



A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Text for the Week: Philippians 3:1-11

Message for the Week: "Christ Above All"

Sunday, February 12

Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week? Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

Read:

Read / Have two people in your group read [Philippians 3:1-11](#) out loud.

(Clicking this link will bring you to multiple translations.)

As you read and/or listen to the text being read, circle, take note of, highlight, or underline what words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them with those who are with you.

Respond / Reflect:

What creds/credentials does our culture hold up as important and valuable? Create a list.

What are the most important things that we hold up alongside Christ? (Christ *and* my career; Christ *and* my accomplishments, achievements, degrees, heritage, etc.)

Paul compares his credentials in these verses to refuse/dregs/dung. What does this suggest about how he felt about these credentials compared to knowing Christ? How do you feel about your own credentials? Similar or differently than Paul?

What do the credentials of the world afford us? What do the credentials of knowing and receiving what Christ has done for us afford us? Which is more important? Valuable? Desirable? Do our hearts and lives demonstrate this?

Explore the attributes of Christ that point toward His immeasurable greatness (meek and mighty, wonderful, eternal, wise, etc.).

Try It:

What things/qualities/skills could God be asking you to use for God's glory and kingdom? What would it look like to lay them down for His service? Do it.

Prayer:

Spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you. Pray this prayer together:

Heavenly Father, we pray that our desire to know Christ may continue to grow and expand until, like Paul, we are able to consider that the loss of those things that we value and hold dear in life, as rubbish to us, in order that we may gain Christ. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Source: <https://prayer.knowing-jesus.com/Philippians/3/8>

Missional/Spiritual Practice for February: Holy Curiosity for the Other

During the month of February, you are invited and encouraged to engage in the missional practice of [Holy Curiosity for the Other](#). By engaging in this practice, we seek to create safe and inviting space in meaningful conversation with others. This involves us risking new and deeper relationships with the people we meet in the context of their lives, developing a holy curiosity that transcends your own needs for affirmation or expression and calls you into full attentiveness and discovery of another person's life and story. When we provide safe, inviting, and prayerful space for another to share, transformative encounters with God and one another occur over time

Philippians 3:1-11

New International Version

3 Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. ² Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. ³ For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— ⁴ though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in ^[a] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

The Message

3 And that's about it, friends. Be glad in God!

I don't mind repeating what I have written in earlier letters, and I hope you don't mind hearing it again. Better safe than sorry—so here goes.

²⁻⁶ Steer clear of the barking dogs, those religious busybodies, all bark and no bite. All they're interested in is appearances—knife-happy circumcisers, I call them. The *real* believers are the ones the Spirit of God leads to work away at this ministry, filling the air with Christ's praise as we do it. We couldn't carry this off by our own efforts, and we know it—even though we can list what many might think are impressive credentials. You know my pedigree: a legitimate birth, circumcised on the eighth day; an Israelite from the elite tribe of Benjamin; a strict and devout adherent to God's law; a fiery defender of the purity of my religion, even to the point of persecuting the church; a meticulous observer of everything set down in God's law Book.

⁷⁻⁹ The very credentials these people are waving around as something special, I'm tearing up and throwing out with the trash—along with everything else I used to take credit for. And why? Because of Christ. Yes, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, firsthand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant—dog dung. I've dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by him. I didn't want some petty, inferior brand of righteousness that comes from keeping a list of rules when I could get the robust kind that comes from trusting Christ—*God's* righteousness.

¹⁰⁻¹¹ I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally, experience his resurrection power, be a partner in his suffering, and go all the way with him to death itself. If there was any way to get in on the resurrection from the dead, I wanted to do it.