



## Repentance Tabernacle Church

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### New Year and New Beginnings!

**Sub-Topic:** To go higher in Christ, you must go deeper in His Word.

**Scripture:** Philippians 3:7-14

- **Re-evaluate your Priorities:** Anything that hinders your relationship with Jesus (career, status, even good things) must be re-evaluated and potentially discarded if it becomes a distraction.
- **Spiritual Momentum:** It's about forward motion, not stagnation. Like an athlete, we must keep striving and straining, letting go of past successes or failures to focus on the finish line.
- **Embrace the Journey:** Knowing Christ involves the whole journey—His power, suffering, and death—leading to ultimate resurrection.
- **Keep your Focus on Jesus:** To know Jesus more deeply, making everything else secondary.

Before apostle Paul was converted from Saul he studied under Rabbi Gamaliel (Pharisee and doctor of the Law) and he went around crucifying Christians. Until he met Jesus Christ on the road of Damascus (Acts 9). Paul, formerly proud of his Jewish heritage and legalistic standing, now considers these things worthless ("garbage") compared to knowing Christ. This is a profound statement about values: A person's relationship with Christ is more important than anything else. To know Christ should be our ultimate goal.

Jesus tells the parable of the hidden treasure (Matthew 13:44). The Kingdom of heaven is more valuable than anything else we can have, and a person must be willing to give up everything to obtain it. *"Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple"* (Luke 14:33). **The man who discovered the treasure in the field stumbled upon it by accident but knew its value when he found it.**

Consider your values. Do you place anything above your relationship with Christ? If your priorities are wrong, how will you reorder them? The goal is deep intimacy with Jesus, experiencing His resurrection power and being united with Him in His sufferings and death to attain resurrection. Paul gave up everything—family, friendship, and political freedom—in order to know Christ and His resurrection power. **What are you willing to give up in order to know Christ?** A few minutes each day for prayer and Bible study? Your friend's approval? Some of your plans or pleasures? Whatever it is, knowing Christ is more than worth the sacrifice.

That power that raised Christ from the dead helps us live morally renewed and regenerated lives. But before we can walk in the newness of life, we must also die to sin (be "*made conformable unto his death*"). If we **believe** in our old, sinful life as dead and buried, we have a powerful motive to resist sin. We can consciously choose to treat the desires and temptations of the old nature as if they were dead. We can enjoy our new life in Christ because we are united ("planted") with Him in His death and resurrection. Our evil desires, our bondage to sin, and our love of sin died with Him. **Now, united by faith with Him in His resurrection life, we have unbroken fellowship with God and freedom from sin's hold on us.**

Paul acknowledges he hasn't reached perfection but actively "presses on," forgetting the past (**both good and bad**) and straining forward toward the ultimate goal of God's heavenly call in Christ. Paul said his goal was to know Christ, to be like Christ, and to be all Christ had in mind for him. This goal absorbed all his energy. **This is an example for us.** We should not let anything take our eyes off our goal—Christ. With the single-mindedness of an athlete in training, we must lay aside everything harmful and forsake anything that may distract us from being an effective child of God.

Instead, grow in the knowledge of God by concentrating on your relationship with Him now. Realize you are forgiven, and then move on to a life of faith and obedience. Look forward to a fuller and more meaningful life because of your hope in Christ. As Paul neared the end of his life, could confidently say he had been faithful to his call (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Paul gave these words to encourage Timothy, and us, **that no matter how difficult the fight seems—keep fighting. It's about a radical reorientation from self-righteousness or worldly success to an all-consuming pursuit of intimacy with Jesus, shedding distractions to grow spiritually.** People of God, let us press on until we hear the Master say, *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord"* (Matthew 25:21).