



Grace Life Church
of Dallas

The doctrines of grace, the life of the Spirit, to the glory of God

Philippians 3:4-7

Confidence in the Flesh Counted as Loss

All Bible Verses are in the ESV Version (unless noted)

© 2001–2013 Crossway.

All rights reserved.

All emphasis added/insertions are mine

Philippians 3:1-3

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. 2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. 3 For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh-

Philippians 3:4-7

though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Verses 1-3

V1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is not trouble to me and is safe for you

- *Rejoice in the Lord*: This is a command
 - Our joy is to be found “*in the Lord*” (Not circumstance)
- *To write the same thing*: Repetition is necessary

V2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh

- Paul is warning about false teachers (Judaizers) teaching Jesus **plus circumcision** are necessary for salvation (Acts 15:1)
- *Dogs* (Derogatory term/Avoid), *Evildoers* (Recognize), *Mutilate flesh* (Naming names)

V3 For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh

- True Christians: *worship by the Spirit of God, glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh*

Verse 4

Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more

- **Flesh:** Who we are and what we can produce apart from God
 - The righteousness we can produce on our own (“*Filthy rags*” Isaiah 64:6)
- **Not saying:** There is reason to have confidence in flesh
- **What he is saying:** If what these Judaizers are saying is true “we can/should find confidence/boast in the flesh”, I have more reason than anyone to boast
- **Purpose:** Expose the false Judaizers and remove any hope in the flesh

Verse 5

Circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews;

Boasting in who I am: Finding confidence and hope in self

- *Circumcised on the eighth day* (Gen 17:12, Lev 12:3)
 - If circumcision according to the law was an advantage, Paul excelled them (Rom 2:28-29, Gal 5:2)
- *Of the people of Israel* (Gen 32:38)
 - If being born in the line of Israel was an advantage, Paul excelled them (Rom 3:9, Rom 9:6)
 - *Of the tribe of Benjamin*
 - Paul was able to give detailed evidence he was “*of the people of Israel*”
- *Hebrew of Hebrews*
 - If maintaining his Hebrew heritage was an advantage, Paul excelled them (Acts 21:40)

Verse 5-6

As to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Boasting in what I have done: Finding confidence and hope in works

- *As to the law, a Pharisee* (Acts 23:6 Son of a Pharisee, Acts 26:5)
 - If there was advantage in being a member of the strict religious leaders, Paul excelled them
- *As to zeal, a persecutor of the church* (Acts 8:1, 9:1, 26:9-10; 1 Cor 15:9)
 - If there was advantage in having religious zeal, Paul excelled them (Rom 10:2 Zeal without knowledge)
- *As to righteousness under the law, blameless*
 - If righteousness (as interpreted by Jewish religious leaders) brought an advantage, Paul excelled them in that he was outwardly blameless

Paul had more room to boast in who he was and what he accomplished more than anyone else.

If the church should listen to anyone on this matter, it should be Paul.

Paul's view of his flesh

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

- Whatever gain I believed I had (when I thought like these Judiazers) I count as loss
- Why? For the sake of Christ
- Who you are and what you can accomplish apart from God are of absolutely NO VALUE pertaining to your justification and salvation
- If fact, it is a sin to believe they bring value (minimizes God, and maximizes man) Unbelief

Ephesians 2:8-9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Personal Implications

Some in here may be trusting in Jesus plus self, and (in our evangelism) nearly everyone we speak with regarding the gospel is trusting in some aspect of the flesh

- Who they are (Christian family, Pastor children, Member of church, Infant baptized)
- What they have done (good person, kind, Jesus plus anything)

As we battle against sin, we need to understand the gospel (How we are justified) if we are ever going to grow in our sanctification

- Preach the gospel to ourselves daily (discipline of grace)
- Guard us against spiritual pride and promote humility

**If we get the doctrine of justification wrong,
we have a different gospel**