

Lesson 15

Knowing God

Philippians 3:8-11

*H*ave you ever taken a spiritual inventory, my friend? I remember hearing a young man tell about one of the blessings that came out of an awful automobile accident that resulted in the amputation of one of his legs. Can you imagine *any* blessings coming from such a trauma?! As this man explained, his months in a hospital bed gave him the opportunity to evaluate his spiritual life—to take a spiritual inventory. You see, as an active young adult he had just been too busy to pay much attention to his spiritual life. But that downtime prodded this gentleman to spend time alone with God to look at his life.

Well, in today's passage God's servant Paul gives us the results of his own personal spiritual inventory. In clear terms, he relates to us the reassessment of his spiritual life after his conversion. We already know that he counted loss for Christ all the things that were previously counted as gain. His upbringing and religious training were thrown aside, along with his privileged education and religious zeal. And in his new evaluation of these "things" and "all things," Paul rejects them with horror and treats them as liabilities.

Read along and learn, as Paul has, what is truly important when it comes to taking inventory of the "things" in our life.

Philippians 3:8-11

- ⁸ But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ
- ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by 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 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Out of God's Word...

1. Reread verse 7 from our previous lesson, where Paul referred to some of the “things” that were “gain” to him. But now in verse 8, what inclusive adjective does Paul use twice?

What makes “all things” pale and fade in importance (verse 8)?

After Paul counts all things as loss, what final label does he put on all fleshly assets (verse 8)?

And what does Paul desire to gain instead (verse 8)?

2. List the desires of Paul’s heart:

- a. Verse 9—That I may
- b. Verse 10—That I may
- c. Verse 10—That I may
- d. Verse 10—That I may
- e. Verse 10—That I may
- f. Verse 11—That I may

...and into your heart

- Can you think of ways you can begin to value “things” less and Christ more? Note several here.
- Considering Paul’s heart-cry in verse 10, how do you think you can know Jesus better? (Remember, the emphasis here is on gaining a deeper knowledge and intimacy with Christ.)
- Set up an appointment on your personal calendar to spend time taking your own spiritual inventory. (And be sure you take this sacred passage of Scripture along with you for your appointment!)

Heart Response

Beloved, I want to know my Savior. It’s one of the consuming passions of my life (and of yours, I hope!). And I want to know Him better and better with each passing day. True, knowing Jesus is believing in Him. But knowing Jesus is also experiential, progressive knowledge. As you and I learn more about Him from the Bible and learn more about Him through drawing upon His resurrection power over sin and death, believe me, we’re fulfilling that passion to know Him!

But what does “being conformed to His death” mean? We begin the process by putting sin aside (Ephesians 4:22). Why? Because we are conformed to Christ’s death when we die to sin (Romans 6:10-11), when we are crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20), when the flesh and its affections are put to death (Colossians 3:5), and when the world is crucified to us (Galatians 6:14). This, my friend, is how we are conformed to Jesus’ death.

Does it sound like a lot to accomplish? Well, take to heart these words spoken by C. T. Studd (whose life we looked at in the previous lesson): “If Jesus be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.”