

CONVERSATION GUIDE:

OPENING QUESTIONS:

- What's something you're proud of on your "life resume"? (Think of an accomplishment, credential, or quality you value about yourself)
- Can you recall a time when you felt you had to prove your worth to someone? How did that affect you?
- What kinds of things do people typically use to measure their own value or success in life?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What would constitute an impressive spiritual "resume" in today's culture?
- *"The most profound need we all have is righteousness."* What does this mean? Do you agree or disagree?
- How do you see the "resume system" operating in different areas of society?
- What's the difference between becoming "religious" and truly becoming a Christian? Why is this distinction important?
- How does Paul describe the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ (verse 9)? How is this different from "a righteousness of my own"?

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

- In what areas of your life are you tempted to find your identity, value, or "righteousness" apart from Christ?
- What would it look like for you to "count as loss" the things you tend to boast, or find security, in?

GROUP FOCUS:

- Take time as a group to reflect on the difference between religious performance and Gospel dependence. Encourage one another to find identity in Christ rather than in accomplishments, relationships, or other sources of worldly validation.



WEEK 19 THE JOY OF A PROPER RESUME (PHILIPPIANS 3:3-9)

TODAY'S VERSES:

Philippians 3:3-9
2 Corinthians 4:7-11

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WEEK 19 THE JOY OF A PROPER RESUME

In today's verses Paul shows a dramatic shift in how he viewed his credentials and accomplishments. Paul lists his "resume" of religious qualifications (his pure Jewish lineage, strict Pharisaical adherence to the law, and zealous persecution of the church), but then declares all of these achievements as "rubbish." Rubbish is a polite translation of a crude Greek term. Our most fundamental need is righteousness, but our righteousness becomes our most profound problem when we rely on it instead of Christ.

Righteousness is our most fundamental need. When people today hear the word "*righteousness*," many think it means "being good" or living a good life. Righteousness is instead what allows us entrance into a place or relationship we have no right to. Paul gives us his resume AND tells us there is something more fundamental about this than just being the means to a job or school. A resume is how we go about everything in our lives. Tim Keller always used to say, "The most profound need we all have is a righteousness."

Our Most Profound Problem is Righteousness. Sin is a problem in our lives. It separates us from God and one another, but sin is not the main thing that spiritually blinds us; it's our own "righteousness." Paul says that the thing that made him a Christian was not that he simply changed his attitude toward his sins (as he always knew sins were wrong). Rather, he says, "*I counted all of these things loss for the sake of Christ.*" This means that even his understanding of his accomplishments and good deeds was radically transformed because of the Gospel. Paul says a Christian is someone who (in trusting Christ) changes their entire way of looking at everything about themselves.

There are two ways to keep control of our lives: 1) the irreligious way ("Who knows if there is a God? I'm going to go live my own life"), and 2) the religious way ("I'm going to follow the rules and be better than other people"). The Gospel leads to a place where we can see that even "religion" is a way of trying to control our own salvation. When we truly become a Christian—born again in Christ—we actually realize, "My only resume is that which God gives me in Christ."

Righteousness is our greatest gift. A Christian is somebody who recognizes God gives us the perfect resume. Paul doesn't just say, "I want God's righteousness." He also says, "I want to be found in him." When Jesus is our righteousness, it changes everything about our lives. A Christian isn't a stoic who says, "I don't care about my spouse, friends, church, etc." A Christian is someone who knows we can still hurt, but Jesus transcends our hurt.

What is our righteousness before God? It is Christ and Him alone. We tend to create a "resume" in every area of life—jobs, relationships, religion—to prove our worth and gain acceptance. The Gospel offers us Christ's perfect righteousness as a gift, allowing us to find our identity in Him rather than in our accomplishments or failures.
