

Philippians 3:1-11

Wash Away the Resume

April 12, 2026

Based on Philippians 3:1-11, Pastor Dan McPherson explored what we take pride in versus what truly matters. The apostle Paul had it all by worldly standards - impressive credentials, religious achievements, and social status that would make anyone envious. Yet when he encountered Jesus, everything changed. He realized he had been measuring his worth by the wrong standard entirely. Like a student who discovers they've been studying for the wrong test, Paul found that all his accomplishments meant nothing when measured against knowing Christ. This doesn't mean our achievements are worthless, but rather that they pale in comparison to the infinite value of relationship with Jesus.

When we understand this truth, it frees us from the exhausting pursuit of proving our worth through performance and allows us to find our identity in something far more secure and lasting. Several people were baptized toward the end of each service, an appropriate conclusion to the message that upside-down joy comes from finding our identity in Christ rather than our own achievements.

Ice Breaker

What's one achievement or accomplishment from your childhood that you were really excited about at the time?

Discussion Questions

1. What's the difference between being proud of something and finding your identity in it? Why do you think it's so difficult for people to let go of their accomplishments and status?
2. **Read Philippians 3:1-11.** Did you grow up in a "religious" home? If so, how did that experience affect your walk with Christ, either positively or negatively?
3. Why does a "balance sheet approach" to righteousness threaten both a person's joy and security?
 - "Paul's problem was not that he couldn't make the grade; it was that he did make it, only to find out that it was the wrong standard of assessment." - Jeannine K. Brown
 - If your righteousness depends upon performance, you'll always be full of anxiety. When you flip the focus on what you have done for God rather than on what God

has already done for you, you'll lose your joy. *Grace* is the key to *joy*. The two words go together. Both come from the same root word in Greek.

4. The apostle Paul calls his greatest accomplishments as “loss” compared to knowing Christ. When did you first experience a similar shift in thinking? What were the circumstances that led you to recalibrate what you truly value in life?

- In verse eight, the English translators politely translate the word as “loss” or “garbage.” To put it mildly, the actual word is closer to “manure” or “dung.”

5. What good things in your life could quietly become sources of joy that compete with the deeper joy of relationship with Jesus?

- You will never learn true joy until you discover true treasure. “God is not just better than the worst stuff in life; God is better than the best!”

Prayer

- Invite the group to prayer focused on the specific blessings that come to mind because of the “surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:8). Thank God for the circumstances that have led you beyond mere religion to a deeper relationship with Him.
- Ask the Lord for opportunities to be attentive and minister to anyone struggling with anxiety or discouragement in their Christian walk - perhaps because they're overly focused on what they do rather than what God has already done.