

SUNDAY

June 12, 2011

READ: Philippians 3 (Focus: verse 1)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What does Paul want the believers in Philippi to do? Do you get the impression that Paul is giving the church new information in this letter? What purpose does he give for what he is writing?

KEY CONCEPT: There is great value in the repetition of important information to reinforce the teaching new doctrine.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Do you recall as a child doing your times tables over and over to lock basic math information into your brain? What are some other things that you were taught that were repeated many times before they became “real” to you? Have you experienced the value of Scripture memorization? Have those verses helped you in times of difficulty or temptation? What specific instance to you recall where God has come to your aid by bringing a verse to your mind, or directing you to a passage that has given you a truth that “got you through” a time of trouble?

PRAY: Step up to the challenge of “hiding” God’s Word in your heart. Consider this week picking one verse or passage to commit to memory. You might start by considering one of these from our current study of Philippians: 1:6; 1:9; 2:3-4; 2:14-15; 3:13-14; 4:4-7; 4:8.

Before embarking on Scripture memorization, ask God to help you to not only remember the words, but also that the Holy Spirit will help you to fully embrace the meaning and intent of the verse or passage.

MONDAY

June 13, 2011

READ: Philippians 3 (Focus: verses 2-3)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What is Paul getting at in these verses? What are the two camps that he is dividing people into?

KEY CONCEPT: The good news of the gospel message is that we are saved by God’s grace, not through anything of our own doing.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: The Judaizers were people who brought the idea of needing to fulfill all the OT laws, particularly the rite of circumcision, in order to receive salvation. These people believed that what they did, rather than the free grace of God, brought them salvation. How do you see the concept of earning one’s salvation in the world around you today? Can you see why Paul encouraged the church to rejoice, as Christ freed us from the Old Testament law of working toward righteousness? Do you ever feel that you have to “do something” to add to the grace of God to be assured of salvation?

PRAY: Read Ephesians 2:8-9 today to enforce your understanding of the sufficiency of God’s wonderful grace. Pray a prayer of thanksgiving for that gift of His love.

TUESDAY

June 14, 2011

READ: Philippians 3 (Focus: verses 4-6)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What is Paul trying to communicate here...is it boasting, or something else? What does Paul mean by having “confidence in the flesh?”

KEY CONCEPT: In God’s eyes the accomplishments we achieve in life do not count toward our eternal destination.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: What are some of the markers of achievement that people take pride in today? Is there anything wrong with seeking to achieve great things with our lives? Do they have ultimate, eternal value, or are they temporal in nature? What is the importance of our goal in the pursuit of these achievements? In other words, can our motivation in working for them be misdirected? What significant things have you achieved or are working toward...and why are you doing so?

PRAY: God desires us to do things of significance and value (see Ephesians 2:10), but they do not provide our ticket to heaven. Take time today to thank God again for His gift of grace, and ask Him to help you understand what the “good works” are that Ephesians explains He has for you to do in response to that grace.

WEDNESDAY

June 15, 2011

READ: Philippians 3 (Focus: verses 7-9)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What was the change that occurred in Paul’s heart? What had he considered “to his profit” that he now considers loss? What is of the greatest importance to Paul now? What do you suppose he “lost” for Christ’s sake? Where does his righteousness now come from, and how is it obtained?

KEY CONCEPT: Moving from a belief that we achieve righteousness through our own efforts to that of receiving Christ’s righteousness through God’s grace is essential to having true joy in our heart.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Is there something in your life that you regret...perhaps a goal you were working toward that you now regret spending so much of your life pursuing? Like Paul, do you have a history of having worked hard to earn the approval of God, and now see that God loves you just as you are? Can you feel the regret of the past, and yet rejoice with Paul at your new understanding of His love and grace? What difference does having a perspective of “grace through faith” vs. “righteousness through works” make in how you approach your life?

PRAY: Rejoice! God loves you! Take time today to share your heart with God...receiving the joy that He wants to give you. Allow His peace to enter your spirit and help you overcome the challenges of everyday life circumstances.

THURSDAY

June 16, 2011

READ: Philippians 3 (Focus: verses 10-11)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What is it that Paul wants at this point? Why would he want to become like Christ in his death and participate in His suffering? Do you want this for yourself? If so, how would you put that idea into practical terms that you can live out?

KEY CONCEPT: Paul gave up everything - family, friends, and freedom - in order to know Christ and His resurrection power. We too have access to this knowledge and power, but we may have to make sacrifices to enjoy it fully.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: What are you willing to give up in order to follow Christ? A crowded schedule in order to set aside a few minutes each day for prayer and Bible study? Your friend's approval? Some of your plans and pleasures? Before we can walk in newness of life, we must die to sin. Just as the resurrection gives us Christ's power to live for Him, His crucifixion marks the death of our old sinful nature. We can't know the victory of the resurrection without personally applying the crucifixion.

PRAY: We want the blessings and joy of the resurrection without the pain and challenges that the crucifixion entails. Trust that God will bring you through those challenges, and will help you deal with the pain as you allow Him to become Lord of your life. It all starts with a prayer of confession for your sin, and living a changed life (repentance). Why not today?

*Adapted from the Life Application Study Bible, NIV. Zondervan. Page 2151

FRIDAY

June 17, 2011

READ: Philippians 3 (Focus: verses 12-16)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: What is it that Paul is saying he wants to take hold of? Is he there yet? How is he striving to take hold of it? What is it that Paul is "forgetting what is behind?" Why does he want to forget it?

KEY CONCEPT: The goal of having Christ as our Lord is a life-long journey. Never figure on "arriving" during this lifetime...yet continue each day to push on, living for Jesus in all you do and say.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: Is it hard to forget what lies behind in our lives? How do we free ourselves of the mistakes of our past to be able to be "new creations in Christ" that God can use? Where would our hope be if Jesus had given up on the goal that He set out to achieve? What if he said, "it's too hard," "it hurts too much," "it costs too much," or "these people aren't worth my sacrifice?" What about you....how do you think that God wants you to live...what he wants you to say and do? A marathon is a race that one trains for over a long time. How can you begin (or step up) your training for the marathon of living for Jesus? How will you deal with the disappointments and pain that would keep you from achieving the goal?

PRAY: Spend time in prayer today, considering all that Jesus endured because of His love for you. Commit your heart to Him, and pray that the Holy Spirit will strengthen you when trials and temptations work to derail your journey with the Lord.

SATURDAY

June 18, 2011

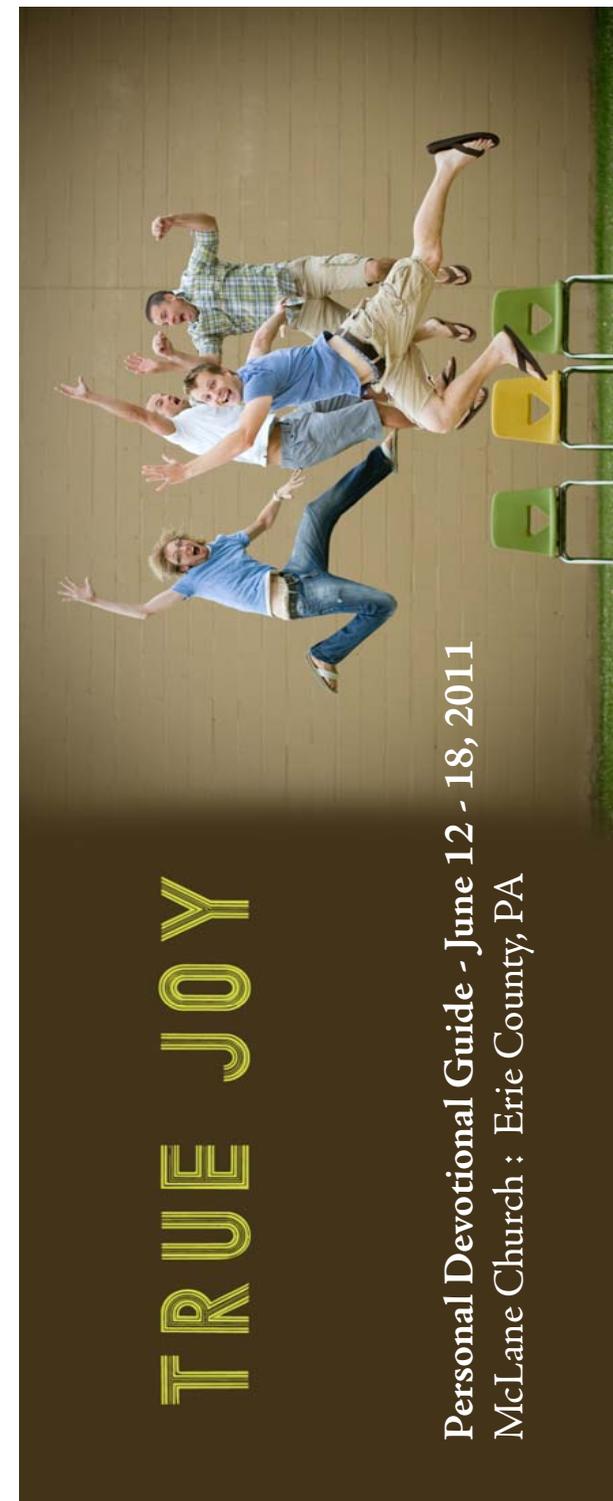
READ: Philippians 3 (Focus: verses 17-21)

OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS: Whose example does Paul urge the believers to follow? Why? Who else should they take note of? What causes Paul concern in verse 18?

KEY CONCEPT: In Paul's day, the people did not have a Bible to consult. Paul encouraged them to imitate his life as way to grow in the likeness of Christ.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER: If you are a tradesman, you may have worked as an apprentice while honing your skills. There is great value in learning from a mentor that is further along the journey than you are. How can you do this from a spiritual perspective? There are many things, ideas, and people that can distract you from fully living into God's plan for your life. Who do you know that models a Christ-like lifestyle in what they say and how they live their life? Would you consider asking them to mentor you? Perhaps you are in a position to serve as a mentor to another. Who might you seek out to help understand what you have learned about living for Christ?

PRAY: Joy comes as we seek to learn about Jesus and as we offer to share Jesus with others. Pray this day how God might want you to be mentored or mentor others. Listen for His voice and keep watch for opportunities that He provides.



Personal Devotional Guide - June 12 - 18, 2011
McLane Church : Erie County, PA