



# The Greatest Desire of a Christian's Life

By

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*Teaching Notes* are Bible studies we taught before GraceLife Ministries began publishing articles online in 1995. Some were presented as sermons, others as group studies.

Our hope is that these older studies will be a blessing to you in your life and ministry. Please use them in any way God leads you.

This study looks at what should be the greatest desire of every Christian.

[These notes are from a Bible study taught more than 40 years ago. The notes are in outline form.]

Phil. 3:8-11 (primary text – verse 10)

*“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”*

Note several words in this portion of Scripture.

In verse 8, underline or note the word “knowledge.”

Also in verse 8, underline or note the word “win.”

In verse 10, underline or note the words “know,” “power,” “resurrection,” “fellowship,” and “conformable.”

Let me now read this portion of Scripture from the Amplified version of the Bible.

*“But more than that, I count everything as loss compared to the priceless privilege and supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord [and of growing more deeply and thoroughly acquainted with Him—a joy unequaled]. For His sake I have lost everything, and I consider it all garbage, so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him [believing and*

*relying on Him], not having any righteousness of my own derived from [my obedience to] the Law and its rituals, but [possessing] that [genuine righteousness] which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith. And this, so that I may know Him [experientially, becoming more thoroughly acquainted with Him, understanding the remarkable wonders of His Person more completely] and [in that same way experience] the power of His resurrection [which overflows and is active in believers], and [that I may share] the fellowship of His sufferings, by being continually conformed [inwardly into His likeness even] to His death [dying as He did]; so that I may attain to the resurrection [that will raise me] from the dead.”*

## **I. Paul's desire – 3:10**

## **II. Paul's example – 3:17; 4:9**

## **III. Paul's words**

The expression “the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord” in verse 8 does not refer to the knowledge which the Lord Jesus possesses, but the knowledge of the Lord Jesus which Paul gained through the experience of intimate companionship and communion with Him.

Paul came to know His heart, His will, as one comes to know another through intimate fellowship and close association with that person. The distinctive Greek word for “knowledge” used here leads us to this interpretation.

The expression “that I may win Christ” does not refer to Paul’s acquisition of Christ as Savior, but to Paul’s appropriating into his life as a Christian the perfection, the graces, the fragrance of the Person of Christ. The word “win” is the translation of the same Greek word translated “gain” in verse seven.

In verse 10, the words “to know” are “to know by experience.” Paul wants to come to know the Lord Jesus in that fulness of experimental knowledge which is only wrought by being like Him.

Paul wants to know also by experience the same power which raised Christ from the dead surging through his own being, overcoming sin in his life and producing the Christian graces and fruit of the Spirit. The Greek word for “power” used here is the same one that is used in Romans 1:16, and means “that which overcomes resistance.”

The Greek word for “fellowship” here means “a joint participation” in the Lord’s sufferings for righteousness sake while on earth.

When these four things are true of Paul, namely to be discovered by men to be in Christ by the very life he lives, by coming to know Him better all the time, by experiencing the same power that raised Christ from the dead surging through his own being, and by becoming a joint-participant in His sufferings for righteousness sake, then Paul will constantly be made conformable to Christ’s death.

The words “made conformable” mean literally “to bring to the same form with some other person.” Paul’s desire was to be brought to the place where he would become, both as to his inner heart life and also as to the outward expression of the same, like his Lord with respect to His death, not merely His physical death which was for others, but His death to self; a self-emptying that was true of our

Lord not only in His act of becoming incarnate and of stooping to the death on the Cross, but also one that conditioned His entire earthly life and made it the beautiful life it was, a death to self, a denying of self for the blessing of others.

That is what Paul was striving for!

This is the greatest desire of any Christian! To be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

[Thank you for reading these teaching notes from more than 40 years ago. My prayer is they will be a blessing to you, your family and your ministry.]

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