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Capitol Bible Discussion Handout
Philippians 3 "Enjoying a Christ-Focused Life"

It is easy in life to stay busy with things that seem urgent at the time, but are not really very important. This has been called "the tyranny of the urgent." If we're not careful, these many urgent things, though they are relatively insignificant, will crowd out those things that are most important, which many of us would say are God first and family second.

To avoid this, we must every day pay close attention to and make time for the things that are most important, even though they might not seem to be very urgent. If we do this, then God will help us to accomplish these priorities, and also can help us with the many other things that come our way that need to be done. And in the process, we will give up to God's great plan and purpose for our lives and enjoying his many blessings.

Many leaders will say they have too many responsibilities to live this way, and so their work crowds out everything else and their relationship with God and family suffer. But when we consider the Apostle Paul, we realize that it is indeed possible to live with this single-mindedness while also being a highly accomplished leader. Paul was a master at structuring his life in this way, and as a result he achieved incredible things. In fact, many historians, including many secular authors, have called him the most influential person to have ever lived, second only to Jesus Christ.

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul writes autobiographically about this deliberate approach in his life, and he describes the joy it gave him.

When we follow God's plan and purpose for our lives as Paul did, aiming to follow Jesus and glorify God in every area of our lives every day, we are also blessed in many radically life-changing ways.

1. WE ENJOY A GREAT PURPOSE (3:7)

Philippians 3:7 "But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ."

We now have a great goal and purpose. No more purposelessness, and no boredom. Life is exciting! We enjoy the wonderfully fulfilling life Jesus promised: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (John 10:10b). As Paul says here, everything else is "rubbish" (or "dung") in comparison (vs.8).

2. WE ENJOY A GREAT RELATIONSHIP (3:8-10)

Philippians 3:8-11 "More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."

Capitol Bible Discussions

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The Greek word translated *know* here is *ginosko*, which means “to have personal acquaintance or experience with.” The Apostle Paul’s greatest passion was to know Christ more by experience, and this should be our desire too. What do we get when we follow Jesus closely? Above all, we get Jesus himself, and nothing is better or worth more than a real relationship with Him!

3. WE ENJOY GREAT FORGIVENESS (3:9)

“9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith”

We don’t need to strive to earn our salvation. We can rest in the finished work of Christ on our behalf and keep going forward seeking Him and growing. How liberating!

4. WE ENJOY GOD’S BLESSINGS EVEN WHEN WE HAVE DIFFICULTIES (3:10-11)

Philippians 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Even our difficulties lead to good things, since our trials are a trail to Christlikeness (Romans 8:28ff).

5. WE ENJOY A GREAT FOCUS. (3:12-16)

Philippians 3:12-14 Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of

the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; 16 however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.

“Reaching forward” is a translation of the Greek word *epekteino* “a compound verb made up of two prepositions added to the verb *teino* (“to stretch”). It describes stretching a muscle to its limit, and pictures a runner straining every muscle to reach the finish line.” We are focused on moving forward and growing in Christlikeness. We are not looking back consumed with our past mistakes and sins (of which Paul had many), but instead we are thankful for the grace of God and laser focused on knowing and serving Him.

6. WE ENJOY A GREAT FUTURE (17-21)

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. 18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Many people choose not to live as Paul did, and it will cost them forever. But God’s work in us is to prepare us for an eternal life with Him. This is just the beginning of our future. As we see God at work in our lives, we can rest assured that we are His, and He is helping us, and He has great things in store for us forever. Now, let’s go forward and focus first on Christ and enjoy His great plan for us

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