



Our adversary is very good at deceiving us into believing that our works make us righteous. Even today, there are those who will minimize God's grace by overemphasizing the outward appearance, the behavior and the traditions. God may be concerned about all of the above but none of them will make us righteous, none of them will get us into heaven. Still we place immense value on not only those things, but our lives. For many years Paul lived in the same deception, then he met Jesus and His infinite righteousness revealed Paul's immense unrighteousness. After his Jesus encounter Paul's perspective change... **Acts 20:24(GWT)** <sup>24</sup>But I don't place any value on my own life. I want to finish the race I'm running. I want to carry out the mission I received from the Lord Jesus—the mission of testifying to the Good News of God's kindness.

### II. DESIRE TO KNOW CHRIST – Philippians 3:10-15 (GWT)

<sup>10</sup>that knows Christ. Faith knows the power that his coming back to life gives and what it means to share his suffering. In this way I'm becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup>with the confidence that I'll come back to life from the dead. <sup>12</sup>It's not that I've already reached the goal or have already completed the course. But I run to win that which Jesus Christ has already won for me. <sup>13</sup>Brothers and sisters, I can't consider myself a winner yet. This is what I do: I don't look back, I lengthen my stride, and <sup>14</sup>I run straight toward the goal to win the prize that God's heavenly call offers in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Whoever has a mature faith should think this way. And if you think differently, God will show you how to think.

We cannot know Christ and not share in His sufferings and if perchance we live without suffering then it is true that we live without Christ. Of course this is not a popular message, but it is the message of truth. You have heard me say, living the Christian life is not easy, it's a life filled with pain, disappointment and suffering. However, we can rejoice that it is not all pain, suffering and disappointment, but is also a life of peace, joy and victory. If we endure to the end of the race, none of the things that caused us to grumble and stumble will matter – ever again.

Why was Paul so adamant that he had not yet reached the goal and what do you think the goal is? Hebrews 9:28 1 Thessalonians 5:9

### III. LEARN FROM MATURE BELIEVERS – Philippians 3:16-21 (GWT)

<sup>16</sup>However, we should be guided by what we have learned so far. <sup>17</sup>Brothers and sisters, imitate me, and pay attention to those who live by the example we have given you. <sup>18</sup>I have often told you, and now tell you with tears in my eyes, that many live as the enemies of the cross of Christ. <sup>19</sup>In the end they will be destroyed. Their own emotions are their god, and they take pride in the shameful things they do. Their minds are set on worldly things. <sup>20</sup>We, however, are citizens of heaven. We look forward to the Lord Jesus Christ coming from heaven as our Savior. <sup>21</sup>Through his power to bring everything under his authority, he will change our humble bodies and make them like his glorified body.

What does it mean to be citizens of heaven?

Apart from the word of God, we cannot measure spiritual maturity. It's not measured by how much work we do in the church or on the street, it's not measured by how many talents we have, or how well we behave. It is only measured by how much we imitate Christ. Therefore, for every one of us, it comes down to this question. How much of Christ can others see in me?

The flesh is constantly warring against the Spirit trying to destroy any image of God that we may on occasion reflect. Finally, our maturity in Christ is not measured by how much word we know, but by how much word we live.

It is not great talents nor great learning nor great preachers that God needs, but men great in holiness, great in faith, great in love, great in fidelity, great for God—men always preaching by holy sermons in the pulpit, by holy lives out of it. These can mold a generation for God. - **POWER THROUGH PRAYER** by EDWARD M.

**BOUNDS**