

# PHILIPPIANS

## UNSHAKEABLE FAITH

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### STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, March 16, 2025

**Teaching Title:** Unshakeable Focus

**Key Scripture:** Philippians 3:1–14

#### 5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

**Monday:** Philippians 3:1–14

**Tuesday:** Isaiah 43:14–28

**Wednesday:** Romans 5:1–11

**Thursday:** Romans 8

**Friday:** Psalm 27

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's word, what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

#### MEMORY TOPIC:

Looking Forward

#### MEMORY VERSE:

Philippians 3:13 NLT

No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead,

#### LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

##### Introduction:

In Philippians 3, the tone of the letter changes somewhat unexpectedly. Paul transitions from highlighting the beautiful example of Christ's humility, as well as how Timothy and Epaphroditus are great models of this humility, to warning the church about those preaching a false gospel. He then explains how he could place confidence in his own history and achievements, but instead chooses to place his confidence solely in Christ and what He has done for us. Paul has learned to leave the past behind and press on toward the future God has for Him. Nothing is more valuable than knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection! Similarly, if we hold on to our past successes and failures, it will hinder our progress in faith. We must remain intentional in our relationship with Christ. The past is a reference, not a residence.

##### Questions:

Icebreaker—What's your favorite childhood memory?

1. Read Philippians 3:1–14 together as a group. From what we see here, describe the false gospel that the Philippians need to watch out for. How were they distorting the gospel? (see Digging Deeper)
2. Why do you think Paul was so tolerant of the rival preachers in 1:15–18, yet intolerant of these rival preachers in 3:2? What is the difference between the two situations?
3. As Paul continues his argument, in 3:5–6, he gives his "stats sheet." What do we learn about Paul's history here? In 3:7–8, how does Paul view that history? (Note that he repeats himself in 3:7–8—what does he repeat, and what is he trying to communicate?)
4. In what ways do you think the enemy uses your past against you? How can you combat this spiritually?
5. In 3:10–11, what is Paul's overwhelming passion, and what is he willing to endure to attain it? How does this challenge you in your own life? (see Notes)

6. Is there something in your past that you need to release to God? Are you holding on to certain parts of your past resume? What would it look like to release these things?
7. What is your next step? What do you need to do to move forward?

## Notes

Question 5: Philippians 3:10—I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised Him from the dead.

- Paul wants to know Christ and experience the power that raised Him from the dead
- “Know” in Greek is *ginosko* (ghin-occe'-ko). It means “to know”. However, it implies a knowledge that's gained through experience or personal relationships.
- Paul is not saying, “I want to know *about* Jesus. He's saying, “I want to know Him, I want to have a relationship with Him, I want to *experience* this Jesus!”
- Isn't that ultimately what we want?

## Digging Deeper

In 3:2 Paul warns his readers to beware of a group whom he describes variously as “those dogs... those people who do evil... those who mutilate say you must be circumcised to be saved.”

Who were these people?

“He draws a contrast between them and Christians who are ‘the circumcision’, i.e. ‘the true circumcision’. He suggests that the people whom he is opposing put their confidence in the physical, namely on the marks of Jewish piety and zeal. Later on he puts himself forward as an example to follow, and he warns against people who are enemies of the cross, ‘who make appetite their god’ and ‘take pride in what should bring shame’ (3:19 REB).

Three things are said about them:

1. ‘Dogs’ was an insulting term used by Jews for Gentiles. It is generally thought that Paul is throwing it back at Jews who were attacking his gospel with its insistence that Gentiles did not need to be circumcised or keep the Jewish law.
2. Elsewhere Paul uses the term ‘workers’ to signify his missionary colleagues. ‘The evil workers’ refers to missionaries of whom Paul disapproved. They were probably not native members of the church at Philippi but were part of a group of travelling missionaries who followed in Paul's footsteps. But it is not clear where the group had actually visited Philippi. There is no indication that any of the members of the church had succumbed to their teaching. They appear to be a potential danger, but nevertheless one that needed to be strongly guarded against.
3. ‘Those who mutilate the flesh’ is a bitter pun in Greek on ‘circumcisers’. These were people who practiced circumcision as a Jewish rite, or else Paul would not contrast it with the Christian circumcision in the next verse. In all probability they urged circumcision upon Gentile Christians.”

—I. Howard Marshall, Stephen Travis, Ian Paul. *Exploring the New Testament: A Guide to the Letters & Revelation*. Page 134