

PHILIPPIANS

Rejoice In
The Lord!

Righteousness

Lesson Thirty-Two

Philippians

Rejoice In The Lord!

Lesson Goal: To assist students to see Paul's desire for right standing with God.

Scriptures: Philippians 3:8, 9

For Memory: "And be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ."
Philippians 3:9

Righteousness

These verses are an explanation of what Paul said in verse seven. Things that others would count as profit, he considered a loss. All those "Impeccable Credentials" that we talked about last week...he thought of as nothing to brag about.

Did Paul mean that they were useless in his life. No. Some of them were criminal, like capturing people and punishing them for their religious beliefs. However, his family background was something to be proud of...his training in religious matters was used in the ministry God gave him...his obedience of the law made him a good person. So, it was not all wasted.

Paul tells us in the eighth and ninth verses that it must all be put into perspective. We need to see all of that kind of thing for what it is. He said that knowing Christ is so much more important than these things. Other things do seem worth nothing when compared to knowing Jesus.

We could see verse seven as the kind of statement that a teacher or preacher might make on the spur of the moment. In verse eight, Paul said that he considered everything a loss. He is saying that he didn't come to this conclusion quickly. It is something he has thought through. He thought it in the past and he still thinks it.

There is one very important word in these verses. That word is righteousness. We have titled our lesson today, "Righteousness." Paul uses this word a lot. It seems to those who study it that righteousness, as used by Paul, means being right with God. That is, our relationship with God is right.

Is there someone in your life that is so important to you that you try really hard to get along with all the time? When you have problems with that person, you feel bad. When that person is upset with you, it upsets you. When things between you don't seem to be good, you want to fix it as quickly as possible. And, you "just know" when things aren't right between you.

That is a picture of what Paul means by unrighteousness. When our relationship with God is not right, we need righteousness. Now, that means to some that you need a

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new list of good deeds. To them, we need to clean up our lives and then present ourselves to God. It might go, “God, look what I have done. I have obeyed all the commandments. My mom and dad are really good Christians. I go to church every Sunday.” God responds, “Well, good. However, stack that up against how good I am and let’s see.” When the stacks are made, our goodness would seem the most pitiful pile of dirty rags one can imagine compared to God’s goodness. Then God says, “Uh-oh. Looks kind of like a pile of trash doesn’t it?” “But,” He says, “remember I sent my Son, Jesus, to clean up rags like that. If you are willing to give them up, and if you have faith, Jesus will come into your life, and my relationship with you will be perfect.”

Paul said, in verses eight and nine, that he had tried everything: depending on family background, keeping the Law, even attacking other religions, but nothing worked. “Now,” he said, “I have discovered that having faith in Jesus is what I really need. It is, actually, all I need.” That is what kept Paul in right relationship with God.

*Underlined statements in this Teacher’s Guide appear in the Student Worksheet with blanks to be filled in by the student during the lesson. Words in the Student Worksheet may not appear exactly as printed in the Teacher’s Guide.



Teaching Tips:

1. There is ample opportunity in this lesson to talk about all kinds of things that people do to please God, and those things may please Him, but will not earn their salvation. The lesson has the potential to seem in opposition to good works. It is not.
2. William Barclay paraphrased Paul, “I found the Law and all its ways of no more use than the refuse thrown on the garbage heap to help me to get into a right relationship with God. So I gave up trying to build up a goodness of my own; I gave up trying to achieve this relationship; and I came to God in humble faith as Jesus told me to do, and I found that fellowship I had sought so long and had never found.”
3. Don’t get hung up on the word “rubbish”. It means “dung,” that’s unimportant to the message here.
4. Songs that emphasize faith, God’s grace, Jesus as Savior, right relationship with God: righteousness, and giving all we have to Jesus are appropriate.
5. Pray with your students: Ask God to give you a right relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus.
6. Three verses on faith: Hebrews 11:6, Romans 1:17, Ephesians 2:8. “Faith in Christ” and “righteousness by faith” speak of the human side of our salvation.

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Student Worksheet

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Righteousness

=Paul said that he considered everything a _____. He was saying that he didn't come to this conclusion _____. It is something he has thought through. He thought it in the _____ and he still _____ it.

=There is one very important word in these verses. That word is _____.

=It seems to those who study it that righteousness, as used by Paul, means being _____ with God. That is, our relationship with God is _____.

=When our relationship with God is not _____, we need righteousness.

=When the stacks are made, our goodness would seem the most _____ pile of dirty rags one can imagine compared to God's _____.

=Paul said that he had tried _____: depending on family background, keeping the _____, even attacking other religions, but _____ worked. He said, “Now I have discovered that having _____ in Jesus is what I really need. It is, actually, _____ I need. That is what kept Paul in right relationship with _____.”

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that there is a God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.

Fifth, believe that He has answered your prayer, and be determined to live for him all the rest of your life.