

SG Questions

Phil 3.1-11

1. Describe your sense of the Christian concept of “joy.” What is it? What is it not? How does it differ from other views of happiness, contentment, etc.? How would you describe it to someone who has recently had significant tragedy in their life?
2. How would you describe Paul’s tone, language, emotions in 3.2-8? Is he sinning by this? Why or why not? (Compare Eph 4.29, 5.4) When is such language appropriate? If your child learned that “poop” or “dung” (or even more vivid) is a good translation for skubalon, in v.8, (ESV: rubbish), how would you help him or her understand when it might be appropriate to use such language? Consider the force of Paul’s argument here, is “rubbish” really too soft a translation to be helpful? How would you compare and contrast Paul’s vivid language (here and Gal 5.11-12) with how our culture uses “four letter words” and other coarse language?
3. Work on a definition of “confidence in the flesh” that works in a religious context (before God) and an irreligious one (before other forms of “salvation”). Use Paul’s examples in v.4-7 as needed as examples and illustrations to get started. Where are you tempted to place “confidence in the flesh?” What results when you pursue these and rely and trust in them? How do they destroy “Joy?”
4. How “big” is Paul’s view of Jesus in v.7-11? How does it compare to your view? What is the difference? Think through the illustrations of Christ’s work for us: “accounting,” “profit/loss” (v.7-8), “being found in him” (v.9), “righteousness” (v.9), personal, not data, “knowledge” of Him (v.10-11). What happens if we try to get this by “confidence in the flesh” instead of through Christ? Does one of these in particular open up for you new vistas of Christ’s grace to us?
5. Pray for each other to experience afresh God’s joy in the midst of the situations of our lives. Pray to each other to treasure Christ and turn away from our confidences in the flesh.