

HOW TO CONTINUE TO BE JOYFUL

Philippians 3:1-11 (April 7, 2024)

- ¹ Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe.
- ² Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation!
- ³ For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,
- ⁴ though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:
⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;
⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.
- ⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.
- ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ
⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;
- ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
- ¹¹ if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

THREE SAFEGUARDS FOR KEEPING YOUR JOY

I. RESIST LEGALISTIC ATTITUDES.

Definition of Legalism: Substituting rules and regulations for my relationship to Christ

“Watch out for those who do evil, those dogs, men who insist on cutting the body... we worship God by his Spirit, and rejoice in our life in Christ Jesus. We do not put any trust in external ceremonies.” (vs. 2-3 GN)

SAFEGUARD #1: LIVE EACH DAY BY GRACE.

Paul's Background: vs. 4-6

5 Examples of legalism: Trusting in Rituals, Race, Religion, Rules, Reputation

“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Rom. 14:17)

II. REEVALUATE YOUR ACTIVITIES.

“But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ...” (vs. 7-8)

“I consider it all mere garbage compared to being able to win Christ.” (Phillips)

SAFEGUARD #2: KEEP YOUR PRIORITIES IN PERSPECTIVE.

“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed. A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” (Luke 12:15)

III. REFOCUS YOUR AMBITIONS.

“I want to KNOW Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his suffering, becoming like him in his death.” v. 10

“For my determined purpose is that I may KNOW Christ -- that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more strongly and more clearly...” (Amplified Version)

SAFEGUARD #3: GET TO KNOW CHRIST BETTER AND BETTER.

3 Ways To Grow In Knowing Christ

Time; Talk; Trust

(Jesus) “Until now you have not asked for anything in My name. Ask and your joy will be complete.” (John 16:14)

Questions for discussion:

1. Why do we tend to go back to legalism?
2. Why do we hesitate to completely surrender to the Lordship of Christ?
3. In what practical ways, can we know Christ more daily?
4. **(Personal application)** What decision do I need to make for the next step of my spiritual growth? (And what can I start doing today?)