

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

SEEKING

TO

KNOW

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WITNESS LEE

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Living Stream Ministry

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SEEKING TO KNOW CHRIST

According to Paul's concept, if we would know Christ, we must first be found in Him ([Phil. 3:8-11](#)). Moreover, to be found in Him requires that we count all things loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ and then suffer the loss of all things and count them to be refuse. Only when we have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, a vision of the supreme preciousness and surpassing worth of Christ, shall we be willing to let go of everything else and count those things as refuse. Then we shall gain Christ and be found in Him. We shall be those who live in Christ and who are found by others in Christ. Being found in Him, we shall surely know Him.

REVELATION AND EXPERIENCE

Paul lived in a condition of not having his own righteousness but having the righteousness of God, in order to know (to experience) Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. To have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ in [Philippians 3:8](#) is

by revelation. But to know Him in [verse 10](#) is by experience—to have the experiential knowledge of Him, to experience Him in the full knowledge of Him. Paul first received the revelation of Christ and then sought for the experience of Christ—to know and enjoy Him in an experiential way.

After we receive the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, we shall be willing to suffer the loss of all things and count them refuse in order to gain Christ and be found in Him. As a result, we shall know Christ experientially. Therefore, [verse 9 of Philippians 3](#) comes out of [verse 8](#), and [verse 10](#) comes out of [verse 9](#). If we do not have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ ([v. 8](#)), we shall not be found in Christ ([v. 9](#)), for it is having the excellency of the knowledge of Christ which makes us willing to suffer the loss of all things and count them as refuse in order to gain Christ and be found in Him. Then, once we have gained Christ and are found in Him, we shall know Him ([v. 10](#)); that is, we shall enjoy Him and experience Him.

To gain Christ is one thing, and to experience Him is another. We may illustrate this difference by the difference between buying groceries and eating food which has been purchased

and prepared. Gaining Christ may be compared to buying groceries, and the experience of Christ may be compared to the eating of the food we have first purchased and cooked. However, before we buy any groceries, we must first have the excellency of the knowledge of groceries. Before we purchase anything, we are first attracted by the excellency of the knowledge of that thing. Thus, first we have the excellency of the knowledge of the groceries, then we gain them by buying them, and finally we enjoy the food by eating it. In like manner, Paul first received the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, then he paid the price to gain Christ and be found in Him, and finally he experienced Christ and enjoyed Him. Paul realized that to gain Christ and be found in Him always results in knowing Him, in enjoying and experiencing Him.

A HIGHER KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST

Our experience of Christ can never surpass the excellency of our knowledge of Christ. Rather, the excellency of the knowledge of Christ always exceeds our experience of Christ. There has never been a case where a believer's experience of Christ surpassed his knowledge of Christ. If we do not have a higher knowledge of Christ,

we cannot have a higher experience of Christ. This is why it is very important that we not be limited by our past knowledge of Christ.

You may know that Christ is joy, peace, and rest. Before you were saved, you did not have the peace. But now that you have received the Lord, you have peace and joy. By no means do I belittle these aspects of the knowledge of Christ. I certainly enjoy the Lord Jesus as my peace, rest, and joy. Nevertheless, we should not be content with such a limited knowledge of Christ, but should advance in our knowledge of Him. Oh, how we need the excellency of knowing Christ!

The excellency of the knowledge of Christ will attract us to Christ and motivate us to lay aside everything other than Him. If we see the surpassing worth of Christ, we shall be willing to count as loss not only worldly, material things, but even our culture, religion, and philosophy. I repeat, it is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ which causes us to drop everything else so that we may gain Christ and be found in Him.

OUR SHORTAGE IN LIVING CHRIST

Our daily living is an indication of what we

are and where we are concerning the experience of Christ. We may talk a great deal about Christ, but in our daily living we may not actually be in Christ. Instead, we may be in our culture, national philosophy, or domestic logic. When we are in the church meetings or with the saints, we may have a lot to say about Christ. But in our daily life we may live in our national philosophy, domestic logic, or family concept.

Recently the Lord has pointed out to me my shortage in living Christ. Most of the confession I make to Him is related to this lack. Day by day, I spend too little time living one spirit with the Lord. Too much of the time I live in something other than Christ, in many good things that are not Christ Himself. Because this is our situation, all of us need the Lord to have mercy on us.

Both we and the Lord have come to a point of crisis. A critical situation definitely exists among many of us today. Yes, we have seen the vision that Christ is our life, that He is the life-giving Spirit, and that we are one spirit with Him, and we talk a great deal about Christ. However, in our practical life day by day, we do not live Christ every moment. We are not found by others in Christ continually. We may be very familiar with [Philippians 3:7-10](#). But how much

have we gained Christ, how much are we found in Christ, and how much do we experientially know Christ? Because of our urgent need to experience Christ, it is not my burden in this booklet to present Bible teachings. It is to minister Christ to the saints that they may grow in the divine life, which is Christ Himself, and may advance in the experience of Christ and enjoyment of Christ.

EXPERIENCING CHRIST IN THE POWER OF RESURRECTION

In [Philippians 3:10](#) Paul says, “To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” According to this verse, Paul aspired not only to know Christ, but also to know the power of Christ’s resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. The power of Christ’s resurrection is His resurrection life which raised Him from among the dead ([Eph. 1:19-20](#)). The reality of the power of Christ’s resurrection is the Spirit ([Rom. 1:4](#)). To know, to experience, this power requires identification with Christ’s death and conformity to it. Death is the base of resurrection. To experience the power of Christ’s

resurrection, we need to live a crucified life according to the pattern of His life. Our conformity to His death affords a base for the power of His resurrection to rise up that His divine life may be expressed in us.

The participation in Christ's sufferings—"the fellowship of His sufferings"—([Matt. 20:22-23](#); [Col. 1:24](#)) is a necessary condition for the experience of the power of His resurrection ([2 Tim. 2:11](#)) by being conformed to His death. With Christ, the sufferings and death came first, followed by the resurrection. With us, the power of His resurrection comes first, then the fellowship of His sufferings and conformity to His death. We first receive the power of His resurrection. Then by this power we are enabled to participate in His sufferings and live a crucified life in conformity to His death. Such sufferings are mainly for producing and building up the Body of Christ.

If we are not conformed to the death of Christ, we do not have the base for the experience of Christ. In order to experience Christ, we must be conformed to His death. But to be conformed to the death of Christ, we must have the fellowship of His sufferings. By participating in Christ's sufferings, we are ushered into a

position to experience the power of His resurrection. Then, when we experience the power of Christ's resurrection, we know Him.

In [Philippians 3](#) the sequence is knowing Christ, knowing the power of Christ's resurrection, knowing the fellowship of His sufferings, and being conformed to His death. But in our spiritual experience, the sequence is reversed. Daily we are conformed to Christ's death; then we participate in His sufferings, know the power of His resurrection, and, by knowing the power of resurrection, we know Christ Himself. According to Paul's sequence, first we receive the excellency of the knowledge of Christ by seeing the vision of Christ; second, we count all things to be refuse; third, we gain Christ and are found in Him; and fourth, we know Christ, experience Him.

THE CRUCIAL NEED FOR A VISION OF CHRIST

It is crucial that we see a vision of Christ and thereby receive the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. I can testify that by giving so many messages on Christ from the book of Colossians, I have been greatly helped to have the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. The

knowledge of Christ contained in this book has made a deep impression on me. According to Colossians, Christ is the portion of the saints, the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation, the Head of the Body, and the Firstborn from among the dead. In Colossians we have a revelation of the all-inclusive and all-extensive Christ.

If we have gained the excellency of the knowledge of Christ from Colossians, we shall be able to testify not only that Christ is peace and joy, but that He is the portion of the saints, the mystery of God, and the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead. Yes, the book of Colossians does reveal that Christ is our peace. But in this book peace is not revealed in an ordinary way. Rather, in [Colossians 3:15](#) we see that the peace of Christ arbitrates in our hearts. Simply to say that Christ is peace does not require much excellency of knowledge concerning Christ. However, to know that Christ is the arbitrating peace in our hearts does require the excellency of the knowledge concerning Him.

In [Philippians 3](#) Paul uses a number of extraordinary expressions. In this chapter Paul does not say that Christ is our joy, peace, or rest. Rather, he speaks of gaining Christ and being

found in Him; of knowing Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of Christ's sufferings; and of being conformed to His death. First, we need to see all these matters. Then we need to pray that the Lord would grant us the grace to experience Him.

To know Christ in all these aspects is truly to experience Him and enjoy Him. We need to enjoy the fellowship of Christ's sufferings that we may be conformed to His death and know the power of His resurrection. For this, we need to forget the things which are behind and stretch forward to the things which are before ([Phil. 3:13](#)). May we all forget the things behind and go on to something higher, deeper, and more profound concerning Christ.

MORE KNOWLEDGE FOR MORE EXPERIENCE

In [Philippians 3:7-11](#) Paul brings us higher and higher. These verses are not all on the same level, but are like ascending steps of a staircase. Each verse brings us higher and higher until we reach the peak in [verse 11](#). I would encourage the saints to consider the points in these verses carefully and in detail. We need to ponder them with much prayer and pray-reading so that our

knowledge may increase more and more. We should not be content with simply an elementary knowledge of spiritual things. We need to learn what is the excellency of the knowledge of Christ and what it means to count all things to be refuse; what it is to gain Christ and be found in Him; what it is to know Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. We also need to grasp what it means to be conformed to the death of Christ. We need to ask the Lord to show us all these things. We need to inquire of Him concerning every matter in these verses. Because these matters are deep, we cannot understand them quickly or easily.

The book of Philippians is not an elementary writing; it is a book in the “graduate school” of spiritual experience. Thus, we should not be content merely with a general knowledge of this book. On the contrary, we need to become familiar with the extraordinary expressions Paul uses in this Epistle. Before we can have the experience, we must become familiar with Paul’s expressions. This will bring us out of our oldness and save us from being so common and general in speaking of Christ. May the Lord grant us mercy that we may have more knowledge

of Christ in order to have more experience of Him.

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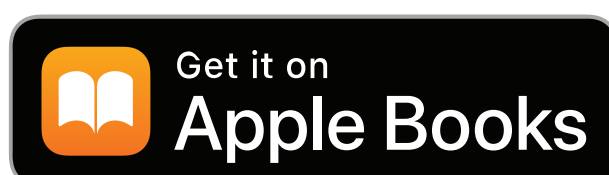
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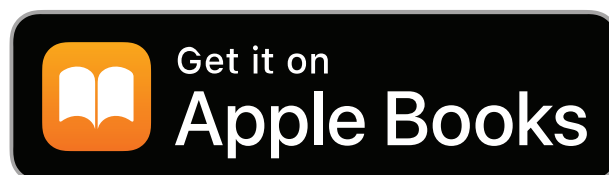
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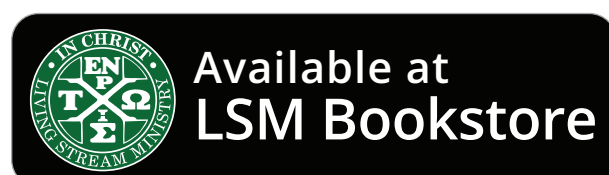
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