

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL - MONDAY, JULY 13 *by Dan Self*

### Philippians 3:1-14 - ONE THING I DO

**Theme: Being motivated by one thing**

Philippians 3:1-14

*“Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. 2 Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence.*

*If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.*

*7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 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—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. 10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.*

*12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”*

In this passage, Paul invites the recipients of this letter to consider the source of their confidence.

Paul explains that he, himself, was a man who had spent his life working to become someone great. He had studied under one of the greatest teachers of his time, and was on his way to becoming accomplished in his own right. His accomplishments meant that he was someone who had authority in his culture. Paul deserved respect and Paul deserved recognition.

Paul also explains that he not only worked hard, but he had an ethnic advantage over most other people- he was born into the right family, in the right part of town. Being born into the right family

meant that you were eligible for special treatment: better pay, better treatment by authorities, special treatment in business dealings. Paul deserved privilege.

These are the things that motivate the world, aren't they?

- Power/authority
- Respect
- Recognition
- Privilege

If you work hard enough, you gain power and authority and influence.

If you are good enough at what you do you gain respect.

If you are an interesting enough person you gain recognition.

If you are born into the right family, in the right ethnicity, in the right city, you will be treated more favorably than others who are not- that is the essence of privilege.

Paul tells his readers two things:

1. He had everything the world celebrates.
2. He considers all of it garbage because of Christ.

The way of Christ is motivated by one thing:

My old way of living (living for the motivations of the world) was crucified with Christ, and a new person with a new purpose was resurrected with Christ. This means that all my worth and all my purpose and all my affirmation is not based on what I've done or what family I was born into, but it's all wrapped up in Christ and what he did and the family he adopted me into.

This means that we live differently.

- This means that power and authority have a different function. Because Jesus Christ died and rose again and claims victory over sin and death and is coming back to establish his eternal kingdom, this means worldly power is finite, but it also means that power is not something gain but something to give. Jesus introduces a new way for believers to live in which power is not used to elevate themselves but used to elevate others. This is the essence of missions- local or global.
- This means that respect has a different function. Jesus, in his time on earth, showed the world that respect is not reserved for those who have accomplished something great, but for those who don't think they deserve it. Who did Jesus speak to? Who did he spend time around? Who did he touch? People who- by the world's standards- didn't deserve respect.

- Recognition has a different function now, too. The gift of Jesus is not based on the goodness or significance of those who receive it, but based completely on the goodness and graciousness of God. All glory and honor and praise belongs to Him and Him alone, so any recognition gained on this earth is but a breath of the recognition that belongs to Him.
- Finally, privilege. Jesus invites every person of every race and every gender and every age and every status and every income level to be a part of his family. In his family all are awarded the same privilege- being called sons and daughters of God. This privilege awards God's children with new life. Using world-given privilege to gain a special advantage is sin, and is opposite of the way of Christ.

### **So, what do we do today? During ONE WEEK**

Consider your power, respect, recognition, and privilege.

What power have you gained, and who can you elevate?

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What respect have you gained, and how can you use your influence to point your followers to the way of Christ?

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Have you gained recognition?

God saw you and loved you before you were even born, so your accomplishments don't determine his love for you. This should drastically change how we live.

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Are you privileged? Privilege that is hoarded will quickly become indifference, and indifference will quickly become disinterest, and disinterest means that you simply will not pay any serious attention to those who don't share the same privilege as you. In Christ, it is unacceptable to use privilege as an advantage. In Christ, the only function of privilege is as a tool to reach a greater number of people.

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The way of Christ begins now, with those closest to you.

If we do not reject the way of the world now and do not take up the way of Christ now, we are lost.