

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the

PHILIPPIANS

Lesson 6: Have the Knowledge of Christ
Philippians 3:1-21

Look for the answer to these questions:

1. According to this lesson, what are the three sections to Philippians Chapter 3?
2. According to this lesson, what were the three groups spreading false doctrines in the church?
3. What are the three groups in Philippians 3:2?
4. What are the three indicators of true circumcision of Philippians 3:3?
5. In Philippians 3:8, Paul compared the things he had given up for Christ to _____.
6. In Philippians 3:10, what are the two ways Paul wanted to know Christ?
7. What is the one thing Paul said he did in Philippians 3:13?
8. In Philippians 3:19, what are the four descriptions of “the enemies of the cross of Christ”?
9. According to Philippians 3:21, how will we be changed when Christ returns?
10. Also in Philippians 3:21, when Christ returns, he will subdue all things to _____.



God desires his church to be unified in spirit and in mind. Without it, we will never STRIVE TOGETHER for the faith of the gospel.

Philippians 1:27

²⁷ Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;



In Chapters 2 to 4, Paul exposes the things that disrupt that unity.

THE PROBLEM

THE REMEDY

CHAPTER

2

Within the church:
Rivalries and worldly ambitions
that set people against each other.

Have the **MIND** of Christ

In Chapter 2, Paul showed that the way to prevent rivalries and selfish ambition inside the church is for everyone to put on the mind of Christ.

CHAPTER

3

CHAPTER

4

THE PROBLEM

THE REMEDY

CHAPTER

2

Within the church:
Rivalries and worldly ambitions
that set people against each other.

Have the **MIND** of Christ

CHAPTER

3

From outside the church:
False doctrines that frustrate or
misuse the grace that is in Christ.

Have the **KNOWLEDGE** of Christ

In Chapter 3, Paul shows that the way to root out false doctrines that creep into the church is to have the **KNOWLEDGE** of Christ.

CHAPTER

4

He identified three false doctrines that disrupt the unity of the church:

The false doctrine that ties salvation to the Law of Moses.

The false doctrine that claims Christians are perfect now and have no need for improvement.

The false doctrine that encourages Christians to live for the pleasures and comforts of this present world.

Chapter 3: PAUL'S APPEAL TO HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

1. Warning against confidence in the flesh (1-9)
2. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)
3. Warning against living for the flesh (17-21)

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

Paul knew he had to continually warn the church of the dangers of false doctrine, but this was not an annoyance to him. It was a necessary safeguard.

Philippians 3:1

- ¹ Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe.

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

The first danger he addresses came from legalists who taught that righteousness (and therefore salvation) comes through the works of the law.

Philippians 3:2

² Beware of dogs,
beware of evil workers,
beware of the concision.

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

The Bible has nothing nice to say about dogs. Isaiah calls false prophets and shepherds “dumb dogs” and “greedy dogs” (Is. 56:10). This seems to be what Paul had in mind.

Philippians 3:2

² **Beware of dogs,**
beware of evil workers,
beware of the concision.

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

These men were evil workers “because they neglected true works and did not teach the true use of them.”

Geneva Bible Notes

Philippians 3:2

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beware of the concision.

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

“He calls them *concision* [literally, a cutting off], because in urging circumcision, they cut off themselves and others from the Church.”

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Philippians 3:2

² Beware of dogs,
beware of evil workers,
beware of the concision.

Look out for the dogs, look out for the evil-workers,
look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

(Revised Standard Version)

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

The circumcision that God desires is not of the flesh, but of the heart and in the spirit.

Philippians 3:3

- 3 **For we are the circumcision,**
which worship God in the spirit,
and rejoice in Christ Jesus,
and have no confidence in the flesh.

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

The circumcision that God desires is not of the flesh, but of the heart and in the spirit.

Philippians 3:3

³ **For we are the circumcision,** which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Romans 2:29

²⁹ But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

To worship God in the spirit is to worship him through Christ, and not through the works of the flesh.

Philippians 3:3

- 3 For we are the circumcision, **which worship God in the spirit,** and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

To rejoice in Christ
Jesus is to know that
he is the captain of our
salvation (Heb 2:10)
and our hope of glory
(Col 1:27).

Philippians 3:3

- 3 For we are the circumcision,
which worship God in the spirit,
and rejoice in Christ Jesus,
and have no confidence in the flesh.

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

We know that salvation is “not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph 2:9).

Philippians 3:3

- 3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, **and have no confidence in the flesh.**

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

Paul now shows that he uniquely qualified to speak on this subject. Before he came to Christ, he could boast about all the things the Jews most highly esteemed.

Philippians 3:4-6

- 4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:
- 5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;
- 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

Having come to Christ, he now knew this was all empty gain. The only pursuit he valued was the knowledge of Christ.

Philippians 3:7-8

- 7 But what things were gain to me,
those I counted loss for Christ.
- 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for
**the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus
my Lord:**
for whom I have suffered the loss of all things,
and do count them *but* dung,
that I may win Christ,

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

In the eyes of his peers, his sacrifice was profound. But he mourned his loss no more than one misses the digested remains of yesterday's meal.

Philippians 3:7-8

- 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.
- 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:
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A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

Through the
KNOWLEDGE of Christ
he would WIN Christ,
and reap the rewards of
true wisdom:

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Proverbs 3:13-15

- ¹³ Happy *is* the man *that* findeth wisdom,
and the man *that* getteth understanding.
- ¹⁴ For the merchandise of it *is* better than the
merchandise of silver,
and the gain thereof than fine gold.
- ¹⁵ She *is* more precious than rubies:
and **all the things thou canst desire** are not to be
compared unto her.

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You find WISDOM when you find CHRIST!

1 Corinthians 1:24b

- ²⁴ ... Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

Paul wanted to FIND Christ and be FOUND in Christ; hidden in the cleft of that great Rock.

Philippians 3:9

9 **And be found in him,**
not having mine own righteousness,
which is of the law,
but that which is through the faith of Christ,
the righteousness which is of God by faith:

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

He did not want to be guilty of frustrating the grace of God.

Philippians 3:9

⁹ And be found in him,
not having mine own righteousness,
which is of the law,
but that which is through the faith of Christ,
the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Galatians 2:21

²¹ I do not frustrate the grace of God:
for if righteousness come by the law,
then Christ is dead in vain.

A. Warning Against Confidence in the Flesh (1-9)

There are wonderful treasures waiting to be discovered in the study of the Old Testament. However, we must be careful in our application of Judaic truths to Christianity. The *greater* truth is in the New Testament.

1 Timothy 1:5-7

- 5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:
- 6 From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;
- 7 **Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.**

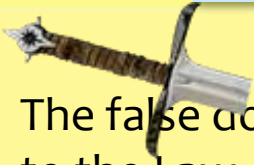
FALSE DOCTRINE

TRUE DOCTRINE

The false doctrine that ties salvation to the Law of Moses

We must test these ideas with the Sword of the Spirit.

FALSE DOCTRINE



The false doctrine that ties salvation to the Law of Moses.



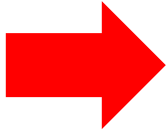
TRUE DOCTRINE

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.



Chapter 2: PAUL'S APPEAL TO HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

1. Warning against confidence in the flesh (1-9)
2. **Exhortation to Know Christ** (10-16)
3. Warning against living for the flesh (17-21)



B. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)

Paul wanted to KNOW Christ in both his power and in his suffering, both as the great I AM and the Lamb of God.

Philippians 3:10-11

- ¹⁰ **That I may know him,**
and the power of his resurrection,
and the fellowship of his sufferings,
being made conformable unto his death;
- ¹¹ If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

B. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)

The power of his resurrection is the power that changes lives.

Philippians 3:10-11

- ¹⁰ That I may know him,
and the power of his resurrection,
and the fellowship of his sufferings,
being made conformable unto his death;
¹¹ If by any means I might attain unto the
resurrection of the dead.

Acts 4:33

- ³³ And with great power gave the apostles witness of
the resurrection of the Lord Jesus:
and great grace was upon them all.

B. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)

This verse is worth a second look:

Philippians 3:10-11

- ¹⁰ That I may know him,
and the power of his resurrection,
and the fellowship of his sufferings,
being made conformable unto his death;
¹¹ If by any means I might attain unto the
resurrection of the dead.

Philippians 1:29

- ²⁹ For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ,
not only to believe on him,
but also to suffer for his sake;

B. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)

He was NOT suggesting that some people are resurrected and others are not. He knew that for ALL people, “there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15).

Philippians 3:10-11

- ¹⁰ That I may know him,
and the power of his resurrection,
and the fellowship of his sufferings,
being made conformable unto his death;
¹¹ If by any means I might attain unto the
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B. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)

Paul wanted to fully die to Christ so that Christ might be fully formed in him.

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¹¹ **If by any means I might attain unto the
resurrection of the dead.**

Galatians 2:20

- ²⁰ I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live;
yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:
and the life which I now live in the flesh
I live by the faith of the Son of God,
who loved me, and gave himself for me.

B. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)

Paul exposed the lie of the false teachers who claimed that Christians have already attained a state of perfection.

Philippians 3:12

¹² **Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect:**
but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

B. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)

He pursued a Christ-like life. He wanted to grasp Jesus in the same way Jesus grasped him.

Philippians 3:12

¹² Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect:
but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

B. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)

He knew he had not reached his goal. But he had abandoned his days of chasing righteousness by works, and now he was pursuing the perfection that comes only in Christ.

Philippians 3:13

¹³ **Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended:** but *this* one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

B. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)

This may seem like TWO things, but you cannot do the first without doing the second.

Philippians 3:13

¹³ Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended:
but this one thing I do,
forgetting those things which are behind, and
reaching forth unto those things which are before,

B. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)

He knew that every step of obedience brought him closer to Jesus than he was before.

Philippians 3:14

¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

B. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)

Now, just three verses after saying he was NOT perfect, Paul includes himself in a group of those who ARE perfect.

Philippians 3:15

¹⁵ Let us therefore, **as many as be perfect,** be thus minded:
and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

B. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)

But here, those who are perfect are those whose hope for final perfection is rooted in Christ.

The “otherwise minded” think they are already there.

Philippians 3:15

¹⁵ Let us therefore, **as many as be perfect,** be thus minded:
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“There is present, then, a bit of irony: perfect (mature) believers are those who admit they are not perfect in any absolute sense.”

Nelson KJV Study Bible

B. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)

As we seek his guidance,
the Spirit of Truth helps
us separate truth from
error.

Philippians 3:15

¹⁵ Let us therefore, as many as be perfect,
be thus minded:
and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded,
God shall reveal even this unto you.

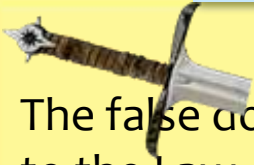
B. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)

We cannot wait for everyone to be in agreement on all things. We must move forward on those things we DO agree.

Philippians 3:16

¹⁶ Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

FALSE DOCTRINE



The false doctrine that ties salvation to the Law of Moses.

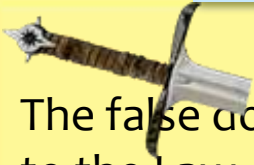


The false doctrine that claims Christians are perfect now and have no need for improvement.

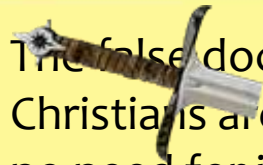
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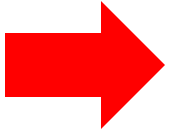
For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.



Chapter 2: PAUL'S APPEAL TO HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

1. Warning against confidence in the flesh (1-9)
2. Exhortation to Know Christ (10-16)
3. **Warning against living for the flesh (17-21)**



C. Warning Against Living for the Flesh (17-21)

There is no gift more precious than the gift of a good example.

Philippians 3:17

¹⁷ Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

C. Warning Against Living for the Flesh (17-21)

But there are many bad examples as well.

Philippians 3:18-19

- ¹⁸ (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:*
- ¹⁹ Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* their belly, and whose glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

C. Warning Against Living for the Flesh (17-21)

God forbid we should be “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:4).

Jesus did not suffer and die on the cross so that we could live for the pursuit of pleasure.

Philippians 3:18-19

- ¹⁸ (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:*
- ¹⁹ Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* their belly, and whose glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

They are the enemies of
the cross of Christ:
Whose end is
destruction,
whose God is their belly,
and whose glory is in
their shame...



José Luis López Galván

The doctrine of the Hedonists – the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain – has crept into the church in the form of the health and wealth gospel.

1 Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Holding on to just a bit of false doctrine is enough to spoil your understanding of the Scriptures, and your expectation of life.

Galatians 5:9

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Holding on to just a bit of false doctrine is enough to spoil your understanding of the Scriptures, and your expectation of life.

Galatians 5:9

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

Do you pray for an *easier* life or for a life that glorifies God?

C. Warning Against Living for the Flesh (17-21)

We should live for more than the life of here and now.

Philippians 3:20

²⁰ For our conversation is in heaven;
from whence also we look for the Saviour,
the Lord Jesus Christ:

C. Warning Against Living for the Flesh (17-21)

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πολίτευμά politeuma: **our citizenship**

C. Warning Against Living for the Flesh (17-21)

True, the Lord helps us manage the trials and tribulations of this life. But his *main* work (and ours) is to gather his flock to bring them into the next one.

Philippians 3:20

²⁰ For our conversation is in heaven;
from whence also we look for the Saviour,
the Lord Jesus Christ:

John 14:2b-3

² ...I go to prepare a place for you.
³ And if I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come again, and receive you unto myself;
that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

C. Warning Against Living for the Flesh (17-21)

When he returns, these wretched bodies will be exchanged for a glorious new body:

Philippians 3:21

²¹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

C. Warning Against Living for the Flesh (17-21)

Although it is impossible to imagine, we shall be made like him.

Philippians 3:21

²¹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

1 John 3:2

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

C. Warning Against Living for the Flesh (17-21)

And all things will be brought under the power and authority of God:

Philippians 3:21

²¹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

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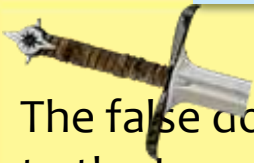
Philippians 3:21

²¹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

1 Corinthians 15:28

²⁸ And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

FALSE DOCTRINE



The false doctrine that ties salvation to the Law of Moses.



The false doctrine that claims Christians are perfect now and have no need for improvement.



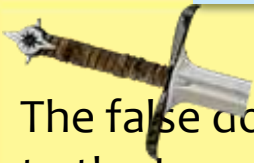
The false doctrine that encourages Christians to live for the pleasures and comforts of this present world.

TRUE DOCTRINE

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

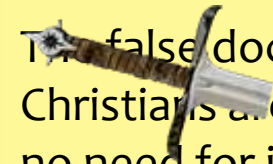
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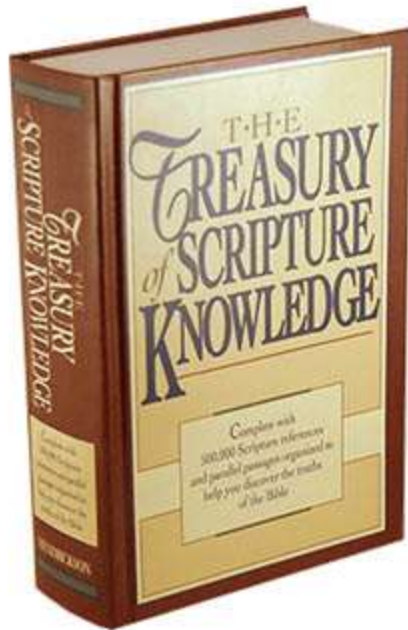
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For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:





Overview - Philippians 3

- 1 He warns them to beware of the false teachers of the circumcision;
- 4 shewing that himself has greater cause than they to trust in the righteousness of the law;
- 7 which notwithstanding he counts as dung and loss, to gain Christ and his righteousness;
- 12 therein acknowledging his own imperfection.
- 15 He exhorts them to be thus minded;
- 17 and to imitate him,
- 18 and to decline the ways of carnal Christians.

Chapter 1: PAUL'S ACCOUNT OF HIS PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCE

Chapter 2: PAUL'S APPEAL TO HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST

Chapter 3: PAUL'S APPEAL TO HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

Chapter 4: PAUL'S APPEAL TO HAVE THE PEACE OF CHRIST



UP NEXT

Questions to test your understanding of this lesson:

1. According to this lesson, what are the three sections to Philippians Chapter 3?
2. According to this lesson, what were the three groups spreading false doctrines in the church?
3. What are the three groups in Philippians 3:2?
4. What are the three indicators of true circumcision of Philippians 3:3?
5. In Philippians 3:8, Paul compared the things he had given up for Christ to _____.
6. In Philippians 3:10, what are the two ways Paul wanted to know Christ?
7. What is the one thing Paul said he did in Philippians 3:13?
8. In Philippians 3:19, what are the four descriptions of "the enemies of the cross of Christ"?
9. According to Philippians 3:21, how will we be changed when Christ returns?
10. Also in Philippians 3:21, when Christ returns, he will subdue all things to _____.

Each question is worth 10 points. Do NOT share your answers with other students.



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