

Philippians 3:1-14 – Part 2

1. *I may be found righteous in Him – vs. 9a* – Paul understands that the only reason he is considered righteous is because of what Christ did for him on the cross of Calvary. Because of that Paul knows that he had Christ in him and he was in Christ. He knew that he had nothing within himself that could be counted as righteous. He knew that he was the “chief of sinners.” **(1 Tim 1:15)** He knew that left to himself he would never be good enough. He also knew that even if he kept the law to the fullest, it would not save him. It was only faith in Christ that gave him the righteousness that he had.
2. *Righteousness that comes from God alone – vs. 9b* – Again Paul says that the righteousness he enjoys is because of God and Him alone, based on his faith in Christ and Christ alone.
3. *That “I” – vs. 10a* – This is where Paul gets personal. He says that it is his responsibility to get to know who Christ is and what Christ is all about. You see, we all have to discover Christ for ourselves and make the decision to follow Christ for ourselves. We cannot depend on anyone else to do that for us. It is not our parents that we can depend on or our friends or even our boyfriend or girlfriend to “have enough” religion for us. So often we think that if one of us is “religious” it is good enough. Wrong! It is personal and it is up to you to make that decision to follow Christ.
4. *Power – vs. 10b* – We all love power. We say “give me more power.” It might be in the work place, or in school, or in our homes, or in our music, wherever we are we want more power. It may be to just have more control over our own destiny, or maybe to accomplish something that needs to be done and others aren’t doing it. Whatever the case, we all work to have more power. Here Paul tells us how to have more power and that the power comes from the resurrection of Christ. It truly is by the resurrection power of Jesus Christ that we can withstand anything the devil throws at us.
5. *Suffering – vs. 10c* – Now this is where it gets serious. Up to now I can take it, but this is meddling. Paul talks about the “fellowship” of suffering with Christ. Let me tell you that while on the surface this sounds crazy, it is absolutely true. Have you ever been in a crisis situation with complete strangers? After the ordeal you all have bonded and a way that would normally take months. Suffering has a way of helping us get close to others. A difficult situation can do one of two things. It can drive you to God, or drive you away from God. Which will it be? If we suffer with Christ and drive toward Him, He will sustain us as he promised; never to leave us or forsake us.

6. *Conformed – vs. 10d* – All of this Paul says is to conform us into the image of God. If we are honest, we will agree that the goal of the believer is to be conformed into the image of God. In order to do that we must first be conformed to His death. Why His death? Because we have to die to self and sin before we can ever become like Him in any other way. Once we understand the death of Christ, and once we are comfortable with the sufferings of Christ, we can then begin to build our relationship with Christ on the basis of what He did and not what we do. (Romans 8:29; 12:2)
7. *Attain the resurrection from the dead – vs. 11* – You see all of this was Paul's way of ensuring that he would inherit the resurrection and heaven. He knew that it was only by his becoming more and more like Christ that he would fulfill what God had chosen him to do. He did not want to do anything that would bring dishonor to God's name or to the cause of Christ. Paul knew he was heaven bound, but wanted to be sure he never did anything to cause anyone else to not decide to follow Christ.
8. *Not that I have obtained it – vs. 12a* – Paul admits that he has not reached his full potential and the maximum of his ability yet. He realizes that we all have more to give, do, and be because of Christ. He knows that he has a long way to go to "be perfect" as God commands us to be. There is always more ahead of us, but our responsibility is to keep going. (Matt. 5:48) What does "perfect" mean here? Can we be perfect? If Christ makes us "perfect" through His death, what is he talking about? I believe that it means that we are to become "perfect" in our thinking and understanding of verse 10.
9. *I press on – vs. 12b* – He uses that phrase a couple of times here and in other places. It means that he doesn't give up or quit. Even in the face of hardships and difficulties, we must "push forward" and stay working toward that purpose God called us to. He knows he hasn't gotten to the top yet, but he "presses on."
10. *I may lay hold – vs. 12c* – This is a phrase we don't use much. It means to "chase down, wrestle with, and subdue, then not let it move or get away." Not put that in terms of your life. How many things do we need to "chase down, wrestle with, subdue, and not let get away?" Often we chase things down, we may even wrestle with them, but we do not secure them. What are those things? How about lying, or stealing, or maybe, gossip, or an addiction? Or maybe it is jealousy, or lust, or any number of things. We just don't know how to "lay hold" of things. So Paul is telling us that we need to "lay hold" of what Christ has done for us and what He is doing through us. We need to grab it and not let go, no matter what happens.

11. *I do not think I'm there yet* – vs. 13a – Paul is saying, I know what I have to do, but I haven't gotten there yet. We all know the right we should do but for some of us it is difficult to follow through with doing that every day all day long. We have good days and bad days. (Romans 7:15-25)
12. *One thing I do* – 13b – this is interesting how Paul looks at what this “one thing” is. It is not just one action or thought. It is not just one change in behavior. Paul goes on to list several things he must do in order to get to the goal that God has called him to. So often we think that we only need that one mountain top experience and then we are go. We just have to witness to that one friend and that is all that is required of us. Sometimes it is that we just need to resist that one temptation just one time and then we are good. Paul says there are three things that we need to do.
13. *Forgetting the past* – vs. 13c – A very important in the life of the believer is to forget the past. That is the past nature of being out of Christ and unsaved. It does not mean we should forget the lessons learned as the Holy Spirit teaches us to live more like Christ. We tend to want to forget the bad and only remember the good. Paul urges us to not remember the sins that Christ forgave on the cross and continue to move forward in the Grace and Mercy that Christ offers.
14. *Accepting the present* – vs. 13d – We are all presented with choices that lie just ahead of us. Paul encourages us to reach toward those things that God put in front of us. We are to be “pro-active” in our daily walk with Christ. Never reach back, but always forward. We should never live in or on the past experiences we have had with God. Many times we talk to someone and ask them what God has done for them and they give us an experience from 20 years ago.
15. *Keep a goal* – vs. 14 – Again Paul uses that phrase “press on.” Paul knows that without a goal in mind and a goal that is ahead of us, we will never reach it. What is that prize? Look at James 1:12. It is the Crown of Life. We are commanded to “work out our salvation” which is the day-to-day living we are to do that honors Christ. We are to live like we are saved.