

The Wrong Way to Be Right

The Road to Heaven Part 1
Philippians 3:1-10 7-3-2016

Summary: The question of how to be a good person is one of the (few) essentials of Christianity. It begins with rejoicing. Where you find your joy (and what you regard as a badge of honor) is fundamental to being righteous. Paul did not want a righteousness of his own, like the dogs in verse 2 who were legalists. Most people, religious and secular, take a legalistic approach to being a good person (follow a list of standards – the only thing that differs is the items on the list). But that doesn't work. Paul tried it, and found that not only was all his list keeping ineffective in making him a good person, but it made him a worse person in God's eyes. The right way to be right is by knowing Christ through faith.

Introduction.....	1
An Essential of Christianity	1
It's Not What You Think	2
Introduction to the Series	2
Rejoice!.....	3
In the Lord.....	4
Beware of Dogs.....	4
The Judaizers	4
Legalism.....	5
It Doesn't Work.....	5
Can't Make up for Sin.....	6
Debit.....	6
The Right Way to Be Right.....	7
It's Possible	7
The Answer: Knowing Christ	8
Conclusion	9
Application Questions (James 1:25)	9

Philippians 3:1 Finally, my brothers, 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, watch out for those men who do evil, watch out for the mutilation. 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who have put (perf) no confidence in the flesh— 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has 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 legalistic righteousness, faultless. 7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, 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 and is by faith. 10 I want to know Christ

Introduction

An Essential of Christianity

You could be wrong about most things in the Bible and still be a Christian. You could misinterpret Genesis 1 and be wrong about the age of the earth, you could be wrong about the rapture, or about

predestination or about the gift of tongues. You can be wrong about almost everything in the whole Bible, and still be saved. But there are a few things that are essentials – things that are so fundamental to the faith, that if you are wrong on those things, you're not a Christian. There aren't very many of those. I think you can list them on one side of one sheet of paper. So there aren't a lot of them, but one thing that is on the list is this: the right way to become a good person.

It's Not What You Think

If you are like most people, you're trying to be a good person. And not only are most people trying to be good, but most people have a sense that they are succeeding in that effort. When people come for counseling we have them fill out the form, and one of the questions asks, "What are you like? Describe yourself." And almost everyone starts out by saying, "I'm a good person."

So we are all trying to be good, but have you ever stopped to think about what your method is for trying to be good? How do you become good? If your answer to that question is wrong, that is catastrophic because that is not one of the things you can be wrong about and still be saved. The question of the right way to become good is definitely one of the essentials. And it's not what most people think. Most people, if you ask them, "How do you become a good person?" would give an answer that Jesus would say is dead wrong. Jesus Christ made a major point about this in his teaching. In Luke chapter 18 Jesus told a story about two men who came to the temple to pray to God, and the first one was exactly the type of person you would think of when you think of a really, really good person. He followed all the rules. The second guy was exactly the type of person you'd think of when you think of a really bad person. He had done some horrible things. And at the end of that story Jesus says this:

Luke 18:14 I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God.

Justified before God means to be good in God's sight. The morally filthy guy walked away good in God's sight, and the squeaky clean religious rule-keeper guy walked away not good in God's sight. And the reason Jesus made such a big deal about this is because whether or not you are good in God's sight will determine whether or not you go to heaven or hell when you die.

Now, some of you are probably sitting there thinking, "I know what he's getting at. The way to become good isn't by following all the rules. The way to become good in God's sight is to invite Jesus into your heart as your Lord and Savior." But that's not it either. Jesus taught that there will be a lot of people who have done that who will find out on Judgment Day that they are not saved.

Matthew 7:21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven ...22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

They thought they were good because they called Jesus Lord and spent their lives doing ministry in his name, and Jesus says, "No, you're evil," and they will be sent to hell forever.

Introduction to the Series

For those of you who are new, we have been studying through the book of Philippians, and today is a perfect day for you to be joining us, because last week we finished up chapter 2, and chapter 3 begins a whole new section. And Philippians chapter 3 is one of the clearest statements anywhere in the Bible about the road to heaven and the right way and wrong way to go about being a good person. So my prayer is that this series will accomplish two things. I hope to make the fundamentals of Christianity clear so that those who are not already born again will understand it and believe, and those of you who are already born again will have greater assurance of your salvation. So by the end of this series, if someone asked you, "If you were to die today, do you know for sure that you would go to heaven?" you would have no hesitation at all – "Yes, I know for sure that I would go straight to heaven."

No Self-Righteousness

Now, before we get started with verse one, I'll just tell you that if you really want to understand this chapter, the heart and soul of it is in verse 9 where Paul says something very striking:

9 [I want to] be found ... not having a righteousness of my own

He writes a whole chapter about how he really, really didn't want to have a righteousness of his own. That's a shocking statement. Now, it may not seem all that shocking to you because of the way our culture has changed the meaning of the word **righteous**. A lot of times people use the word righteous with a negative connotation – to describe someone who is puffed up with pride and thinks they are better than you and look down their nose at everyone. That is not what the word means. Righteousness is not a bad thing – it is a wonderful thing. To be righteous means to be good. Not to just think you're good – but to actually be good, and to have a good standing with God. It means to be the best version of you that benefits the most people and that fulfills your reason for existence and that pleases God. So when you see the word righteous in the Bible, just think *being a truly good person, not only in the eyes of people, but in God's eyes*. So that's what we all want – that's what we are all shooting for. Everyone wants to be a good person, which means everyone wants to be righteous in the good sense of the word. We all want that. And Paul says, "My big, driving desire is that I would not have a righteousness of my own. I don't want goodness that comes from me."

What does that even mean? If you can answer that question, then you have a handle on what Christianity is all about. And that is what this whole chapter is about, so I hope you can all be here for all the parts of the series, because this has an impact on your eternal destiny.

Rejoice!

Okay, so let's start with verse one - which is also something that might come as a shock. If you were about to write a chapter on how to become good in the eyes of God so that you could be assured that if you died today you would go to heaven, what would be the first thing you would say? Take a look at the first thing Paul says.

Philippians 3:1 Finally¹, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord!

If you want to know how to be a good person, the very first thing you need to know has to do with happiness. The word **rejoice** means to be happy and joyful and to express that happiness and joy. Now let's skip ahead to the end of this section.

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

The fundamentals of Christianity – the core of the faith, begins and ends with happiness. And not the shallow, fragile kind of happiness that comes from pleasant circumstances and then it's gone when things get hard. This is the deep, profound happiness that stays intact even through the most painful ordeals of life. So again, I hope you'll be able to be here for the whole series because your soul needs this kind of joy.

The Bible has a whole lot to say about this kind of joy, but the point here in this context is to show the connection between this happiness and being a good person in God's sight. It is impossible to be a good person without this happiness, and it is impossible to have this happiness without being a good person in God's sight. Righteousness and happiness are inseparable. The wrong approach to happiness will shipwreck your life and doom you forever, and the right approach to happiness will put you on the road to heaven.

¹ This word should not be translated **finally** here. It literally means, "and as for what remains..." And it is commonly used right in the middle of a letter just as a way of introducing a new topic. And that is what is happening here.

In the Lord

Everyone is going through life trying to be happy. But one of the core essentials of the Christian faith has to do with where you are looking to get your happiness from.

Philippians 3:1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord!

Everyone is looking for happiness, but very few people look for it in the right place. A Christian is someone whose joy in life comes from the Lord Jesus Christ. He says that again in verse 3.

3 For it is we ... who glory in Christ Jesus

That word translated glory is the same word translated **joy** back in 1:26.

1:25 ...I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow

So the word for joy in verse 25 is the same as the word rejoice in 3:1, and the word in 1:26 is the same as the word here in 3:3. So all that to say these two words are connected – the normal word for joy, and another word that means to place your confidence in something, and wear that thing as a badge of honor (that’s why they translate it “to glory”). We will say more about that in the weeks to come, but the point for now is that rejoicing in the Lord comes from leaning on him and counting on him. Counting on him for what? What does rejoicing in the Lord look like, exactly?

Beware of Dogs

To answer that question, Paul is going to start by showing us the opposite of rejoicing in the Lord. The opposite of rejoicing in the Lord is these dogs that Paul warns us about in verse 2.

2 Watch out for those dogs! Watch out for those men who do evil! Watch out for those mutilators of the flesh!

Wow, Paul, why don’t you tell us how you really feel? What is he so worked up about all of a sudden? His tone has been so warm and soft all through the book so far – and he goes back to that soft, warm tone for the rest of the book. This one verse is the only one where he is like this.

You might have expected some hard words back in chapter 1, when he was talking about those preachers who were trying to stir up trouble for Paul while he was in chains, actually going out of their way to hurt Paul. Fellow Christians, in the church, using their sermons to try to cause trouble for Paul while he was in prison. Most of us would get pretty worked up about something like that, but Paul didn’t. He didn’t call them dogs. He just says, “Yeah, they’re trying to hurt me, but what does it matter? I’m just glad they are preaching the gospel.” That’s how Paul usually is, so this verse really stands out. He not only calls them names, but he repeats the warning three times. For some reason they don’t translate it in the NIV, but in the Greek, the word for **watch out** is repeated all three times:

2 Watch out for those dogs! Watch out for those men who do evil! Watch out for those mutilators of the flesh!

Paul wrote **watch out** three times, and it should be translated three times so that we can see how earnest he is in warning them about these people.

The Judaizers

Who are these people and why does Paul call them evil-doing, flesh-mutilating dogs. Why is he so upset? He is upset because this is a group of people that ruined people’s lives and destroyed churches with their teachings.

They were a group of people that historians refer to as the Judaizers. They call them that because they were going around teaching that in order to be a good person, you had to live like a Jew. And living

like a Jew meant following certain Old Testament laws. They had a list of things you had to do, and #1 on the list was to become circumcised, because they believed that was what made someone Jewish.

The Judaizers considered themselves Christians. They believed that Jesus was the Messiah, and that he died on the cross for their sins. And the way to salvation was through Jesus Christ. But you also had to follow certain Old Testament ritualistic laws.

Legalism

That approach to being a good person – righteousness through rituals, or following a list of rules, is still to this day the most common approach that people take. If we wanted to put a label on it, we could call it *legalism*. Becoming a good person, or trying to be right with God, through following some set of laws, or rules. Legalists put their confidence in their religious observance. They have a righteousness of their own. They think, “I’m a good person in God’s eyes because I go to church every Sunday, I got baptized, I put money in the offering...” Or in the Catholic Church, “I’m a good person because I go to mass and I say the Hail Mary’s and I stay away from all the taboos.” Or for a Muslim, “I’m a good person because I bow down and pray toward Mecca five times a day, and I follow the rules in the Quran.” Or for a Buddhist, “I put up my prayer flags and I follow the eightfold path.” Or the new-ager, “I try to align myself with the universe and I stay true to myself.”

And here is what most people fail to realize: it doesn’t have to be connected to any formal religion. Most secular people in our culture – even atheists and agnostics and naturalists take this exact same approach. They don’t consider themselves religious, but they are just as legalistic. They think they are so different from the religious people who believe in God. But in reality, they are following just a slightly modified version of the same religious system. The only difference is the people in formal religions have what I’ll call hard legalism, and others have soft legalism. Hard legalism has a very specific list of standards that are written down in a book, and it is the same for everyone in that religious system.

Soft legalism has a more general list of mostly unwritten rules. But they are rules nonetheless. Hard legalism says, “Don’t drink, don’t smoke, don’t chew, don’t go with the girls who do – don’t watch these kinds of movies or listen to that music, go to church every week, etc.” And the hard legalist thinks he’s a good person because he follows all those rules.

The soft legalist says, “I’m a nice person. I’m friendly, I don’t cheat anyone, I don’t do drugs, I give money to the Salvation Army Santa Claus guy in front of Walmart each year – I’m a good person!” It is exactly the same system – just different rules. Maybe it’s meditation, or some kind of prayer ritual, maybe it’s living up to the standards your parents gave you: Don’t trash the environment, be loyal to your family and friends, get educated, raise the minimum wage, recycle, make sure you vote (and you can vote for whoever you want, unless you vote for that *other* party – then you’re scum). They would never admit they think that way, because they like to imagine that they are open minded, but as soon as they find out you are aligned with that other political party, the one they don’t like, you are automatically in the “bad person” category in their mind. Why? Because voting the way they do is part of their resume for being a good person. It’s on their list. If you vote differently, you have to be a bad person – otherwise their system for being a good person falls apart.

It Doesn’t Work

Everyone thinks being a good person is all about picking the best list and then sticking to that list. But the Bible exposes the fatal flaw in that – the fatal flaw in every religion, every code of ethics, every method of trying to be a good person by following rules – hard or soft. And that flaw ... should be obvious. The flaw is this: it doesn’t work. Making yourself good by keeping a list of standards doesn’t work. It doesn’t actually make you a good person. And deep down, we all know this. We know it’s not working. That’s why we have to work so hard to try to convince ourselves we’re good. When people fill out the form, the first thing they want to say is, “I’m a good person, I’m a good person,” like if we say it enough times it will somehow be true. But the reason we have such a hard time convincing ourselves that

it's true is because it's not true. And it is obvious that it's not true. Whatever your list is – even if you are one of those people who has come up with a really, really easy list with hardly anything on it, still – you've broken it. Haven't you? You've done things that even your easy list says not to do. And you failed to do things that even your easy list says you're supposed to do. And that didn't just happen once or twice in your life; it's happened thousands of times.

There are some people who have only one thing on their list. They have the easiest list in the world. According to them, there is only one thing that they need to do in order to be a good person: *don't judge*. That's the only moral law – don't ever pass judgment on anyone. Anything else is fair game. And yet what do those people do every time they see judgmental people? They pass judgment on them. They look down on those people because those people are so judgmental. And by looking down on them, they are breaking the only rule on their whole list!

No matter how short your list is, and no matter how easy it is, no form of legalism works. That's the whole point of the first two chapters of the book of Romans. No matter what your standard is, no matter what list you have – whether you have the law of God in your hands, or you have never heard of the Bible and you are going by whatever is in your conscience – whatever your standard is, that standard will do nothing but expose you as a bad person. It will never make you a good person.

Can't Make up for Sin

And so we come up with ridiculous solutions like, “Well, I realize I've done bad things in the past, but I'm making up for that now.” But think about how silly that is. How could doing what I'm supposed to do now make up for not doing what I was supposed to do before? If I murder somebody today, and then tomorrow I go all day long without murdering anybody, and even help an old lady across the street, does it suddenly make me innocent? No, I'm still guilty – I'm still a murderer, and I will be guilty of that crime until the day I die no matter how many good deeds I try to do. There is absolutely nothing we can do about our past evils. Nor is there anything we can do to change the thing inside us that is so messed up that causes us to do these evil things.

Jeremiah 13:23 ... Can the leopard change its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.

You and I did all the bad things we've done because of something messed up inside us, and we don't have the ability to change our nature.

That is why Paul made that comment in verse 9 about not wanting to have the righteousness of his own that comes from the law. He didn't want to have a righteousness of his own because he knew from experience that a righteousness of his own was inadequate. It would be tainted with that thing inside him that's messed up.

The problem with every religion in the world, and the problem with every nonreligious ethical system in the world are all the same – none of it can do anything about the problem of our sin. No adherence to any list can make you a good person. Nothing you can do could ever make you acceptable in God's sight. Legalism can never make you a good person. All it can do is condemn you as a bad person.

Debit

In fact, not only does following a list not make you a good person, it actually makes you even worse than you already were. Starting in verse 5 Paul describes how good he used to be at keeping the Jewish list.

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 legalistic righteousness, faultless.

That is as good as it is possible for a Jewish resume to get. He had every one of those Judaizers beat at their own game. He's like, "You guys are amateurs at this legalism stuff." Nobody was better at following all those Jewish rules than he was. And back in the day, he was just like them. He thought all those things were like credits in his profit column. Legalists know they can't be perfect, so usually they just figure that if the good stuff over in the profit column outweighs the bad stuff in his life, then that makes them a good person. That's why they think they can make up for some debits in the past by adding in a bunch of credits through good deeds. But then look what Paul came to realize:

7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss

He's looking at his spiritual P&L - profit and loss form, or his balance sheet - and he suddenly realizes that everything that he had in the profit column actually belongs in the loss column. Can you imagine if you found out that every paycheck you've taken to the bank turned out not to be a check, but a bill? So instead of that much money going into your account each week, it was drawing that much out? So you thought you had \$50,000 in the bank, and suddenly you discover it's a \$50,000 debt.

That is the reality that legalists don't understand. It's not that all their good deeds aren't quite enough - not quite enough in the profit column. No, the pluses are actually negatives. So Paul says, "Not only were all those things failing to make me a good person, but they were making me a worse person." Legalism doesn't make you good; it turns you into a dog. It will make you a dog, an evildoer, and, as a bonus, it will also destroy your joy in life.

The Right Way to Be Right

Okay, so all of that shows us the wrong way to be right; what's the right way to be right? If rule-keeping makes you worse in God's eyes instead of better, and it prevents you from having the deep, empowering, life-giving kind of happiness that God designed your soul to crave, where does that leave us? He has just wiped out every religious system for being a good person, and every nonreligious system for being a good person - what's left?

Some of you are sitting there waiting for me to give you yet another list. You just can't conceive of any way of being a good person without following some list of standards, and you are sure the answer is going to be, "The right way to be a good person is to do this and this and this" and it's just going to be some new list.

But the answer is not in a list of standards - get this - not even God's standards. Does God have a list of standards - a list of what's right and what's wrong? Yes. It's his law, and it is in the Bible. But if we try to make ourselves good people by following even that list, and if we try to make ourselves acceptable to God through our performance even using God's own law, we will become dogs.

It's Possible

So is it even possible to get to the point where you are a good person - not just a good person in your own sight so you feel really good about yourself (there are criminals who feel good about themselves) - but is it possible to actually be a good person - in God's sight? Yes. Look at verse 3.

3 For it is we who are the circumcision

We will have to wait until next time to unpack all the significance of that statement, but the bottom line is just simply that Paul is saying, "We are actually what those dogs are trying to be, namely, the true people of God. The people who are actually righteous and good in God's sight." Wow, that's quite the claim. What makes you and the Philippian church so good and righteous, Paul? Is it because you finally got really good at keeping the right list? No. Look what else he says. He gives four descriptions, and there isn't time today to look at all of them, but just look at the last one:

3 ... who put no confidence in the flesh

The truly righteous people put no confidence in themselves when it comes to being a good person. Zero confidence in external rituals or religious observance, and zero confidence in their own rule-keeping. No confidence in those things, and yet, Paul is super-confident in something. There is no doubt in his mind that if he died right then he would go straight to heaven. He is absolutely sure that he is right before God. He has lots and lots and lots of confidence that he's saved, but not one bit of that confidence comes from his performance morally or in religious observance. So where does it come from?

That is what this whole chapter is going to explain to us. I hope all of you can be here in the weeks to come as we work step-by-step through this chapter so that the answer to that question is crystal clear in our minds by the time we get to the end. There isn't anything you could ever study more important than this.

The Answer: Knowing Christ

And so in our closing moments, let me just give you a little bit of a preview of the answer he's going to give us. Paul has made it clear what he doesn't want. He doesn't want a righteousness of his own that comes from keeping a list of standards. So if that is what he doesn't want, what is it that he does want?

10 I want to know Christ

That is the way. That is the right method. That's the road to heaven, that's the way to true righteousness and goodness. And that's the way to joy. Not just calling him Lord, not just inviting him into your heart, not just being pro-Jesus, but actually *knowing* him. There's one thing that can make you a good person, and it's not doing something; it's knowing someone. Knowing Christ.

"Oh, that's no problem – I know all about Jesus Christ. I'm informed; I've studied his life, I know all about Jesus Christ."

No – not just knowing about Christ. Knowing Christ – knowing him personally.

The fact that God is personal means he can be known – not just known about, but known as a person - like you know your husband or wife or best friend. We know *about* ideas and philosophies and abstractions, but to know someone personally is different. Knowing a person means you have greater access to that person than those who do not know him. It means personal interactions with him are a part of your life. It means that person being unhappy with you or pleased with you matters to you. It means you know what he is like, how he thinks and behaves, what he loves and hates, how he feels, and what he desires. And knowing Jesus Christ is the most important thing in the universe.

Jeremiah 9:23 This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, 24 but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD.

Paul knew that he was not a good person. He was a terrible person. He was guilty of doing all kinds of horrible things, even while he was keeping his list, and he knew there was absolutely nothing he could do to change that. But what he discovered is that there is one good person - just one. Jesus Christ. He is the only one who never sinned, never did anything bad, and never failed to do a good thing that he was supposed to do. He is the only perfect human thing to ever walk the face of this earth. And what Paul discovered was that the only way Paul could ever become an actual good person, was by being identified with Jesus Christ in God's sight. That is what he means by a righteousness that is not his own. It is Christ's. It is an alien righteousness that comes from someone else that is credited to Paul's account. Paul knew that when Judgment Day arrived, his only hope would be if right at that moment when Paul was to be judged, Jesus Christ stepped up beside Paul and pulled him close and said to God the Father, "This guy is with me." That is his only chance of being accepted and loved by a perfectly just, perfectly holy judge who hates evil. That is what Paul means when he says **I want to know Christ**. He wants to know him that way – with a personal relationship that is so close that he is actually identified with Christ in God's sight.

Conclusion

And how does that happen? How does a person get that kind of relationship with Jesus Christ? Back to the confidence and joy thing. You simply stop putting your confidence in your list, stop putting your confidence in your religious performance, stop putting your confidence in your spirituality or your heritage or your upbringing or your track record, and put it 100% in Jesus Christ. And stop looking to things in this world for your joy and happiness, and look to Jesus Christ alone to satisfy the cravings of your soul. Count on him to satisfy every craving your soul has.

The Bible calls that “faith,” and it is the only way to have this kind of relationship with God. And the moment you do that, all your sins and evils will be credited to Jesus’ account, which is why he was punished so severely by God the Father on the cross. He was being punished in our place – in the place of anyone who comes to know him. And not only will your evil be credited to his account, but his perfect purity and goodness will be credited to your account, so that you will be truly good in the sight of God. You will be a good person. You will have a goodness and righteousness that isn’t your own – it’s Christ’s.

Now I know that might raise more questions in your mind than it answers. If being good means being associated with Jesus, why is the Bible full of laws and commands? Where do they come in? Should I be trying to obey those or not? And when it comes to the Old Testament laws, why does Paul condemn these people for wanting to require laws like circumcision, which God did command in the Old Testament, and then turns right around and says we are supposed to follow other Old Testament law, like loving God or loving your neighbor as yourself? That’s a huge question, because a lot of people accuse Christians of picking and choosing. That is one of the biggest talking points for those who are against Christianity in our culture. They say, “You condemn homosexuality because of the Bible, but you don’t obey the Bible when it says to stone people to death, so you’re a hypocrite.” Why is it that we hold some Old Testament laws as binding and others non-binding? And how do we pick which are which?

What is the purpose of God’s law? And how does God want us to respond to it?

Those are some of the questions we will plan on dealing with next time, as well as going deeper into this concept of knowing Christ and exactly what that looks like. But you don’t have to wait until then to know Christ. You can put your confidence in him right here and now, right where you’re sitting. If you would like to know more about this, please feel free to talk to me afterwards, or any of our other leaders.

Benediction: Ephesians 6:23 Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

Application Questions (James 1:25)

- 1) If you were to die today, do you know for sure that you would go to heaven? Why or why not?
- 2) If you are a believer and you can remember your conversion, share the story with the group.
- 3) What “list” do you find yourself most prone to reverting to in order to be accepted by God?
- 4) How would you describe the degree of closeness in your relationship with Jesus Christ right now?