

No Confidence in the Flesh

Philippians 3:1-6

Welcome back and here we go! Today we continue in Philippians with a warning: Don't trust in the flesh. But what exactly does that mean? Good question.

Paul, our ultimate New Testament teacher, second only to Jesus, tells us to beware of the things that give us an artificial sense of well-being, security and safety, a foundation built on knowledge, position, wealth, or privilege.

Yet, God has obviously allowed each of us, through His grace, to be in the position we are in.

Philippians 3:1-6

- 1) What stands out to you?

I almost always start with this question to ascertain where each person is spiritually, and also to learn from you.

Paul starts this block of scripture with "*Rejoice in the Lord*", meaning find joy again in the Lord in all hardships. Here, it is in reference to Epaphroditus being sick, one of their own, and Paul's trusted courier. But then he alludes to having warned them about legalism, and more importantly, people who push legalism.

Philippians 3:3

- 2) What is legalism?

From "Grace Notes" on Grace, pg 25 & 26:

The greatest enemy of grace is legalism. Grace and legalism are mutually exclusive, *ROMANS 11:6*. Grace means that God does the "work" and receives the glory (credit) for it. Legalism means that man does the work and receives the credit. Notes are available on the doctrine of legalism.

Grace depends solely on the character of God and entirely excludes human ability, human merit, human achievement, etc. Legalism, however, depends on human activity and ability.

Grace and legalism have opposite emphasis. Grace emphasizes what God does in the soul of man, free of charge. The production and blessings in the Christian's life are byproducts of what is first provided by God without cost. Legalism excludes the mental attitude and emphasizes overt activity for the purpose of gaining credit with God and impressing men.

Legalism hinders a person from accepting Christ as Savior.

Galatians 2:21

I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”

Legalism neutralizes the believer in the Christian way of life.

Galatians 5:2-4

Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. 4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

God is perfect, and His plan is perfect. Man's work is excluded from the plan of God because man is imperfect. If man were permitted to make a contribution to the plan of God, the plan would no longer be perfect; it would be no stronger than its weakest link. Grace eliminates all considerations of human merit.

3) Where in life do you rely on yourself?

The truth is many of us are self-reliant and we trust in ourselves. We may deny this, not believe it ourselves or just simply may be unaware. But, when a crisis comes, where do we go? Who do we trust in a crisis? Our barber? Our real estate agent? Our friends that we hang with? No, usually, it is people who can help us understand the spiritual aspect of our problems and who can give us comfort in Christ.

Philippians 3:3-6

4) What is confidence in the flesh?

Paul says if anyone could trust in their knowledge, power, position, wealth and privilege, it was him!

Next week we will look at what it means to put things behind us, to move on from the past. But today, we focus on putting confidence in Christ.

I absolutely believe pride is the #1 reason we trust in ourselves! Pride reveals itself in times of crisis, when all of these things fail us and we can no longer trust in anything other than God's intervention or in the least, His peace. God is perfect and His plan is perfect!

From “Grace Notes” on “Grace”, page 26:

Grace, then, is the antithesis of human arrogance. An awareness of the full meaning of grace is a giant step toward true humility. Four types of pride are noted in those who are not oriented to Grace:

- There is pride on the part of the believer who rejects the eternal security of grace. He thinks his sins are greater than the plan of God. He thinks that grace is not sufficient.
- There is pride in the believer who falls apart during suffering. He thinks that his pressures and adversities are greater than the provision and protection of God.
- There is pride in the believer who enters into a life of false spirituality through legalism or religion. He thinks his personal works impress God and are greater than His plan.
- There is pride in the emotional believer who thinks feelings and emotions are greater and more real than the Word of God or the grace of God.

5) Which one is closest to you?

God is not surprised by your situations. He has the solution and had it before your problem. Do you trust that? The problem with relying on ourselves is that the situations only get worse. ==== Crisis by definition:

Pride points to all of my abilities, accomplishments, property, money and says: “I’m good”.

Humility says: “thank you for my earthly provisions Lord. Now give me spiritual peace as I trust you in the flames.

For the Lord will not consume forever. He remembers we are flesh.

Have NO confidence in the flesh.....

6) What does trusting God more look like to you?

I love you.

Next week: *Philippians 3:7-16*, “Forgetting These Things”.