

# Philippians 3:7-8 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[Philippians 3:1](#)  
[Philippians 3:2](#)  
[Philippians 3:3](#)  
[Philippians 3:4](#)  
[Philippians 3:5](#)  
[Philippians 3:6](#)  
[Philippians 3:7](#)  
[Philippians 3:8](#)  
[Philippians 3:9](#)  
[Philippians 3:10](#)  
[Philippians 3:11](#)  
[Philippians 3:12](#)  
[Philippians 3:13](#)  
[Philippians 3:14](#)  
[Philippians 3:15](#)  
[Philippians 3:16](#)  
[Philippians 3:17](#)  
[Philippians 3:18](#)  
[Philippians 3:19](#)  
[Philippians 3:20](#)  
[Philippians 3:21](#)

**Philippians 3:7** But whatever things were (3SIAI) gain to me, those things I have counted (1SRPI) as loss for the sake of Christ ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [\[alla\] hatina en \(3SIAI\) moi kerde. tauta hegemaí \(1SRPI\) dia ton Christon zemian](#)

**Amplified:** But whatever former things I had that might have been gains to me, I have come to consider as [aone combined] loss for Christ's sake. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Lightfoot:** All such things which I used to count up as distinct items with a miserly greed and reckon to my credit—these I have massed together under one general head as loss.

**Phillips:** Yet every advantage that I had gained I considered lost for Christ's sake. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** But whatever things were to me a gainful asset, these things I have considered a loss when it comes to my acquisition of Christ, and still so consider them. (Eerdmans)

**Young's Literal:** But what things were to me gains, these I have counted, because of the Christ, loss;

**BUT WHATEVER THINGS WERE GAIN: alla atina en (3SIAI) moi kerde:**

- Ge 19:17 Ge 19:26; Job 2:4; Pr 13:8; 23:23; Mt 13:44, 45, 46 16:26; Lk 14:26,33; 16:8; 17:31 17:32 17:33; Acts 27:18; 27:19 27:38 Gal 2:15 2:16; 5:2, 3, 4, 5
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those things which were profit to me (BBE)

But Christ has shown me that what I once thought was valuable is worthless (CEV)

These things that I once considered valuable (GWT)

whatever things were assets to me (ISV)

All such things which I used to count up as distinct items with a miserly greed and reckon to my credit—these I have massed together under one general head as loss. (Lightfoot)

**But (alla)** marks a definite and striking contrast between the before/after picture of who Paul was in the flesh versus who (and whose) he was now is in Christ. See discussion of importance of observing **terms of contrast**.

**Paul** is saying "I saw that all my acts of (self) righteousness were nothing on which I could depend for salvation; and that Christ crucified could alone profit me; for I have come to understand that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin.

**Whatever things were gain** - The apostle still speaks from his old standpoint—they were objects of gain, inasmuch as and so long as they were believed to secure acceptance with God. The **zemia** is opposed

**Whatever things** are similar to the "**things**" Paul warned the Colossians about (keeping certain days, abstaining from certain foods, performing certain ascetic practices, etc) declaring that "*these are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence*" (Col 2:23-note) because they were external works that produced no internal heart change.

**Gain** (2771) (**kerdos** [word study]) is an accounting term that means **profit** (excess of returns over expenditure in a transaction). The meaning is that which is gained or earned. **Kerdos** also refers to an **advantage** or any kind of benefit. In the plural (as in this verse = literally "gains") **kerdos** usually referred to money in secular Greek uses.

**TDNT** writes that " **kerdos** means "gain," "advantage," "profit," with the desire for it as a derived sense, also crafty counsels in the plural. ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

**NIDNTT** adds that **kerdos** "more rarely (was) used in Gk. for clever advice, cunning attacks; and in the plural (meaning) deceit, a frequent meaning from Homer onwards. The opposite of **kerdos** is **zemia**, disadvantage, loss, and (occasionally) punishment. The opposite of **kerdaino** is accordingly **zemioomai**, suffer loss, attested only after Homer. These contrasting pairs are brought together in Matt. 16:26 and Phil. 3:7. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

Paul used **kerdos** in the preceding section to emphasis that

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is **gain** ( **kerdos**) (Php 1:21-note)

The only other NT use of **kerdos** is in Titus...

**Titus 1:11** (note) who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid **gain (kerdos)**.

Paul now repeats this bookkeeping metaphor using the noun form, **gain (kerdos)**, in this verse and then the verb form, **gain (kerdaino)** to describe one side of the ledger. He uses **loss** here and twice in 3:8 for the other side of the ledger. When Paul met Christ a wonderful "business transaction" took place and he came to realize how futile and worthless were his "good" works to achieve God's standard of righteousness (**filthy rags** of Isa 64:6-note).

Paul lost some things, but he gained much more than he lost, for in Christ

are hidden **all the treasures** of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:3-note)!

**Remember Lot's wife?** She was unwilling to count her **gain** as **loss** and so she **lost** everything. She ignored the angelic warning

Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away." (Ge 19:17)

Instead of obeying this clear warning she

looked back, and she became a pillar of salt (Ge 19:26)

**Jesus** Himself called on all who have ears to hear to

**Remember** (present imperative = command to keep remembering her "lot") Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. (Luke 17:32, 33)

**Jesus** gave similar warnings to His disciples declaring that

If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his **own** father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his **own life**, he cannot be **My disciple**." (Lk 14:26)

"So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions." (Lk 14:33) (bolding added for emphasis)

**Jim Elliott** missionary martyr had the same attitude as Paul writing that

He is no fool to give what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

#### THOSE THINGS I HAVE COUNTED AS LOSS FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST: tauta hegemai (1SRMI) dia ton Christon zemian:

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I now consider worthless for Christ (GWT)

**Spurgeon** comments that...

when we come to Christ, whatever we have to trust to, we must put away. We must write it on the other side of the ledger. We had entered it as a gain; now we must set it down as a loss; it is of no value whatsoever, it is a loss if it shall tempt us to trust any less in Christ.

Paul's faith in Jesus reversed all his former estimates, 'so that his gains he counted to be losses. He thought it so much the worse, concerning zeal, to have persecuted the church, and so much to his injury to have imagined that he was blameless in the presence of God.

**Those things** (5023) (**tauta**) is emphatic. Paul is saying in essence "these, yes these things". What things? Those things just mentioned such as physical circumcision. In a similar reminder Paul wrote to the Galatians who were being tempted to add law and works to justification by faith --

Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive **circumcision**, Christ will be of no benefit to you (if you are placing your "faith" in your "work" of circumcision). And I testify again to every man who receives **circumcision**, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who **are seeking to be justified by law**, you have fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit, **by faith**, are waiting for the hope of righteousness." (Gal 5:2, 3, 4, 5)

**I have counted** (2233)(**hegeomai**) is a mathematical term which says "Think about it and come to a conclusion." In the account book of Paul's life (so to speak) his entries on the **gain** side were transferred to the **loss** side. They were not merely useless, they were detrimental. After reflection (now with the mind of Christ) he considered them worthless.

**Hegemai** - 28x in 27v - Matt 2:6; Luke 22:26; Acts 7:10; 14:12; 15:22; 26:2; 2 Cor 9:5; Phil 2:3, 6, 25; 3:7f; 1 Thess 5:13; 2Th 3:15; 1 Tim 1:12; 6:1; Heb 10:29; 11:11, 26; 13:7, 17, 24; Jas 1:2; 2 Pet 1:13; 2:13; 3:9, 15. NAS = chief(1), consider(3), considered(2), considering(1), count(4), counted(1), esteem(1), governor(1), leader(1), leaders(3), leading(1), led(1), regard(5), regarded(1), Ruler(1), thought(2).

**Counted** is in the **perfect tense** which means that Paul made this accounting at a point in time in the past and that he still considered them as a loss. One could paraphrase it as follows...

These things I have set down as loss, and do so still.

The **perfect tense** here contrasts with his use of the **present tense** for the same verb ("**count**") in the next verse.

Jesus alluded to this same thought when He declared

what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? " (Mt 16:26)

**Loss** (2209)(**zemia**) describes the state of coming into a worsened situation from previous advantage. Thus **zemia** is translated as damage, disadvantage, loss, forfeit. In Herodotus **zemia** usually meant 'punishment' but in the NT it is only used of in reference to suffering the loss of something, with the implication of sustaining hardship or suffering.

In ancient Greek manuscripts **zemia** referred to commercial or business losses.

**TDNT** writes that **zemia** meant "Disadvantage (which) may take the form of monetary or material "loss" or "damage." It may also be moral or spiritual in the sense of "hurt" or "ruin," with a subjective nuance of "unpleasantness." Legally **zemia** early takes on the sense of "penalty" and **zemioo** "to punish." ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Eerdmans](#))

**NIDNTT** - The opposite of **kerdos** is **zemia**, disadvantage, loss, and (occasionally) punishment. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

Other than **Phil 3:7,8**, there are only 2 other Scriptural uses of **zemia**...

(The ship carrying Paul to Rome to stand trial, encountered a deadly storm, prompting Paul to declare), "Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be attended with damage (hubris) and great **loss (zemia)**, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives." (Acts 27:18)

Paul stood up in their midst and said, "Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete, and incurred this damage and **loss (zemia)** (Acts 27:21)

A similar historical illustration of "counting it all loss" is told of the Spanish explorer Hernando Cortez. After landing at Vera Cruz, Mexico in 1519 he was so intent on conquest that to assure the devotion of his men, Cortez set fire to his fleet of eleven ships! With no means of retreat Cortez's army had only one direction to move, into the Mexican interior. Cortez understood the price of commitment—and he was willing to pay it for a temporal, earthly treasure. Paul in contrast was willing to give up the earthly for the heavenly. **Am I? Are you?**

**For the sake of Christ** - This means "on account of Christ" or "because of the fact of Christ" (Vine)

**Eadie** explains **for the sake of Christ** as signifying "what was once gain was now reckoned loss, either because it did not commend him to Christ, or what was held as something won was regarded now as loss, for it did not enable to win Christ, nay, kept him from winning Christ. When he won, he was losing; nay, the more he won, the more he must lose. All his advantages in birth, privilege, sect, earnestness, and obedience, were not only profitless, but productive of positive loss, as they prevented the gaining of Christ, and of justification through the faith of Christ. ([Philippians 3 Commentary - Online](#))

In Paul's great renunciation, he gives us his own "Profit and Loss Statement" with **"those things"** in the preceding verses that had been gain to him, "writing" on one side of the ledger and "writing" on the other side the single word **Christ**. Paul's point is that all of man's glory amounts to nothing when compared with the glorious treasure which is found in Christ Alone. Where is your treasure... for

where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Mt 6:19, 20, 21-see notes Mt 6:19; 20; 21)

On the Damascus Road Paul had the unspeakable privilege of seeing the glory of the Risen Lord (Acts 9:3), and from that moment on all other **glories** seemed like nothing in comparison.

**McGee** - On the credit side of the ledger Paul had been adding up his background and his character and his religion. It seemed like an impressive list—and it was, on the human plane. Suddenly it all became a debit—he no longer trusted in those things because he met Jesus Christ. He had hated Him before and was on the way to Damascus to persecute His followers, but now the One on the debit side was moved to the credit side. He put his entire trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, my friend, if the bookkeeping system of this country were transformed like that, it would upset the economy of the world. It would be a revolution. Actually, any conversion is a revolution because what things are gain become a loss, and loss becomes gain. It turns you upside down and right side up. It gets you in an altogether different position. That is what conversion is. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

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**I Have Everything** - Philippians 3:1-12 - I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. -- Philippians 3:8

The airline had mangled Debbie's luggage. Then her purse disappeared. Instead of entering the airport through an enclosed corridor, she stumbled off the plane in the pouring rain. She was drenched, far from home with no money, no identification, and no dry clothes.

Under normal conditions Debbie would have been furious, but that night it didn't matter. She had just survived the crash of Flight 1420 in Little Rock, Arkansas. "When I walked off that plane," Debbie said, "I walked off with nothing, then I stopped and thought, I have everything." She had suddenly realized that her life was more important than all she had lost.

It sometimes takes a dramatic turn of events to alter our perspective. That was true for Saul of Tarsus. He had treasured his hard-earned reputation for "righteousness" more than anything in the world (Phil. 3:4-6). But when he met Christ on the Damascus road

(Acts 9:1-6), his whole outlook changed. Later he wrote, "What things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ" (Phil. 3:7).

Yielding our sinful pride and self-sufficiency to the Lord may seem as if we are losing everything. But only then will we discover that to have life in Christ is to have everything. —David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We think we have what matters most  
Of what this life can give;  
But when we yield it all to Christ,  
We've just begun to live. —DJJ

**When we have nothing left but Christ  
We find that Christ is enough.**

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**WHEN ALL IS LOST** - Philippians 3:7-14 - What things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. —Philippians 3:7

I was rummaging around my son's garage and found all the trophies he had won in his years of athletic competition. There they were in a box—about to be thrown out.

I thought of the blood, sweat, and tears that had gone into gaining those awards, yet now he was putting them in the trash. They no longer had any value to him.

It reminded me of a whimsical children's poem by Shel Silverstein called "Hector the Collector." It describes all the things that Hector collected over the years. He "loved them more than shining diamonds, loved them more than glistenin' gold." Then Hector called to all his friends, "Come and share my treasure trunk!" And all the people "came and looked and called it junk."

So it will be at the end of our lives. All our possessions—the things we've spent a lifetime working for—will be nothing but junk. That's when we'll surely know that the best things in life are not things.

But we can have the right perspective now, as Paul did. "What things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ" (Philippians 3:7). We can keep a proper attitude about our possessions, because we possess the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord.—David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold,  
I'd rather be His than have riches untold;  
I'd rather have Jesus than anything  
This world affords today. —Miller  
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**Our greatest riches are the riches we have in Christ.**

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**F B Meyer in his devotional commentary on Philippians...**

### **SELLING ALL TO BUY THE PEARL**

Phil 3:4-9

The Pearl of Great Price. In one of His most exquisite parables, our Saviour depicted a man leaving his house in the morning with a heavy bag of gold, and making his way to the market-place, where pearl-sellers displayed the precious ocean gems. He was seeking goodly pearls, and passed from stall to stall with the eye and touch of the connoisseur; but from each stall he turned away dissatisfied. At last he approached one of the sellers, and saw before him on the tray the most exquisite, perfect, and transparent pearl that his eyes had ever lit on. Asking the price, he discovered that it would take all the pearls he had bought, and all the gold in his pouch, to procure it. On starting, he had meant to get the pearls and keep his house and estate, but he learnt that to win that he must sell even these; and so pearls and gold, home and heritage, were all gladly parted with, that that one most priceless jewel might be his own. And always afterwards, when the purchase was concluded, though he was homeless and solitary, the fact that he had got that pearl more than compensated him; he counted all things else but loss.

When our Lord spoke that marvellously beautiful parable, He must have had Saul of Tarsus in His eye--a man with a rich religious nature, capable of an infinite hunger after God, who passed from one stall to another amid the religions of the world, seeking for the best. But finally, when he came where the gem of heaven and earth and sea, the pearl of great price, lay, translucent and

glistening, he gladly sacrificed all he possessed to win it; and in this marvellous paragraph he tells us that he counted all things else as loss and refuse compared with Jesus Christ. Oh, that we may understand the superlative excellence of Jesus, and turn from everything that would divide our heart with Him!

### **NOTICE HOW THE APOSTLE USES THE POWER OF CONTRAST**

There are many ways by which we set forth the value of any possession. We may speak of its rarity; dilate upon its quality; or we may set it in contrast with things that men value. Let us look upon these contrasts, so enhancing "the Pearl."

### **THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST AND THE PRACTICE OF JUDAISM**

(1) He contrasted "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" with the ancient and holy system of Judaism. The Apostle speaks of Judaism with profound reverence and affection. His was not a profane and irreverent soul, that could speak ruthless words about the holy system, which, for so many centuries, had satisfied his forefathers, and which, in his own early life, had been so treasured and dear. He never could forget that the architecture of Judaism had been given by God on Sinai's Mount; that the ritualism of the Tabernacle had been wrought out in the laboratory of the Divine mind; that the breath of God had quivered upon the lips of its prophets, and His fire burnt upon the hearts of its seers. He never could forget the generations of holy souls which in Judaism had found their solace, their inspiration, and their comfort; and therefore, with reverent, loving, and tender words, he spoke about that hoary system. What though the light of evening was now shining upon the hills of Zion! What though, ere long, Jerusalem itself must lie beneath the foot of the invader! Still Judaism was dear to him. But contrasted with Jesus Christ, and with that new view of God that Jesus Christ had brought, in which the veil was torn away, and the soul stood face to face with incarnate Deity, Judaism with all its sacred sanctions was but so much loss.

### **CHRIST AND SACRAMENTAL GRACE**

(2) He contrasted the knowledge of Christ, next, with the virtue of sacramental efficacy. He mentions, first, the sacrament of circumcision. He says: "Circumcision was administered to me, not in mature life, as to a Gentile proselyte, but in my infancy. On the eighth day I received the initial rite, the badge of the Jew, the seal of the covenant." He made much of it. It is right that we should make much of the holy sacraments of our religion. Chiefest amongst our religious memories, treasured with unfeigned delight, are certain great moments when we have sat at the Table of our Lord with His saints, and have feasted high, whilst the tide of holy joy has borne us beyond the shores of earthly delight, to the very bosom of our Saviour. Sacraments have meant much to us, but how much to others! Paul said: Though I value beyond compare the sacraments of Judaism, what are these compared to the living Christ? They are but the empty grave from which He has gone forth; they are but the ceremonies of the tomb, whilst the living Christ passes along the Easter path.

### **CHRIST AND HIGH BIRTH**

(3) He contrasted the knowledge of the Lord with high pedigree. To have been circumcised was much, but even if he had been the child of a Jewish proselyte he would have been circumcised the eighth day. It did not prove that he had the pure blood of Abraham flowing through his veins; therefore he says: "I was born a Hebrew; mine was the stock of Israel, the prince with God; I was of the tribe of Benjamin, from which Saul came, the first king of Israel; and which, amid the general faithlessness, clung still to Judah in maintaining the Temple rites. Moreover, I was a Hebrew of Hebrews; no Gentile blood had ever intermingled in our family." How good some count it to be able to trace back their pedigree to the Normans, or to the Saxons who preceded the Conquest. Some such pride might have been the Apostle's. He looked upon Rome, and Babylon, and Greece, but knew his descent lay further back than any. They might boast their splendour, but he came of the man who crossed the Euphrates, and settled in Palestine as the friend of God. In him flowed the blood of Moses, who dared behold God face to face; of Joshua, who bade the sun stand still; of Jeremiah and the prophets. But he cries: Compared to Christ, it is nothing. The soul that has won Him is related to a higher family; has received the title of a nobler lineage; is linked, not with the fathers of saintly piety, but to the everlasting Father, the eternal God, through Jesus Christ, the great Brother Man, who has lifted man into union with God. Compared with Him, high lineage and ancient pedigree are but dross.

### **CHRIST IN CONTRAST WITH PHARISAISM.**

(4) He contrasted the knowledge of Christ with his membership in a noble order of men. Before Agrippa he said: "I lived a Pharisee"; and before the Council he cried: "I am a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee." He here boasts it again--"As touching the law, a Pharisee." The Pharisee in our time has come to be looked upon as the embodiment of pride, arrogance and supercilious contempt and scorn; but away back in the history of Israel the Pharisees stood for the purest, strictest morality. They were the maintainers of the Law amid the indifference of their time, They opposed the great parties of the courtly Herodians and of the skeptical Sadducees. What if they made their phylacteries broad! It showed that they revered the very text of the Word of God. What though they built the tombs of the prophets! At least they had reverence for the great past. What though they



flaunted an outward piety! At least there was the outward recognition of God. There was much to condemn, but they stood for the unity of the God-head, the resurrection of the Hereafter, and the strictest interpretation of the law. But Paul said that all this was as nothing to him now; he was prepared to be cast out by the Pharisees, to become an outcast and an alien, and be treated as the off-scourings of all things. To have Christ was an infinite compensation, which made all the rest seem but loss.

### **CHRIST IN CONTRAST WITH REPUTATION.**

(5) He contrasted the knowledge of Christ with his own great reputation--"As touching zeal, per-securing the Church." Everybody knew how devoted he was to Judaism, and how intent in uprooting Christianity. Breathing fire and sword, he swept like a tornado through Palestine. The disciples trembled when he came near any city in which they were gathered, for there was every fear that he would drag them before the Councils and commit them to prison. In many cases he ruthlessly stamped out the infant church in blood. There was nothing he would not do, so relentless, so merciless, so unsparing. And with all this, he was building up such a reputation as would have given him prominence in all after time in his fatherland and amongst his fellow-countrymen. It is not a small thing for a young man of thirty to build up a reputation like that, because it means high marriage, power, wealth and prestige. It means everything that a man cares for and seeks; but when Paul stood, with everything of this world alluring him on the one hand, and with Christ on the other calling him to the cross, torture, isolation, poverty, and everything the flesh of man hates, he said: "I am married to Christ, and in Him am married to suffering, sorrow, and loss; but I look on it as a man who has made a good bargain--for I have won the Pearl, Christ."

### **CHRIST IN CONTRAST WITH PERSONAL UPRIGHTNESS**

(6) He contrasted the knowledge of Christ with the satisfaction of blameless character--"As touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless." There is a tribunal always in session, a tribunal before which we are all constantly being tried; and we ourselves often sit upon that tribunal to try those above us, on our level, and beneath us. But in our quiet hours we leave that judgment-seat, and apply to ourselves the standards which we have been applying to our fellows. At such times we cannot but notice how, compared with many around us, our own character appears blameless and flawless. Thank God, we say, after we have been considering the case of the drunkard, the miser, or the dissipated, we are not as they are. And as we apply to ourselves the standard beneath which so many of our fellows have been condemned, we are disposed to take to ourselves considerable credit. "I go to church, I pay my subscriptions, I do not drink, I do not indulge the flesh, I keep my tongue in control; my dearest and nearest cannot accuse me of being anything but a loving, tender man; my life is blameless." Thereupon we conclude that we are right.

These are the people that it is hardest to win for Christ. They are enclosed and encased within the armour of their self-righteousness; they are so complacent that when the strongest sermons are levelled against congregations they shelter themselves beneath their armour-plate, and say: The sermon is good for others, but it cannot mean us. When a man wakes up suddenly to see that in God's sight all that counts for nothing; when Christ comes to him and casts the X-rays upon his inner life; when he sees the glory of the Great White Throne compared with the linen he has been washing for years with such arduous punctiliousness; when he sees that what he thought to be white and clean is only as filthy as rags to the Son of God, there comes the greatest fight of his life. Many a man would be prepared to give up his church, to renounce his sacraments, to step out from his high family, with its pedigree, and from the blamelessness of his earlier life; many a man would be prepared to sacrifice his reputation for earnestness: but when it comes to saying that his righteousness is but filthy rags; that the boat he has been constructing will not carry him across the mighty deluge of waters; that the tower he has built upon the reef will not resist the autumn storm, in counting even his blamelessness as loss and dross--yea as dung--then there comes the greatest fight.

### **CONTRASTED RIGHTEOUSNESS**

(7) He contrasted the knowledge of God's Righteousness which is by faith, with his own righteousness, which was of the law. In the Epistle to the Romans the Apostle clearly describes the righteousness, which is of the law, "That the man which doeth these things shall live by them" (Rom. 10:5). The doing of the things prescribed by the Law in the heart, or the Law on the Tables of Stone, has occupied the minds and governed the activities of legalists and ritualists from the beginning of the world. It was this that prompted Luther to fastings and scourgings, beneath which his body was reduced to an extremity, and that encouraged Bunyan to hope that an outward reformation would satisfy the outcry of his conscience. But such men have always found their efforts unavailing. However zealous they may be in going about to establish their own righteousness, men discover that what has seemed a white and flawless robe is only as filthy rags, in the searching light of the great white throne.

But the Righteousness which is "of God," because it was designed by His wisdom, and is offered by His unmerited grace, requires no "going about." There is no need to say, "Who shall ascend unto heaven," or "Who shall descend into the deep." "The word of faith is nigh thee." Its one condition is the open hand of a faith, that takes what the risen Saviour offers. Just as soon as the soul trusts Him--not merely believing about, but in Him,--in that moment it is clothed upon with the Righteousness of Christ, wrought

out by His perfect obedience unto death, which is "unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. 3:22). It is only necessary to abandon our own righteousness to gain Christ and His righteousness. We cannot have both. But when we have resolved to drop the one, that we may take the other; in making the choice, we suddenly find ourselves in Him, and arrayed in the beautiful dress, Who was made sin for us that we might be made the Righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21).

Have you come to Him? The time is coming when you will have to be found somewhere. The Apostle says, "That I may be found in Him." You will have to be found by the swirling tides of sorrow, by some supreme temptation, by the final test of death; you will have to be found in the Judgment; you will have to be found in the dissolution of the Heavens and the Earth. When God comes to find you, where will you be found? In the cardboard of your own goodness, or in the completed Righteousness of Jesus Christ, which He wrought out on the Cross in tears and blood, and which is yours directly you look with penitent trust towards Him? God grant that when you are found, it may be with the Pearl of great price in your hand, and with the Righteousness of Jesus Christ upon your soul! (F. B. Meyer. The Epistle to the Philippians - A Devotional Commentary)

**Philippians 3:8 More than that, I count (1SPMI) all things to be (PAN) loss in view of the surpassing value (PAPNSA) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss (1SAPI) of all things, and count (1SPMI) them but rubbish so that I may gain (1SAAS) Christ ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek:** [alla men oun ge kai hegoumai \(1SPMI\) panta zemian einai \(PAN\) dia to huperechon \(PAPNSA\) tes gnoseos Christou lesou tou kuriou mou, di' on ta panta ezemiothen. \(1SAPI\) kai hegoumai \(1SPMI\) skubala hina Christon kerdeso \(1SAAS\)](#)

**Amplified:** Yes, furthermore, I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly]. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish (refuse, dregs), in order that I may win (gain) Christ (the Anointed One), ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Amplified** (2015) 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 unequalled]. For His sake I have lost everything, and I consider it all garbage, so that I may gain Christ,

**NET** More than that, I now regard all things as liabilities compared to the far greater value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things— indeed, I regard them as dung!— that I may gain Christ,

**Phillips:** Yes, and I look upon everything as loss compared with the overwhelming gain of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord. For his sake I did in actual fact suffer the loss of everything, but I considered it useless rubbish compared with being able to win Christ. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** Yes, indeed, therefore, at least, even I am still setting all things down to be a loss for the sake of that which excels all others, my knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord which I have gained through experience, for whose sake I have been caused to forfeit all things, and I am still counting them dung, in order that Christ I might gain, (Eerdmans)

**Young's Literal:** yes, indeed, and I count all things to be loss, because of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, because of whom of the all things I suffered loss, and do count them to be refuse, that Christ I may gain, and be found in him,

**MORE THAN THAT: alla menouge kai:**

- [Philippians 3 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries](#)

Not only those things (ICB)

But indeed, therefore (Analyzed Literal)

But no, rather (Modern KJV)



Yes, indeed, therefore, at least, even (Wuest)

**More than that** (KJV = "yea doubtless") is actually **five** particles **alla**, **kai** and **menounge**, the latter representing a combination (**mén** = indeed + **óun** = but now, therefore + **ge** = an emphatic), the full significance of which is difficult to convey in our English translations and also a lit. "but indeed therefore at least even").

The sense is something like 'indeed, more than that, I therefore affirm at least even this' adding to and reinforcing what he has just said

**Robertson** explains this unusual but meaningful construction stating that "five particles before Paul proceeds (yea, indeed, therefore, at least, even), showing the force and passion of his conviction.

The particle **alla** would have been enough to put this verse in direct contrast with what he had just said but Paul clearly desires to unequivocally contrast his self righteous "religious" works with the incalculable treasures gained from knowing Christ.

God's Word Translation conveys the sense of Paul's passion paraphrasing it -- **It's far more than that!**

### I (continually) COUNT ALL THINGS TO (continually) BE LOSS: hegoumai (1SPMI) panta zemian einai (PAN):

- Acts 20:24; Ro 8:18)
- Click devotional [Religion or Relationship?](#) ([Click devotional](#) by Spurgeon
- [Philippians 3 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries](#)

I now regard all things as liabilities (NET)

I am still setting all things down to be a loss" (Wuest) "I consider everything else worthless" (GWT)

**Spurgeon** - Paul thinks that to be righteous by faith is infinitely better than all the righteousness that can come by works and ceremonies. He therefore utterly despises that which he once thought to be more precious than gold; and he takes possession of, as his greatest treasure, that which he once trampled in the mire.

**Count** ([2233](#)) (**hegeomai**) is in the **present tense**, indicating that Paul continually (habitually) reflected on what he could do in his own strength to add even one "ounce" to his standing before God and he continued to come to the same conclusion -- it belonged in the loss column if it was not Christ's righteousness. As Paul so dramatically discovered on the road to Damascus, a person can have **tons** of religion without one **ounce** of salvation!

**All things (pas)** means all without exception and emphasizes that when Christ is on one side of the scale there is simply nothing that can match His worth. Thus Paul says he continually counts not just his religious achievements as loss but "**all things**".

**Guy King** adds that **all** means "**All** financial gain, **all** material gain, **all** physical gain, **all** intellectual gain, **all** moral gain, **all** religious gain—all these are no gains at **all** compared with the **Great Gain**. (bolding added) (Quote from Joy Way: An Expository Study Of Philippians, Ft. Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1952)

**Spurgeon** asks "Since you have not had to suffer the loss of all things, do you hold all things at God's disposal? Are you ready to part with comfort and honor for Him? Since God has left your worldly comforts to you, have you used all things for His sake?"

**Loss** ([2209](#))(**zemia**) describes the state of coming into a worsened situation from previous advantage. Thus **zemia** is translated as damage, disadvantage, loss, forfeit. In Herodotus **zemia** usually meant 'punishment' but in the NT it is only used of in reference to suffering the loss of something, with the implication of sustaining hardship or suffering.

**Eadie** writes that Paul does not "mean all things absolutely. It has not the article, indeed, but the meaning is limited by the context—all things of the class and character described—the things of which he says immediately that he had suffered the loss. The estimate was not a hasty conclusion from fallacious premises, nor the sudden leap of an enthusiasm which had for a moment urged him. It was his calm and deliberate judgment still. ([Philippians 3 Commentary - Online](#))

### IN VIEW OF THE SURPASSING VALUE OF KNOWING CHRIST JESUS MY LORD: dia to huperechon (PAPNSA) tes gnoseos Christou lesou tou kuriou mou:

- Phil 3:10; Isa 53:11; Jer 9:23,24; Mt 11:25-27; 16:16 16:17; Lk 10:21 22; Jn 14:7 ,20; 16:3; 17:3 17:8; 1Cor 2:2; 2Cor 4:4 4:6;

Gal 1:16; Eph 1:17 18; Eph 3:8 3:9;3:18 3:19 Col 2:2 2:3; 1Pe 2:7; 2Pe 1:3; 3:18; 1Jn 5:20

- **Lord** - Lk 1:43; 20:42-44; Jn 20:13 20:28
- [Wuest's Commentary Notes on Philippians](#) - rich in word study insights
- [Philippians 3:4-8 Religious Credentials](#)- John MacArthur
- [Philippians 3:4-11 Evaluating Your Relationship in Christ - 1](#)- John MacArthur
- [Philippians 3:8-11 Surpassing Value of Knowing Christ](#)- John MacArthur
- [Philippians 3 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries](#)

compared to the far greater value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord (NET)

for the sake of that which excels all others, my knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord which I have gained through experience (Wuest)

because of the priceless privilege of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord (Weymouth),

for the sake of what is so much more valuable, the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord (TEV)

compared to the possession of the priceless privilege (the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth, and supreme advantage) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him [of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more fully and clearly] (Amplified - Classic)

## KNOWING YOU JESUS IS THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD

**Surpassing value** (5242) (**huperecho** from **hupér** = above, over + **écho** = have) is literally to hold above and so to stand out or be superior in rank, authority or power. **Huperecho** speaks of that which excels, is superior or better and which is exceptional or excellent.

**Surpassing** means outstanding, exceptional, rare, phenomenal, stellar, transcendent, unrivalled, incomparable, matchless, and the list of synonyms will go on and on forever in eternity! Hallelujah!

**Knowing Christ** is of incomparable worth--of **more value than** anything! **The unfathomable riches of Christ** (Eph 3:8-note) surpass the value of anything and everything. If you are struggling with angst and anxiety and worry over your early possessions (that are possessing you!), memorize Paul's great words in Phil 3:7-10 and ask the Spirit of Christ saturate and renew your mind with these profound truths regarding our greatest Possession, our priceless, incomparable Lord Jesus Christ and as you rest in this truth the Spirit will make the things of this earth grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. Amen.

Then play **Graham Kendricks great spiritual song** as you ponder the incomparable value of personally knowing the King of kings and Lord of lords

### KNOWING YOU

All I once held dear, built my life upon  
All this world reveres, and wars to own  
All I once thought gain I have counted loss  
Spent and worthless now, compared to this

Knowing You, Jesus  
Knowing You, there is no greater thing  
You're my all, You're the best  
You're my joy, my Righteousness  
And I love You, Lord

Now my heart's desire is to know You more  
To be found in You and known as Yours  
To possess by faith what I could not earn  
All-surpassing gift of Righteousness

Oh, to know the power of Your risen life  
And to know You in Your sufferings

To become like You in Your death, my Lord  
So with You to live and never die.

**AMEN!**

**Knowing** (1108) (**gnosis** from **ginosko** = to know especially experientially) in simple terms is the possession of information of what is known. **Gnosis** describes the comprehension or intellectual grasp of something. **Gnosis** refers to knowledge gained by experience in contrast to intuitive knowledge. **Gnosis** is an “experiential knowledge,” and not a mere passing acquaintance. Gnosis is not simply an intellectual (head) knowledge of Christ, but refers to a more intimate, experiential knowledge.

**Louw-Nida** says **gnosis** means “acquaintance with,” which in the English dictionary refers to “personal knowledge” with synonyms such as familiarity with, knowledge of, experience with/of, awareness of, understanding of, comprehension of, grasp of.

**John Walvoord** - The “**knowledge**” of Christ Jesus which he mentions indicates personal acquaintance, experiential knowledge as opposed to theoretical. Because he really knows Christ Jesus as his Lord, the surpassing qualities of Christ and His salvation make any of his own claims for righteousness insignificant.

**Gordon Fee** - As v. 10 will clarify, “**knowing Christ**” does not mean to have head knowledge about him, but to “know him” personally (BAGD) and relationally. Paul has thus taken up the Old Testament theme of “knowing God” and applied it to Christ. It means to know him as children and parent know each other, or wives and husbands—knowledge that has to do with personal experience and intimate relationship. It is such knowledge that makes Christ “trust-worthy.” The intimacy will be expressed in v. 10 in terms of “participation in his sufferings.” In the light of such expansive language, therefore, the object of his “knowing” is not simply “Christ,” nor even “Christ Jesus,” but “Christ Jesus my Lord.” (NICNT)

**Ralph Martin on knowing Christ** - The Pauline expression ‘**to know Christ**’ is intimate (my Lord), and glows with the warmth of a direct relationship; it may therefore be taken as equivalent to ‘fellowship with Christ’ to which Paul was introduced on the day of his conversion (cf. 2 Cor. 4:6).

**Wuest** says **knowing Christ Jesus** “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” (gnosis) used here, leads us to this interpretation.”

**Thomas Constable on knowing Christ Jesus** - What he had learned to value was Christ Jesus his Lord. Consequently coming to know Christ, entering into a deeper and fuller appreciation of His person and work, was of primary importance to Paul. This knowledge (Gr. gnosis) is the kind that one obtains only by personal relationship. It is different from the knowledge we gain through objective academic study (Gr. oida), though information is part of our growing personal knowledge of Christ. To gain this fuller knowledge of Christ Paul had let everything else in life go. (Expository Notes)

**Wiersbe** adds that “**knowing Christ** means much more than knowledge about Christ, because Paul had that kind of historical information before he was saved. To “**know Christ**” means to have a personal relationship with Him through faith. It is this experience that Jesus mentions in [Jn 17:3](#). You and I know about many people, even people who lived centuries ago, but we know personally very few. “**Christianity is Christ.**” Salvation is **knowing Him** in a personal way.” ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

**John MacArthur** on knowing Christ Jesus - The word knowing in the Greek text is not a verb, but a form of the noun **gnōsis**, from the verb **ginōskō**, which means to know experimentally or experientially by personal involvement. The surpassing knowledge of Christ that Paul describes here is far more than mere intellectual knowledge of the facts about Him. The New Testament frequently describes Christians as those who know Christ. In John 10:14 Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me.” In John 17:3 He defined eternal life as knowing Him: “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” To the Corinthians Paul wrote, “For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6), while in Ephesians 1:17 he prayed “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.” In his first epistle John declared, “And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life” (1 John 5:20). Salvation involves a personal, relational knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. (MacArthur NT Commentary)

The LORD Himself gave this beautiful explanation through the prophet Jeremiah

Thus says the LORD, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that **he understands and knows Me**, that I am the LORD who exercises

lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

**Spurgeon** comments that...

Those are sweet words, "**my Lord.**" Remember how Thomas cried, in ecstasy, "**My Lord** and my God." Paul, by faith putting his finger into the prints of the nails, says, "**My Lord.**"

The godly pastor **F B Meyer** describes our intimate communion with Christ as a full, accurate and correct knowledge of Christ writing that

We may know Him personally intimately face to face (cp 1 John 3:2<sup>note</sup>). Christ does not live back in the centuries, nor amid the clouds of heaven: He is near us, with us, compassing our path in our lying down, and acquainted with all our ways. But we cannot know Him in this mortal life except through the illumination and teaching of the Holy Spirit... We must not Rest until we "Know Him." We should never rest until we know Him as we know our friend, and are able to read without speech the movements of His soul. We should know by a quick intuition what will please and what will hurt His pure and holy nature. We should know where to find Him; should be familiar with His modes of thought and methods of action; should understand and identify ourselves with His goings forth, as, day by day, He goes through the world healing and saving. What a difference there is between the knowledge which the man in the street has of some public character and that which is vouchsafed to the inner circle of his home; And we must surely know Christ, not as a stranger who turns in to visit for the night, or as the exalted king of men—there must be the inner knowledge as of those whom He counts His own familiar friends, whom He trusts with His secrets, who eat with Him of His own bread. To know Christ in the storm of battle; to know Him in the valley of shadow; to know Him when the solar light irradiates our faces, or when they are darkened with disappointment and sorrow; to know the sweetness of His dealing with bruised reeds and smoking flax; to know the tenderness of His sympathy and the strength of His right hand—all this involves many varieties of experience on our part, but each of them like the facets of a diamond will reflect the prismatic beauty of His glory from a new angle. ([Devotional Commentary](#))

In his devotional on **Morning and Evening Spurgeon** writes about the **surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus...**

Spiritual knowledge of Christ will be a **personal knowledge**. I cannot know Jesus through another person's acquaintance with Him. No, I must know Him myself; I must know Him on my own account.

It will be an **intelligent knowledge**—I must know Him, not as the visionary dreams of Him, but as the Word reveals Him. I must know His natures, divine and human. I must know His offices—His attributes—His works—His shame—His glory. I must meditate upon Him until I "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

It will be an **affectionate knowledge** of Him; indeed, if I know Him at all, I must love Him.

An ounce of heart knowledge is worth a ton of head learning.

Our knowledge of Him will be a **satisfying knowledge**. When I know my Saviour, my mind will be full to the brim—I shall feel that I have that which my spirit panted after. "This is that bread whereof if a man eat he shall never hunger."

At the same time it will be an **exciting knowledge**; the more I know of my Beloved, the more I shall want to know. The higher I climb the loftier will be the summits which invite my eager footsteps. I shall want the more as I get the more. Like the miser's treasure, my gold will make me covet more.

**To conclude**; this knowledge of Christ Jesus will be a most happy one; in fact, so elevating, that sometimes it will completely bear me up above all trials, and doubts, and sorrows; and it will, while I enjoy it, make me something more than "Man that is born of woman, who is of few days, and full of trouble"; for it will fling about me the immortality of the ever living Saviour, and gird me with the golden girdle of his eternal joy.

**Come, my soul, sit at Jesus' feet and learn of Him all this day.**

**FOR WHOM I HAVE SUFFERED THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS AND (continually) COUNT THEM BUT RUBBISH: di on ta panta ezemiothen (1SAPI) kai hegoumai (1SPMI) skubala:**

- Phil 3:7; Mt 19:27-29; 1 Cor 4:9-13; 2Cor 11:23-27; 2Ti 4:6) (1Ki 14:10; 2Ki 9:37; Job 20:7; Mal 2:3
- [Philippians 3 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries](#)

for whose sake I have been caused to forfeit all things, and I am still counting them dung" (Wuest)

**Suffered... loss** (2210)(**zemioo** from **zemia**) means to affect with damage or to do damage to, to suffer injury, to suffer loss, to sustain damage, to forfeit or to fine. It means to experience the loss of something, with implication of undergoing hardship or suffering.

**Zemioo** was a business term meaning to "punish by exacting a forfeit" (Vincent).

**A T Robertson** writes that **zemioo** "occurs in the sense of being fined or mulcted (penalized by fining or demanding forfeiture) of money.

**Marvin Vincent** agrees noting that **zemioo** was "Often in the classics, of fining or mulcting in a sum of money.

Here in Philippians, **zemioo** is in the **aorist tense** which denotes a distinct point in time (~Paul's conversion) when in that "great crisis" (Vincent) all his legal "possessions" were lost. The **passive voice** is more literally translated "I have **been caused to forfeit.**"

There are 6 uses of **zemioo** in the NT...

**Matthew 16:26** "For what will a man be profited, if he gains (kerdaino) the whole world, and **forfeits** (zemioo - aorist tense) his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? **(Comment: Vincent** has an interesting comment - "Note that both words are in the past (aorist) tense: *if he may have gained or lost.* The Lord looks back to the details of each life as the factors of the final sum of gain or loss." Wow! This is worth meditating on for a few moments!)

**Mark 8:36** "For what does it profit a man to gain (kerdaino) the whole world, and forfeit (zemioo -aorist tense) his soul?

**Luke 9:25** "For what is a man profited if he gains (kerdaino) the whole world, and loses (apollumi) or **forfeits** (zemioo - aorist tense) himself?

**1 Corinthians 3:15** If any man's work is burned up, **he shall suffer loss**; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

**2 Corinthians 7:9** I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not **suffer loss** in anything through us.

**Philippians 3:8** More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ,

**Zemioo** is used 6 times in the Septuagint (LXX) (Ex 21:22; Deut 22:19; Prov 17:26; 19:19; 21:11; 22:3)

**Proverbs 21:11** When the scoffer is **punished** (Hebrew = 'anash = to fine, punish; Lxx = zemioo), the naive becomes wise; But when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge.

**Proverbs 22:3** The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, But the naive go on, and are punished (Hebrew = 'anash = to fine, punish; Lxx = zemioo) for it.

**Wuest** adds that "Paul was a citizen of Tarsus. At the time he lived there, only families of wealth and reputation were allowed to retain their Tarsian citizenship. This throws a flood of light upon Paul's early life. He was born into a home of wealth and culture. His family were wealthy Jews living in one of the most progressive of oriental cities. All this Paul left to become a poor itinerant missionary. But not only did he forfeit all this when he was saved, but his parents would have nothing to do with a son who had in their estimation dishonored them by becoming one of those hated, despised Christians. They had reared him in the lap of luxury, had sent him to the Jewish school of theology in Jerusalem to sit at the feet of the great Gamaliel, and had given him an excellent training in Greek culture at the University of Tarsus, a Greek school of learning. But they had now cast him off. He was still forfeiting all that he had held dear, what for? He tells us, "that I may win Christ." ([Philippians Commentary Online- Recommended](#))

**Count** (2233)(**hegeomai**) was a mathematical term which conveyed the idea to think about something and then to arrive at a conclusion.

The **all things** were all conceivable worldly advantages, everything that Judaism held for him. The permanent honor, satisfaction and joy of the personal knowledge of Christ Jesus, and the abiding blessedness of owning Him as "my Lord," robbed everything else of its once supposed advantages. Moreover, that in the change it was not mere mental knowledge, but a knowledge that affected the heart, is plainly indicated in the "my." It is just this that proves incontestably the reality and validity of the facts of the Christian faith. For anyone to undergo such an experience, involving a permanently transformed outlook, attitude and aspiration, nullifies the force

and reason of all skepticism regarding, and criticism of, the doctrines which can produce such effects.

**Rubbish** (street filth, dung) (4657) (**skubalon**) is literally any refuse such as the excrement of animals, off scourings, rubbish, dregs and so figuratively speaks of things that are worthless and detestable. It includes material thrown to the dogs.

**Eadie** explains that **skubalon** "expresses not only the utter insignificance which the apostle now attached to the grounds of his former trust, but the aversion with which he regarded them, especially when placed in comparison with Christ. ([Philippians 3 Commentary - Online](#))

**Vine** writes that **skubalon** "denotes "refuse," whether (a) "excrement," that which is cast out from the body, or (b) "the leavings of a feast," that which is thrown away from the table. Some have derived it from kusibalon (with metathesis of k and s), "thrown to dogs"; others connect it with a root meaning "shred."

**Vincent** adds that **skubalon** refers to "Either excrement or what is thrown away from the table; leavings. The derivation is uncertain. According to some it is a contraction from **to throw to the dogs** (*es kunas ballo*). Notice the repetition of gain, count, loss, all things, Christ.

**Skubalon** was a word used to refer to a half eaten corpse (gross!) and filth of various kinds including lumps of manure or human excrement. It was the word describing the portion of food "rejected" by the body as not nourishing.

**Lightfoot** adds that **rubbish** was "applied most frequently in one sense or other to food. The two ways this word is used are: (1) "**Excrement**," the portion of food rejected by the body as not possessing nutritive qualities. This sense is frequent in medical writers. (2) "**The refuse or leavings of a feast**," the food thrown away from the table.

**TDNT** adds that **skubalon** was "used of persons and things to denote pitiful and horrible remains, a corpse half-eaten by fishes as the remnant of a much-bewailed sea-voyage

The Judaizers regarded Gentile believers as dogs, while they thought that themselves were enjoying God's banquet. Paul seems to reverse this figure with his use of this term, implying that it is the Judaizers who are the dogs. Paul is saying that he counts everything in his life trash. He even counts all his religious achievements as rubbish for that deep intimate love relationship with the living Christ. This strong metaphor reminds one of Isaiah's description of ALL of men's righteous deeds describing them ([Isa 64:6](#)) as "filthy rags" which is an Old Testament term for menstrual cloths!

**McGee** - God is just not taking in dirty laundry. However, He will take in dirty sinners, and He is the One who will clean them up. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

It is worth noting that Paul does not dwell longingly or with any sense of loss on the past, as some Christian testimonies seem to do. Every believer has a "gutter to glory" testimony but the emphasis should always be on the glory not the gutter.

**Barnes** - The word here used--**skubalon**--occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means, properly, dregs, refuse; what is thrown away as worthless; chaff, offal, or the refuse of a table or of slaughtered animals; and then filth of any kind. No language could express a more deep sense of the utter worthlessness of all that external advantages could confer in the matter of salvation. In the question, of justification before God, all reliance on birth, and blood, and external morality, and forms of religion, and prayers, and alms, is to be renounced, and, in comparison with the merits of the great Redeemer, to be esteemed as vile. Such were Paul's views; and we may remark, that if this was so in his case, it should be in ours. Such things can no more avail for our salvation than they could for his. We can no more be justified by them than he could. Nor will they do anything more in our case to commend us to God than they did in his. (Albert Barnes. Barnes NT Commentary)

**McGee** adds his usual pithy but practical comment - " Paul says that since that moment of his conversion he lives for Christ. He has suffered the loss of all things. Jesus Christ is uppermost in his thinking. The things that he used to consider most precious he now considers to be dung—that is strong language! He says he flushes his religion down the drain. He flushes away all the things he used to trust. Now he trusts the Lord Jesus and Him only for his salvation. I remember hearing Dr. Carroll say, "When I was converted, I lost my religion." A great many people need to lose their religion and find Jesus Christ as Paul did. He was so revolutionized that what had been his prized possession is now relegated to the garbage can! ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

**IN ORDER THAT I MAY GAIN CHRIST: hina Christon kerdeso (1SAAS):**

- Mt 13:44-46; Heb 3:14; 1Jn 1:3
- [Philippians 3 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries](#)



I threw it all away in order to gain Christ (GWT)

so that I may have Christ as my reward (BBE)

So why does Paul continually count all things that our flesh would do as rubbish or dung?

**In order that (hina)** is the Greek preposition which marks a purpose clause and so tells us clearly Paul's motivation for his counting of all things as the dregs. He wants only ONE THING in this world and in all eternity - to gain Christ. See discussion of importance of observing and querying **terms of purpose or result**.

**Spurgeon** comments that "He had every opportunity of advancement. He was a fine scholar, and might have reached the highest degree in connection with the Sanhedrim and the synagogue; but he thought nothing of all that, he threw it all away as worthless, and declared that this was his ambition: "That I may win Christ,"

**Eadie** says "and to win Him is to enjoy Him in every aspect. It is to have Him as mine, and to feel that in comparison with such a possession all else may be regarded as truly loss. To the apostle Christ was so identified with the truth, that when he gained Him he gained the highest knowledge; so identified with life, that when he gained Him he was endowed with the noblest form of it; and so identified with spiritual influence, that when he gained Him his whole nature was filled with power and gladness. The name of Christ, so used, covers His entire work and relations, and, as Wiesinger says—"Christ comes as gain in the place of the loss he has suffered." And the possession of Christ is real gain compared with Hebrew lineage, the seal of Abrahamic descent, or devotedness to the Mosaic ritual and law. ([Philippians 3 Commentary - Online](#))

**Gain** (2770) (**kerdaino** from **kerdos** = gain) means literally to procure an advantage or profit, to acquire by effort or investment (as in the parable of the talents Mt 25:16,17, 20, 22; James 4:13 = "make a profit").

In **1 Cor 9:19-22 kerdaino** is used 5 times and translated "might win", in each use this "gain" referring not to money but to men's souls, for those whom Paul might "gain" equates with those who were saved. This is the ultimate "good investment" which will pay "dividends" for eternity! **Are you placing more effort into investing in the market were the gains are temporal or in men where the gain is eternal?**

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.

**Gain** also conveys the idea of to **win** in (**Mt 18:15**) apparently the "gain" being that the reprov'd brother repents. Peter also uses **kerdaino** figuratively of a submissive wife winning her husband.

The synoptic Gospels use **kerdaino** to emphasize the tragic state of a man who **'gains'** the whole world (Mt 16:26, Mark 8:36, Luke 9:25), this use speaking literally of money, possessions, investments, etc, but also figuratively of the position, power, acclaim, etc ("boastful pride of life"). The Spirit must consider this truth of great importance, to reiterate it in all three Gospels! Note also that **world** in each of these three passages is **kosmos** which refers to the world system of evil of which Satan is the head, all unsaved people his servants, together with the pursuits, pleasure, purposes, people, and places where God is not wanted.

**Vine** writes that **kerdaino** is used "metaphorically, (a) to win persons, said (1) of gaining an offending brother who by being told privately of his offence, and by accepting the representations, is won from alienation and from the consequences of his fault, Matt. 18:15; (2) of winning souls into the Kingdom of God by the Gospel, 1 Cor. 9:19, 20 (twice), 21, 22, or by godly conduct, 1 Pet. 3:1 (R.V., "gained"); (3) of so practically appropriating Christ to oneself that He becomes the dominating power in and over one's whole being and circumstances, Phil. 3:8 (R.V., "gain") ([Vine's Online](#))

**Kerdaino** is used 17 times in the NT (none in the LXX)...

**Matthew 16:26** "For what will a man be profited, if he **gains** the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

**Matthew 18:15** "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have **won** your brother.

**Matthew 25:16** "Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and **gained** five more talents. **17** "In the same manner the one who had received the two talents **gained** two more... **20** "And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you

entrusted five talents to me; see, I have **gained** five more talents.' **22** "The one also who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.'

**Mark 8:36** "For what does it profit a man to **gain** the whole world, and forfeit his soul?"

**Luke 9:25** "For what is a man profited if he **gains** the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? (**Comment: Vincent** notes that **kerdaino** is " A merchant's word. Jesus is putting the case as a common-sense question of profit and loss.")

**Acts 27:21** And when they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, "Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete, and **incurred** (**kerdaino**) this damage and loss. (**Comment:** Here **kerdaino** pictures gain through avoiding loss. It could be translated "spared this damage... ")

**1 Corinthians 9:19** For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that **I might win** (**kerdaino**) the more. **20** And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that **I might win** (**kerdaino**) Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that **I might win** (**kerdaino**) those who are under the Law; **21** to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that **I might win** (**kerdaino**) those who are without law. **22** To the weak I became weak, that **I might win** (**kerdaino**) the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some.

**Philippians 3:8** More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may **gain** Christ, (The best investment anyone could ever make!)

**James 4:13** Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and **make a profit.**"

**1 Peter 3:1** (note) In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they **may be won** without a word by the behavior of their wives, (**Comment: Without a word** means without the wife's spoken words and does not mean that unbelieving husbands do not need to hear the Word of Truth which the "seed" by which one is born again - see **note** 1 Peter 1:23)

**NIDNTT** writes that "**kerdaino** means to make to profit or gain an advantage, gain something or somebody for something; it can also mean to spare or avoid (e.g. in Acts 27:21), since avoiding loss brings a gain. The opposite of **kerdaino** is accordingly **zemioo**, suffer loss, attested only after Homer. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

The verb speaks of a personal appropriation which makes Christ my own. Knowing Christ and making Christ my own outstrips everything, absolutely everything. The encouraging truth is that when we have nothing left but Christ, we find that Christ is everything we ever needed!

**Wuest** adds "**that I may gain Christ** does not refer to Paul's acquisition of Christ as Saviour, but to Paul's appropriating into his life as a Christian, the perfection, the graces, the fragrance of the Person of Christ." ([Philippians Commentary Online- Recommended](#))

How does this happen? Salvation (past tense salvation) takes place in a moment but sanctification (present tense salvation - daily being saved from myself and being transformed and conformed into the image of Christ) takes a lifetime.

He (Christ) must (continually) increase, but I must (continually) decrease." (Jn 3:30-note)

How? By daily, continually working "out (my) salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God Who is at work in (me), both to will and to work for His good pleasure. (Phil 2:12, Phil 2:13NLT- see **notes** Philippians 2:12; 13)

As I submit to this daily process in the practical tests He allows in my life, I will

grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2Pe 3:18-note)

**Vine** says that "**To gain Christ** is more than gaining the knowledge of Him; it is to gain Him in all His fullness; it is, to repeat a frequent quotation, "to lay fast hold upon Him, to receive Him into our hearts, and so to make Him ours and ourselves His, that we may be joined to Him as our Head, espoused to Him as our Husband, incorporated into Him as our nourishment, engrafted in Him as our stock, and laid upon Him as a sure foundation. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

How else does one **gain Christ**? **Jamieson's** comments are worth pondering

A man cannot make **other things his "gain"** or chief confidence, and at the same time "**gain Christ.**" He who

loses all things, and even himself, on account of Christ, gains Christ: Christ is His, and He is Christ's".

**Jesus** adds that "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it." (Lk 9:23, 24)

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**Spurgeon** writing on Paul's desire **that I may win** (gain) **Him** reflects...

The very high value that the apostle Paul set upon the Savior, is most palpable, when he speaks of winning Him. This shows that the Savior held the same place in Paul's esteem as the crown did in the esteem of the runner at the Olympic games. To gain that crown, the competitor strained every nerve and sinew, feeling as though he were content to drop down dead at the goal if he might but win it. Paul felt that were he to run with all his might, if that, were the way of winning Christ, were he to strain soul and body to win Him, he would be well worth the effort. He shows his value of Christ by speaking of Him as the prize he panted to win. He uses the very same word which the soldier would use concerning the victory, when, with garments rolled in blood, amidst confused noise and clouds of smoke, he counts all things but little if he may but hear the shout of triumph. So, Paul, regarding Christ as more glorious and excellent than mountains of prey, considered such a prize to be worth all the fighting, even though he should agonize and sweat with blood. He would be well worth dying to win. I take it that he speaks of Christ here as though he felt that he was the very climax of his desire, the summit of his ambition. If he might but get Christ, he would be perfectly satisfied; but if he could not get Him, whatever else he might have, he would still remain unblessed.

I would to God that you all felt the same. I wish that the ambition of every one of my fellow-creatures here assembled — and, indeed, the wide world over, — were this, that they might win Christ. Oh, if they did but know His preciousness, if they did but understand how happy and how blessed He makes those to be who gain Him, they, too, would give up everything else for this one desire, — that they may win Christ. I hope that, perhaps, a few words of mine may be blessed of God the Spirit to stir up such a desire in the hearts of the congregation now assembled below then shall I begin? (See Spurgeon's full sermon "The Priceless Prize")

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## Religion Or Relationship?

READ: Galatians 1:11-24

Two kinds of religion exist in our world: Religion A and Religion B. The first is "faith" in name only (2Ti 3:5note). It's the outward practice of Christianity without genuine faith in the living Lord.

Religion B, on the other hand, is a life-transforming, destiny-changing experience. It's a definite commitment to the crucified and risen Savior, which establishes an ongoing personal relationship between a forgiven sinner and a gracious God.

This difference explains why for many years British author C. S. Lewis had such great difficulty in becoming a Christian. Religion A had blinded him to Religion B. According to his brother Warren, his conversion was "no sudden plunge into a new life, but rather a slow, steady convalescence from a deep-seated spiritual illness--an illness that had its origins in our childhood, in the dry husks of religion offered by the semi-political churchgoing of Ulster, and the similar dull emptiness of compulsory church during our school days."

Are you bogged down in the empty ritual of Religion A? If so, you must receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Then make sure your relationship with Christ is growing deeper and more vital every day. —Vernon C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries. Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

You only are true life--  
To know You is to live  
The more abundant life  
That earth can never give. --Clarkson

You can have tons of religion without one ounce of salvation.

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**Just Living?** (READ: Ecclesiastes 1:1-11) I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. --Philippians 3:8

There's a gulf of difference--far wider than the Grand Canyon--between living for something and merely living. But what is a worthy purpose for our existence?

Ty Cobb, one of baseball's all-time greats, made a revealing admission: "For years I ate baseball, I slept baseball, I talked baseball, I thought baseball, I lived baseball." But then he added, "When you get beyond those years of playing professional baseball, you can't live on baseball."

Certainly there is a vast multitude of purposes to which we can devote our energies. But in the end none of them will prove sufficient. One purpose alone gives enduring motivation to life. The apostle Paul stated that lasting purpose this way: "For to me, to live is Christ" (Php 1:21-note).

Knowing Christ, trusting Him, abiding in fellowship with Him, and serving Him--this is the one driving purpose that saves life from being little more than a monotonous march of meaningless days (Eccl. 1:1-11). Even when we are old and infirm, we can serve Him through a ministry of example and intercession. This makes life a joyful journey with our Savior and Friend, the Lord Jesus, whose face we will see when we reach our eternal home. —Vernon C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Those searching to know life's true meaning  
Can find it in only one way:  
By serving the Lord with commitment  
And living for Him day by day. --J D Branon

Life's purpose is found in a person--the Lord Jesus Christ

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**God's Paradoxes** - Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. --Matthew 16:25

The Bible tells us there is a wisdom that is foolish and a foolishness that is wise (1Cor 1:20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25). There is a gain that is loss and a loss that is gain (Phil. 3:7, 8, 9). And there is an exalted way that leads downward and a humble way that leads to exaltation (Phil 2:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11).

Statements like these seem to be contradictions, but they are actually paradoxes. A paradox is a statement that contains two truths, which at first glance seem to be incompatible.

A psychiatrist once unknowingly referred to one of God's paradoxes, remarking, "The greatest secret of mental health comes down to us in the words, 'Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will save it.'" He added, "I forget who said that, but it is a great truth."

Who said that? Our Lord Jesus Christ! He gave us that principle in Matthew 16:25. And the apostle Paul lived it out as he endured countless hardships for the benefit of others (2Cor 4:8, 9, 10, 11, 12). Yet Paul knew that even as his physical body was dying, his spirit was being renewed (2Cor. 4:16).

You cannot find your richest personal fulfillment until you sacrifice your time, strength, and resources to God's will. "Lose your life" for Christ. Start really living! --V C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Take up thy cross and follow on,  
Nor think till death to lay it down,  
For only he who bears the cross  
May hope to wear the glorious crown. --Everest

**Christ showed His love by dying for us  
We show our love by living for Him.**