



# Midweek Study

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## *in pursuit of* **HAPPINESS** Through Philippians



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### **Learning to Count** Philippians 3:1-11

**Have you ever done a balance sheet on your life?** We do it with our personal finances. We do it with our business. But have you ever done that with your life? This is exactly what Paul did in our text. Paul played the role of the accountant, balancing assets and liabilities, coming out with a bottom line figure for his life. Outward criticism from his enemies caused Paul to take a closer look at his own life. The result was the inventory of his life.

“HAPPINESS” – A fleeting feeling of exhilaration

“BIBLICAL JOY” – The settled conviction that God sovereignly controls the events of life for the believer’s good and God’s glory.

#### **I. The ENEMIES of the Gospel 3:1-2**

#### **II. The ESSENTIALS of the Gospel 3:3**

1. It’s About the Heart; 2. It’s About Worship; 3. It’s About Jesus; 4. It’s NOT About Anything Else

#### **III. The EMPTINESS without the Gospel 3:4-8**

- 1. Rituals Can’t Save Me (v.5 – Circumcision)**  
- Baptism, Communion, Baby Dedication.
- 2. Race Can’t Save Me (v.5 – Israel, Benjamin) - Heritage**  
- “My Mom and Dad are Christians!”  
- God has no GRANDCHILDREN – only children.
- 3. Religion Can’t Save Me (v.5 – Hebrew of Hebrews)**  
- Religion is man’s attempt to get to God.  
- Jesus Christ is God’s attempt to get to man.
- 4. Rule-Keeping Can’t Save Me (v.5 – a Pharisee)**
- 5. Reputation Can’t Save Me (v.6 – As for zeal and legalistic righteousness – I was Faultless)**  
- God loves unconditionally. Our work does not get us into heaven.  
- I would not trust the best hour of the best day I have ever lived for my salvation.

<u>Profit / Loss</u>	
<u>Statement of Your Life</u>	
<u>Profit</u>	<u>Loss</u>
	RITUALS
	RACE
	RELIGION
	RULE-KEEPING
	REPUTATION
Knowing Christ Intimately	
Right-Standing Before God	
Fellowship with Christ	
The Promises of Christ	
<b>No Comparison!!</b>	

**- As one pastor has written, "Jesus plus nothing equals everything; everything minus Jesus equals nothing."<sup>1</sup>**

- Christian = **CHRIST** + I - **AM** - **NOTHING**

The Greek scholar Kenneth Wuest gives a graphic description of what Paul gave up to become a Christian believer.

*"Paul was a citizen of Tarsus. At the time he lived there, only families of wealth and reputation were allowed to retain their Tarsian citizenship. This throws a flood of light upon Paul's early life. He was born into a home of wealth and culture. His family were wealthy Jews living in one of the most progressive of oriental cities. All this Paul left to become a poor itinerant missionary.*

*"But not only did he forfeit all this when he was saved, but his parents would have nothing to do with a son who had in their estimation dishonored them by becoming one of those hated, despised Christians. They had reared him in the lap of luxury, had sent him to the Jewish school of theology in Jerusalem to sit at the feet of the great Gamaliel, and had given him an excellent training in Greek culture at the University of Tarsus, a Greek school of learning. But they had now cast him off. He was still forfeiting all that he had held dear, what for? He tells us, 'that I may win Christ.'"*

**ILLUSTRATION:** Martin Luther was driven to God's grace by the awareness of his inability to save himself. He wrote, *"I was a good monk, and I kept the rule of my order so strictly that I may say that if ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery it was I. All my brothers in the monastery who knew me will bear me out. If I had kept on any longer, I should have killed myself with vigils, prayers, reading, and other work."*<sup>2</sup>

#### **Why were these things "loss"?**

There is only one other place in the NT where "loss" is used and that is in Luke's description of Paul's disastrous voyage to Rome that Paul had experienced only months before writing his letter to the Philippians. Acts 27 is a record of that voyage, and in the account Paul speaks twice of the "loss" of cargo suffered because of a violent storm.

In those days, when a ship was caught in a violent storm, as a last resort the crew would throw cargo and tackle overboard in order to lighten the shipload. This would cause the ship to ride higher in the water, diminishing the danger of being swamped by the high waves washing over the deck. Obviously, however, such action would entail great loss to the ship owner or captain.

Only one other scriptural account speaks of the loss of a ship's cargo: Jonah 1:5. In such heavy seas as Paul and Jonah experienced, the cargo actually became dangerous. To keep it aboard jeopardized not only the ship, but the crew and passengers as well.

In both instances, the masters of the ships were faced with a difficult choice: throw the cargo overboard and suffer its loss, but hopefully save the ship; or keep the cargo on board and risk losing everything – cargo, ship, and the lives of passengers and crew.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Why is Human Goodness Bad?**

*Isaiah 64:6 - But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.*

*Proverbs 21:4 - A haughty look, a proud heart, And the plowing of the wicked are sin.*

Adrian Rogers: Good things are bad things when they become the substitute for the best thing.

- Now for example, a bookbag is not a bad thing. You are going camping, it's a good thing. But if you are sitting in an airplane and the airplane is going down, and you pick up a bookbag and strap it on your back instead of a parachute by mistake, it becomes a bad thing, because it's there as a substitute for the right thing.

- The worse thing about outward morality is that so many people have taken it as a substitute for the new birth and dear friend, **the worse form of badness is human goodness when human goodness becomes a substitute for the new birth.**

## **IV. The EXPERIENCE of the Gospel 3:9-11**

**All of his life, Paul had desired to be righteous, that is, acceptable before God.** When Paul met Jesus on the Damascus Road and received Him, Jesus gave him the very thing he desired.

<sup>1</sup> Tullian T.

<sup>2</sup> [Quoted in Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1950, p. 45]

<sup>3</sup> Jerry Bridges, *The Gospel for Real Life*, 116-117.