both the power of Christ's resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. The words "being conformed" indicate how we may know the power of Christ's resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings.

Paul's use of the word "conformed" in [3:10](#) implies that Christ's death is a mold. Often when sisters bake a cake they use a mold. Dough is placed into the mold and conformed to its shape. On the day we began to live the Christian life, we, like a piece of dough, were put into the mold of Christ's death. When we suffer for the Body, we are shaped into the form of the death of Christ. This is what it means to be conformed to His death.

By being conformed to the death of Christ, we experience the power of His resurrection and enter into the fellowship of His sufferings. It is in this way that we attain to the out-resurrection and reach the goal of being fully out of the old creation and wholly resurrected into the new creation.

LIVING IN THE NEW CREATION

If a brother attains to the out-resurrection in his experience, even his love for his wife will be in the new creation. No longer will it be a natural love, a love in the old creation. A brother may love his wife very much, but his love may have nothing to do with the out-resurrection. Likewise, a wife may be submissive to her husband according to her ethics and cultural background, but her submission may also be altogether in the natural realm, in the old creation, not at all in the new creation. Suppose a sister makes herself submit to her husband. She does not want to submit, but, perhaps with tears, she forces herself to do so. This submission is in the old creation. God does not want a natural love or a natural submission, a love and submission which are not in the out-resurrection. Instead, He wants us to live the kind of life revealed in [Philippians 3](#). For this, we need to gain Christ and be found in Him to know the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, that we may attain to the out-resurrection.

God has rescued us from the old creation and put us in a race toward the goal for the prize.

Now we must run this race to attain to the out-resurrection from the dead and all the things of the new creation.

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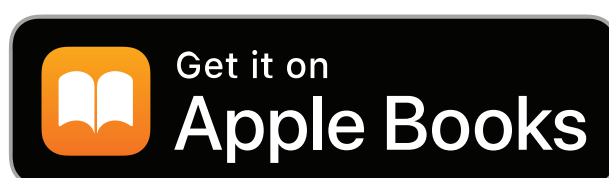
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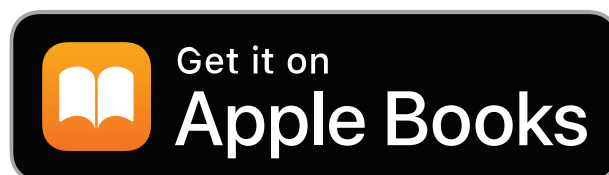
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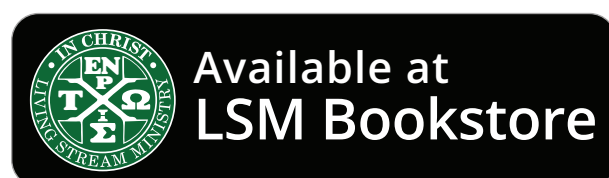
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PURSUE TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING

This booklet will focus on two words found in [Philippians 3:14](#)—goal and prize. If we reach the goal, we shall receive the prize. Thus, pursuing toward the goal is for obtaining the prize. But what is the goal, and what is the prize? Many would answer that both the goal and the prize are Christ. Although such an answer may be regarded as correct, in this booklet we need to see from [Philippians 3:10-14](#) something particular concerning the goal and the prize.

[Philippians 3:10-13](#) helps us understand the goal and the prize in [verse 14](#). In [verse 11](#) we may say that the out-resurrection is actually a synonym for Christ. In [verse 10](#) Paul speaks of knowing Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. This verse indicates clearly that if we would know Christ, we must know His resurrection.

Paul's desire was to gain Christ and be found in Him, to know Him, the power of His

resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. Knowing Christ in this way is the result of gaining Him and being found in Him. Our natural mind cannot touch the depths of what it means “to know Him and the power of His resurrection.”

At this juncture we need to ask an important question: Where is Jesus Christ today? In this booklet I would answer by saying that Christ is in resurrection. No doubt, on the one hand, Christ is in the heavens and, on the other hand, He is in us. However, I want to emphasize the marvelous fact that Christ today is in resurrection. One day, as the One who existed in eternity, Christ became a man by incarnation. Eventually, He was crucified and buried. Through death He entered into another realm, the realm of resurrection. In His preexistence, Christ was God and was with God in eternity; by incarnation He became a man in the flesh; and then, through crucifixion and burial, He entered into resurrection. Have you ever heard that Christ is now in resurrection? On the day of His resurrection angels told the women that Christ could not be found in the tomb, for He had risen from the dead ([Luke 24:1-6](#)). This indicates that Christ is in resurrection.

Because Christ is now in resurrection, we cannot know Him experientially unless we know the power of His resurrection. In [Philippians 3](#) Paul aspires to know Him not only in His death, but even the more in His resurrection.

In [Philippians 3:11](#), a continuation of [Philippians 3:10](#), Paul says, “If by any means I may attain to the out-resurrection from among the dead.” The expression “the out-resurrection” is puzzling. After Christ was resurrected, He became a person wholly in resurrection. Furthermore, the resurrection wherein Christ is today is not an ordinary resurrection, like the resurrection of Lazarus; it is an extraordinary resurrection. For this reason, Paul adds the prefix *ex* to the Greek word for resurrection to show that Christ’s resurrection is extraordinary. His resurrection is the out-resurrection.

A DEFINITION OF OUT-RESURRECTION

To be in the out-resurrection means to leave everything of the old creation and to be brought into God. Although Lazarus was resurrected, he neither left the things of the old creation nor was he brought into God. At the end of the coming age all the dead unbelievers will be resurrected.

Nevertheless, that resurrection will not bring them out of the old creation, and it will not bring them into God. There is only one kind of resurrection which brings us out of the old creation and into God, and this is the resurrection of Christ. Thus, Christ's resurrection is the outstanding resurrection. Christ is the unique One to pass out of the old creation and to enter into God. Christ lived in an old creation body and environment for thirty-three and a half years. Through His death and resurrection He left the old creation behind and was brought into God.

We should not think that Christ was never in the old creation. According to [Colossians 1:15](#) Christ was the Firstborn of God's creation. His physical body belonged to the old creation and, living in a carpenter's home in Nazareth, He lived in the environment of the old creation. Eventually, He took the old creation upon Himself as a burden and nailed it to the cross. Now in resurrection Christ is absolutely out of the old creation and in God. All He is, all He has, and all He does are in God. This is the significance of the out-resurrection.

If we would know Christ, we must know this out-resurrection and attain to it. Paul's words

“attain to the out-resurrection” imply a goal. This goal, mentioned in [Philippians 3:14](#), is the out-resurrection in [Philippians 3:11](#). Hence, to attain to the out-resurrection is to arrive at the goal. In [verses 12 and 13](#) Paul confessed that he did not reckon himself as one who had attained to this goal. But forgetting the things behind and stretching forward to the things before, he pursued toward the goal of the out-resurrection.

The goal is the out-resurrection. To say that Christ is the goal is to speak in a general way according to [verses 8 and 9 of Philippians 3](#). But to speak in a specific way, the goal is the out-resurrection. If we consider [verse 14](#) in relation to [verse 11](#), we shall see that the goal must be the out-resurrection. Therefore, in general the goal is Christ, but in particular the goal is the out-resurrection.

Now we need to ask an important question: Can we reach the goal of the out-resurrection in this age, or can we only run the race and hope to reach the goal in the coming age? Some may think that we must wait until the coming age to reach the goal. But if we do not arrive at the goal in this age, we shall not attain to it in the next age. We must endeavor to arrive at the goal during our lifetime.

In [Philippians 1:21](#) Paul says, “To me to live is Christ.” This Christ was his goal. Hence, for Paul to live was the goal—Christ as the out-resurrection. Furthermore, for us to live should also be the out-resurrection, for the very Christ whom we should live is Himself the out-resurrection. This means that day by day we should live the out-resurrection. For example, suppose a certain brother loves his wife very much. He needs to ask himself whether this love is natural or in resurrection. Even non-Christian husbands may love their wives in a natural way. If a brother loves his wife in resurrection, his love will be out of the old creation and in God. This shows that to live Christ is to live the out-resurrection, to live a life absolutely out of the old creation and in God.

When I was young I wondered why it seemed difficult for Paul to reach the goal. I thought that the persecutions he suffered made this difficult. It seemed to me opposition from others hindered him in running the Christian race. Years later, through experience I came to see that it is easier for me to overcome persecutions than to love my wife in the out-resurrection and not according to the natural life. I have been in Christ for more than fifty years. During all this time I have been

a zealous Christian. Having encountered many hindrances in the Christian race, I have learned that the greatest hindrance is the natural life with its thoughts and habits. The natural life frustrates us in running the race toward the goal.

Have you ever asked yourself how much of your daily conversation is natural and how much is in the out-resurrection? Although you may not speak in an evil, slanderous way, your talk may be natural. You may speak many positive things, but your words may be spoken in a natural way, not in resurrection. It is easy to improve our character, behavior, ethics, or morality, but it is extremely difficult to live in resurrection.

One characteristic of the natural life is anxiety. Are you free from anxiety and worry? Recently I had a problem with my health, and I was anxious about it. I claimed the Lord's word in [Philippians 4:6](#) and [7](#): "In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." However, immediately after declaring that I stood on this promise, I was anxious again. I wanted to be free from anxiety, but it refused to let me go. Do you

know why I was anxious? I was anxious because I was not fully in resurrection. There is no anxiety in the out-resurrection. Anxiety belongs to the old creation, and it cannot enter into the realm of resurrection, into the sphere of the new creation.

Paul knew from experience that it is not easy to live a life which is wholly out of the old creation and in God. In [Philippians 1:21](#) he could declare, “To me to live is Christ.” But in [chapter one](#) we simply have the declaration, not the explanation or definition. In [chapter three](#) we see that to live Christ is to live the out-resurrection and that this should be our goal. Our deeds and words must be in resurrection. If a certain deed is not in resurrection, we should not do it. If a certain word is not in resurrection, we should not say it. The question is not whether a particular thing is right or wrong, but whether or not it is in resurrection. Even our love needs to be in resurrection.

In the out-resurrection there is no element of the old creation. Instead, everything is full of the divine element. This is the reason that people sense God when they are with a person who lives in the out-resurrection. The living of such a person, his deeds and words, is in resurrection. This

is the out-resurrection in our daily life. In [Philippians 3](#) Paul was pursuing this kind of living. This is what he had in mind when he declared that his desire was to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and by any means to attain to the out-resurrection. Not regarding himself as having attained, he pursued toward the goal of the out-resurrection.

We thank the Lord for showing us the depths of these verses in [Philippians 3](#). What He has spoken regarding the out-resurrection will not be in vain. I believe that many among us will have a living which is out of the old creation and in God.

Just as the goal is the out-resurrection, so the prize is also the out-resurrection. The goal is for us to gain, whereas the prize is for us to enjoy. We may reach the goal in this age, but we shall enjoy the prize in the coming age.

In [Romans 8:11](#) Paul says, “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from among the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from among the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.” This verse indicates that we can attain to the out-resurrection in this age. Here Paul says that the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from among the

dead will give life to that part of our being which is dying, our mortal bodies. The Spirit is the reality of Christ's resurrection, the reality of the out-resurrection. The Spirit is dwelling in us to work the out-resurrection into our being in a real and practical way. Thus, [Romans 8:11](#) indicates that we should attain to the out-resurrection in this age.

[Revelation 20:6](#) refers to the prize in the coming age, the prize of the first resurrection: "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection: over these the second death has no authority; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years." The Greek word rendered "first" is the same word used for the "best" robe given to the returned prodigal in [Luke 15](#). The first resurrection is the best resurrection, the out-resurrection. If in this age we do not pursue a life which is absolutely out of the old creation and fully in God, we shall not have the prize for our enjoyment in the coming age. But if we obtain the out-resurrection today, it will become a prize to us in the next age. Then what is now our goal will become our prize when, during the millenium, we reign as co-kings with Christ. That will be the enjoyment of the out-resurrection as our

prize. In Christ God has called us from above for this prize. This prize should be the goal we pursue and obtain in this age.

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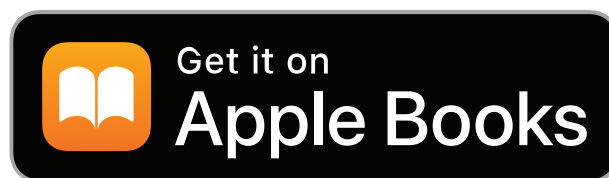
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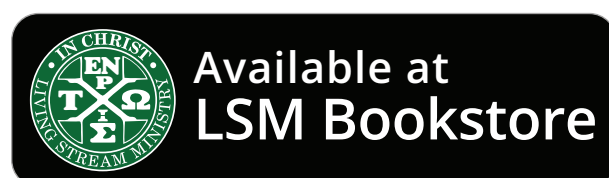
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