

THAT I MAY KNOW HIM

Paul's passion was ***TO KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN!*** Paul, in various places, (cf. Acts 9, 22, 26, etc.) emphasizes differing aspects of the history of his personal testimony. However, the essential emphasis in Philippians 3 is Paul's **change of HEART** that relates to his conversion.

The gist of this chapter can be summed up as an emphasis on KNOWING CHRIST whether it be related to justification (emphasis in vv. 1-9), or sanctification (emphasis in vv. 10-17), or glorification (emphasis in v. 18-21). The theme of KNOWING CHRIST builds until it climaxes in glorification.

Once Paul met Jesus, his whole life from then on was about KNOWING CHRIST. Then it was about a personal faith relationship with Christ (Gal. 2:20), whereas previously Paul had majored on his RELIGIOUS credentials.

Paul shows that relationship with Christ is entered into on the basis of FAITH alone (3:9) - but that is just the beginning. Just as the "I do's" at the marriage ceremony signify the beginning of a new relationship that must then be further nurtured and developed, so too, Paul saw the importance of further developing His relationship with Christ. This is expressed in the phrase "***that I may know Him***" in verse 10. This practical sanctification passion to KNOW Christ more and more deeply governs Paul's thought from verse 10 through verse 17.

In verse 10 Paul conveys that KNOWING Christ in a growing way involves the intersecting of two truths.

1. the power of His resurrection
2. the fellowship of His suffering

Resurrection power is the same power evident when Jesus was raised from the dead. This power (as seen in the fruit of the Spirit, cf. Rom. 1:4, Gal. 5:22-25) is most clearly portrayed in the context of suffering for Christ. When we suffer for Christ and respond in a Christ-like way, the power of His resurrection is on display.

Paul knew that the more he identified with Christ, the more he would suffer (cf. Jn. 15:18-20; 2 Tim. 3:12), and yet at the same time the more Christ's resurrection power would be on display in and through him (cf. Phil. 1:20; 2 Cor. 12:8-10). Paul's desire was to KNOW Christ and to be governed by

the same mind that resulted in Christ going to the cross (cf. 2:8, 3:10b), which will culminate in the resurrection/rapture event (cf. 3:11).

In verses 12-14, Paul affirms that he is not yet perfect in terms of practical sanctification. However, he is in process (cf. Phil. 1:6) and is **PRESSING ON** towards the goal of perfectly knowing Christ and having God's purposes fulfilled in him. In a nutshell, Paul's passion could be summarized as this: **TO KNOW CHRIST AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN**. This defined his life (cf. Phil. 1:21, 3:10; Acts 9:15-16).

However, in the growth process of knowing Christ, Paul realized there are **MANY** things that can be a distraction regarding the past. They may be past sins and failures or accomplishments and successes. Whatever the tendency to distraction may be, Paul's single-minded goal was the twin truths expressed in Phil. 3:13-14...

1. forgetting those things which are behind
2. reaching forward to those things which are ahead

Practical sanctification has this single-minded **FOCUS**. It doesn't look back and rest on past accomplishments. It doesn't look back and pine over past failures that God has forgiven and forgotten (cf. Heb. 10:17-18). No, it goes on – it **PRESSES ON** in the goal of Christ-likeness – of more and more **KNOWING CHRIST AND MAKING HIM KNOWN**, which God will reward at the upward call (cf. Phil. 3:14).

In Phil. 3:15-17, Paul emphasizes that mature thinking is reflected in a **PRESSING ON** perspective and challenges the believers to live accordingly. Paul further challenges them to follow his and other godly leaders who emulate **PRESSING ON** in the pursuit of passionately **KNOWING CHRIST**.

Our motto in Christian living should ever be “onward and upward!”

PRESS ON!