

Philippians 3:7–15 “Which Way is Forward” Sermon-Based Discussion

Sermon Refresher: To win the prize we have to know which way is forward. The way forward in our race, according to Paul, is characterized by four signs in our lives:

- Living by the power of Christ’s resurrection
- Finding our identity in Christ
- Focusing primarily on knowing Christ
- Taking hold of that for which Christ took hold of us

Discussion:

1. What would you say describes somebody who is spiritually mature?
2. Where we find our identity is a key sign for maturity. Look at the following statements and see if any of them resonate for you. How do you fill the blank in for yourself?
 - I am who I am because . . . I’m good in my job.
 - I am who I am because . . . people like me.
 - I am who I am because . . . I’m my own person.
 - I am who I am because . . . my kids do well in sports/school, etc.
 - I am who I am because . . . of my political positions.
 - I am who I am because . . . I look good.
 - I am who I am because . . . ?
3. Read Philippians 3:7–15. What are all the ways that these verses describe believers as connected to or related to Christ?
4. Think back to what you answered for “I am who I am because . . .” What difference could it make for how we find our identity if we realize how connected we are to Christ?

5. Paul says that knowing Christ Jesus as Lord is what matters most to him (v.8). How can we tell what matters most to us? Here's one test. What do you tend to do in the first hour of your day? List out all your habits or practices for that first hour you're awake.
 - a. What could that list tell you about what matters most to you?
 - b. What kind of habits could you cultivate, whether in the first hour of your day or at another time, that could help knowing Christ become more important to you?
6. Paul says that he's still pressing on and straining toward what's ahead, which means that he hasn't arrived. How could the fact that the Apostle Paul was still in process shape your perspective on your own Christian life?

Philippians 3:7–15 “Which Way is Forward” Exercise

The exercise this week is meant to be done over the course of several days. Each day you will read the Bible verses and then reflect on how you’re connected to Christ according to those verses and what should that mean to you.

Then each day pray Ephesians 3:16–20 for yourself. You might read it out loud and pause after each phrase to personalize it. The repetition of this prayer each day is actually part of the point. Dwelling on this prayer is part of it penetrating our hearts.

Your group can share your reflections with each other at your next meeting.

Day 1

Read these verses:

- Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Write a paragraph reflecting on how you are connected to Christ and what that could mean for your life.

Pray Ephesians 3:16–20.

¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Day 2

Read these verses:

- Colossians 3:1–4 ¹ Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Write a paragraph reflecting on how you are connected to Christ and what that could mean for your life.

Pray Ephesians 3:16–20.

Day 3

Read these verses:

- Ephesians 2:4–6 ⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus

Write a paragraph reflecting on how you are connected to Christ and what that could mean for your life.

Pray Ephesians 3:16–20.

Day 4

Read these verses:

- Ephesians 1:3–6 ³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Write a paragraph reflecting on how you are connected to Christ and what that could mean for your life.

Pray Ephesians 3:16–20.

Day 5

Read these verses:

- Ephesians 1:7–10⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding,⁹ he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ,¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

Write a paragraph reflecting on how you are connected to Christ and what that could mean for your life.

Pray Ephesians 3:16–20.