

Title	confidence in?	
Text	Philippians 3:1-4	
Date	21 February 2021	

The questions below are designed to be used by OCC LIFEGroups as they meet during the week following the Sunday morning message. The intent is not for groups to answer every question, but for leaders to use the questions as a guide as they tailor the discussion to the unique needs of their group.

The Sunday message and these questions can be found each week at occweb.org/sermons.

OVERVIEW

Paul continues to remind the church in Philippi of what it means to live faithfully in the world.

TEXT

V	NIV	The Message	Good News Translation
1	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.	And that's about it, friends. Be glad in God! I don't mind repeating what I have written in earlier letters, and I hope you don't mind hearing it again. Better safe than sorry—so here goes.	In conclusion, my friends, be joyful in your union with the Lord. I don't mind repeating what I have written before, and you will be safer if I do so.
2	Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh.	Steer clear of the barking dogs, those religious busybodies, all bark and no bite. All they're interested in is appearances—knife-happy circumcisers, I call them. The real believers are the ones the Spirit of God leads to work away at this ministry, filling the air with Christ's praise as we do it. We couldn't carry this off by our own efforts, and we know it—even though we can list what many might think are impressive credentials.	Watch out for those who do evil things, those dogs, those who insist on cutting the body.
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—		It is we, not they, who have received the true circumcision, for we worship God by means of his Spirit and rejoice in our life in union with Christ Jesus. We do not put any trust in external ceremonies.
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:		I could, of course, put my trust in such things. If any of you think you can trust in external ceremonies, I have even more reason to feel that way.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS.

Looking at the Text

- Read Philippians 3:1-4
- Are there words, phrases or ideas that pastor Mike used that you didn't understand?
- What is one thing that stuck out to you from the message?

Evangelist Billy Sunday once said, *"If you have no joy...there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere."*

- Circumstances, people, everyday problems, overwork, sin, doubt, disease, and chronic pain can all cause leaks in our joy.
- Paul used strong language as he instructed us to guard our joy. Paul told the Philippians to constantly rejoice. The verb tense indicates that it's meant to be an ongoing activity.
 - Joy has less to do with what is happening around you; it's what's inside you that brings joy.
 - Joy is not automatic; it's a learned response, a choice we make.
 - Joy was Paul's out-look because Jesus was his up-look. Joy centers on a spiritual reality: God is on His throne. Because of that truth, you can say, "I am joyful because I have a relationship with the Lord."

Paul spoke against those who mixed law and grace. He said:

- Legalists can be scavengers: "Beware of dogs" (v. 3)
- Legalists can be evil, but think they're doing good: "Beware of evil workers" (v. 3). Good works are a by-product of salvation, not its basis.
- Legalists can be destructive: "Beware of the mutilation" (v. 3). Legalists taught that circumcision, a work of the flesh, was vital to salvation. Legalism mutilates the grace of God and the work of Jesus Christ.
- The Apostle Paul warns against believing that faith plus specific actions or traditions are necessary to be a Christian.
 - What are some traditions you've noticed that are sometimes required for salvation?
 - Have you personally ever had a "Jesus plus" view of salvation?
 - Are there areas where you tend to lean toward legalism? How can you learn to lean back toward joy? What would you share with a fellow Christian who leans too heavily toward legalism? What Scriptures would you share concerning our freedom in Christ?

In verse 1, Paul described a true Christian believer:

- True follower: "we are the [true] circumcision."
Christians are those who have a true, inward cleansing, not a meaningless outward mark.
- True worshipers: "who worship God in the Spirit."
Worship is an inward attitude of the heart, taking an outward form: singing, prayer, etc.
- True celebrators: "boast in Christ Jesus."
Legalism boasts in its own works, minimizing the work of Jesus Christ.
- True believers: "have no confidence in the flesh."
The message of our world is to pull yourself up. The legalist message is to work your way to heaven. But the biblical message is that Jesus paid it all and all credit is His.
- To comprehend is to grasp something mentally, to understand it and follow it. Look over the above 4 points. In what ways do you comprehend them, or follow them? In what ways do you not—and how can you improve your comprehension as a follower, worshiper, celebrator, and believer? Consider 1 Corinthians 13 and Colossians 3:5-13.
 - Are there some areas in your life where you may find yourself "behaving" in order to "belong"?

PRAY WITH EACH OTHER

Pray that you and your group will live by Biblical truth, not by cultural myths.

THIS WEEK

Read the letter/book of Philippians – it's only 4 chapters.

- **Connect Up:** Jesus said that those who worship God must worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24). What did Jesus mean by spirit and truth. Would you agree with the following statement? "Unless there is a real passion for God, there is no worship in spirit. At the same time, worship must be 'in truth,' that is, properly informed. Unless we have knowledge of the God we worship, there is no worship in truth."
- **Connect In:** Within any given church, you will find both legalists and antinomianists (those who think they are not obligated to follow any law). How are Bible-believing Christians to strike a balance between these two extremes?
- **Connect Out:** When sharing the gospel with an unbeliever, how would you respond to the following charge? "All Christianity is about are a bunch of dos and don'ts; it's all about following a set of rules."