

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

PURSUE TOWARD

THE GOAL

FOR THE PRIZE

OF THE

HIGH CALLING

WITNESS LEE

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

PURSUE TOWARD
THE GOAL
FOR THE PRIZE
OF THE
HIGH CALLING

WITNESS LEE

Living Stream Ministry
Anaheim, CA • www.lsm.org

PURSUE TOWARD THE GOAL FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING

This booklet will focus on two words found in [Philippians 3:14](#)—goal and prize. If we reach the goal, we shall receive the prize. Thus, pursuing toward the goal is for obtaining the prize. But what is the goal, and what is the prize? Many would answer that both the goal and the prize are Christ. Although such an answer may be regarded as correct, in this booklet we need to see from [Philippians 3:10-14](#) something particular concerning the goal and the prize.

[Philippians 3:10-13](#) helps us understand the goal and the prize in [verse 14](#). In [verse 11](#) we may say that the out-resurrection is actually a synonym for Christ. In [verse 10](#) Paul speaks of knowing Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. This verse indicates clearly that if we would know Christ, we must know His resurrection.

Paul's desire was to gain Christ and be found in Him, to know Him, the power of His

resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. Knowing Christ in this way is the result of gaining Him and being found in Him. Our natural mind cannot touch the depths of what it means “to know Him and the power of His resurrection.”

At this juncture we need to ask an important question: Where is Jesus Christ today? In this booklet I would answer by saying that Christ is in resurrection. No doubt, on the one hand, Christ is in the heavens and, on the other hand, He is in us. However, I want to emphasize the marvelous fact that Christ today is in resurrection. One day, as the One who existed in eternity, Christ became a man by incarnation. Eventually, He was crucified and buried. Through death He entered into another realm, the realm of resurrection. In His preexistence, Christ was God and was with God in eternity; by incarnation He became a man in the flesh; and then, through crucifixion and burial, He entered into resurrection. Have you ever heard that Christ is now in resurrection? On the day of His resurrection angels told the women that Christ could not be found in the tomb, for He had risen from the dead ([Luke 24:1-6](#)). This indicates that Christ is in resurrection.

Because Christ is now in resurrection, we cannot know Him experientially unless we know the power of His resurrection. In [Philippians 3](#) Paul aspires to know Him not only in His death, but even the more in His resurrection.

In [Philippians 3:11](#), a continuation of [Philippians 3:10](#), Paul says, “If by any means I may attain to the out-resurrection from among the dead.” The expression “the out-resurrection” is puzzling. After Christ was resurrected, He became a person wholly in resurrection. Furthermore, the resurrection wherein Christ is today is not an ordinary resurrection, like the resurrection of Lazarus; it is an extraordinary resurrection. For this reason, Paul adds the prefix *ex* to the Greek word for resurrection to show that Christ’s resurrection is extraordinary. His resurrection is the out-resurrection.

A DEFINITION OF OUT-RESURRECTION

To be in the out-resurrection means to leave everything of the old creation and to be brought into God. Although Lazarus was resurrected, he neither left the things of the old creation nor was he brought into God. At the end of the coming age all the dead unbelievers will be resurrected.

Nevertheless, that resurrection will not bring them out of the old creation, and it will not bring them into God. There is only one kind of resurrection which brings us out of the old creation and into God, and this is the resurrection of Christ. Thus, Christ's resurrection is the outstanding resurrection. Christ is the unique One to pass out of the old creation and to enter into God. Christ lived in an old creation body and environment for thirty-three and a half years. Through His death and resurrection He left the old creation behind and was brought into God.

We should not think that Christ was never in the old creation. According to [Colossians 1:15](#) Christ was the Firstborn of God's creation. His physical body belonged to the old creation and, living in a carpenter's home in Nazareth, He lived in the environment of the old creation. Eventually, He took the old creation upon Himself as a burden and nailed it to the cross. Now in resurrection Christ is absolutely out of the old creation and in God. All He is, all He has, and all He does are in God. This is the significance of the out-resurrection.

If we would know Christ, we must know this out-resurrection and attain to it. Paul's words

“attain to the out-resurrection” imply a goal. This goal, mentioned in [Philippians 3:14](#), is the out-resurrection in [Philippians 3:11](#). Hence, to attain to the out-resurrection is to arrive at the goal. In [verses 12 and 13](#) Paul confessed that he did not reckon himself as one who had attained to this goal. But forgetting the things behind and stretching forward to the things before, he pursued toward the goal of the out-resurrection.

The goal is the out-resurrection. To say that Christ is the goal is to speak in a general way according to [verses 8 and 9 of Philippians 3](#). But to speak in a specific way, the goal is the out-resurrection. If we consider [verse 14](#) in relation to [verse 11](#), we shall see that the goal must be the out-resurrection. Therefore, in general the goal is Christ, but in particular the goal is the out-resurrection.

Now we need to ask an important question: Can we reach the goal of the out-resurrection in this age, or can we only run the race and hope to reach the goal in the coming age? Some may think that we must wait until the coming age to reach the goal. But if we do not arrive at the goal in this age, we shall not attain to it in the next age. We must endeavor to arrive at the goal during our lifetime.

In [Philippians 1:21](#) Paul says, “To me to live is Christ.” This Christ was his goal. Hence, for Paul to live was the goal—Christ as the out-resurrection. Furthermore, for us to live should also be the out-resurrection, for the very Christ whom we should live is Himself the out-resurrection. This means that day by day we should live the out-resurrection. For example, suppose a certain brother loves his wife very much. He needs to ask himself whether this love is natural or in resurrection. Even non-Christian husbands may love their wives in a natural way. If a brother loves his wife in resurrection, his love will be out of the old creation and in God. This shows that to live Christ is to live the out-resurrection, to live a life absolutely out of the old creation and in God.

When I was young I wondered why it seemed difficult for Paul to reach the goal. I thought that the persecutions he suffered made this difficult. It seemed to me opposition from others hindered him in running the Christian race. Years later, through experience I came to see that it is easier for me to overcome persecutions than to love my wife in the out-resurrection and not according to the natural life. I have been in Christ for more than fifty years. During all this time I have been

a zealous Christian. Having encountered many hindrances in the Christian race, I have learned that the greatest hindrance is the natural life with its thoughts and habits. The natural life frustrates us in running the race toward the goal.

Have you ever asked yourself how much of your daily conversation is natural and how much is in the out-resurrection? Although you may not speak in an evil, slanderous way, your talk may be natural. You may speak many positive things, but your words may be spoken in a natural way, not in resurrection. It is easy to improve our character, behavior, ethics, or morality, but it is extremely difficult to live in resurrection.

One characteristic of the natural life is anxiety. Are you free from anxiety and worry? Recently I had a problem with my health, and I was anxious about it. I claimed the Lord's word in [Philippians 4:6](#) and [7](#): "In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." However, immediately after declaring that I stood on this promise, I was anxious again. I wanted to be free from anxiety, but it refused to let me go. Do you

know why I was anxious? I was anxious because I was not fully in resurrection. There is no anxiety in the out-resurrection. Anxiety belongs to the old creation, and it cannot enter into the realm of resurrection, into the sphere of the new creation.

Paul knew from experience that it is not easy to live a life which is wholly out of the old creation and in God. In [Philippians 1:21](#) he could declare, “To me to live is Christ.” But in [chapter one](#) we simply have the declaration, not the explanation or definition. In [chapter three](#) we see that to live Christ is to live the out-resurrection and that this should be our goal. Our deeds and words must be in resurrection. If a certain deed is not in resurrection, we should not do it. If a certain word is not in resurrection, we should not say it. The question is not whether a particular thing is right or wrong, but whether or not it is in resurrection. Even our love needs to be in resurrection.

In the out-resurrection there is no element of the old creation. Instead, everything is full of the divine element. This is the reason that people sense God when they are with a person who lives in the out-resurrection. The living of such a person, his deeds and words, is in resurrection. This

is the out-resurrection in our daily life. In [Philippians 3](#) Paul was pursuing this kind of living. This is what he had in mind when he declared that his desire was to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and by any means to attain to the out-resurrection. Not regarding himself as having attained, he pursued toward the goal of the out-resurrection.

We thank the Lord for showing us the depths of these verses in [Philippians 3](#). What He has spoken regarding the out-resurrection will not be in vain. I believe that many among us will have a living which is out of the old creation and in God.

Just as the goal is the out-resurrection, so the prize is also the out-resurrection. The goal is for us to gain, whereas the prize is for us to enjoy. We may reach the goal in this age, but we shall enjoy the prize in the coming age.

In [Romans 8:11](#) Paul says, “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from among the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from among the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.” This verse indicates that we can attain to the out-resurrection in this age. Here Paul says that the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from among the

dead will give life to that part of our being which is dying, our mortal bodies. The Spirit is the reality of Christ's resurrection, the reality of the out-resurrection. The Spirit is dwelling in us to work the out-resurrection into our being in a real and practical way. Thus, [Romans 8:11](#) indicates that we should attain to the out-resurrection in this age.

[Revelation 20:6](#) refers to the prize in the coming age, the prize of the first resurrection: "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection: over these the second death has no authority; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years." The Greek word rendered "first" is the same word used for the "best" robe given to the returned prodigal in [Luke 15](#). The first resurrection is the best resurrection, the out-resurrection. If in this age we do not pursue a life which is absolutely out of the old creation and fully in God, we shall not have the prize for our enjoyment in the coming age. But if we obtain the out-resurrection today, it will become a prize to us in the next age. Then what is now our goal will become our prize when, during the millennium, we reign as co-kings with Christ. That will be the enjoyment of the out-resurrection as our

prize. In Christ God has called us from above for this prize. This prize should be the goal we pursue and obtain in this age.

This booklet is compiled from
Life-study of Philippians
© 1988 Living Stream Ministry

Please feel free to share this eBooklet with others.

See more titles in this series at
www.lsm.org/booklets.

SEE LINKS TO PURCHASE

Life-study of Philippians

AUDIOBOOK • EBOOK • PRINT

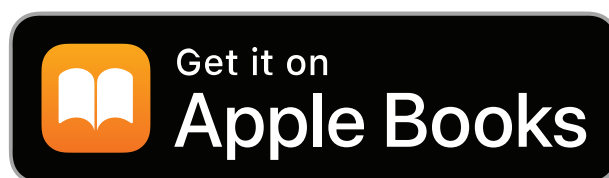
Purchase *Life-study of Philippians*

*Click on the badge for the format
you wish to purchase.*

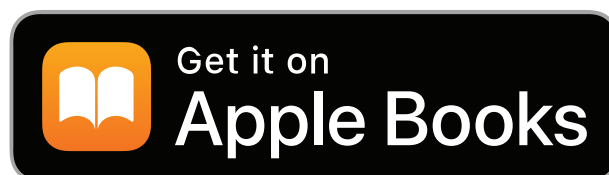
Audiobook

available at

amazon



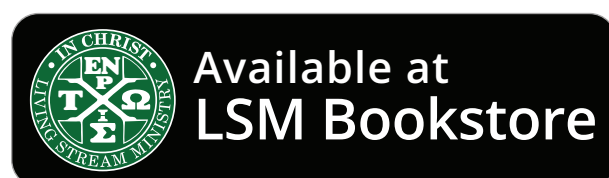
eBook



available at

amazon

Print



www.lsm.org/life-study-philippians