
I HAVE EVERYTHING

Read: 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.

Application:

1. Are there things in your physical life that compete or pull you away from developing a healthy spiritual life. If so, what are they?

2. Name an area in your life that it is easy to go into "auto-pilot" mode and forget the Lord?

Author: David C. McCasland

Captives in Churches

Read: Philippians 3:9

Unbelievable, yet true; bizarre, yet it happened. A 16-year-old girl was kidnapped and held prisoner for 4 months. Where? In the attic of a church in Memphis, Tennessee. Week after week that congregation gathered to worship, to sing, to pray, to enjoy Christian fellowship—and for 4 months in that very same building there was a terrified human being needing to be rescued. Until she was discovered and released by two men on the church's maintenance staff, that girl was a helpless captive.

Imagine! A prisoner in church! But perhaps there are more people hidden away in church than we realize—people who have been taken captive by God's diabolical enemy ([2 Tim. 2:26](#)). Like the apostle Paul before his conversion, they may even think they are living for God while they are dead in sin. There may be people in our churches who have not experienced spiritual freedom through faith in Jesus Christ.

Evangelist Billy Sunday quipped that taking a horse into a garage doesn't turn it into an auto, nor does merely taking a sin-bound person into a church change him or her into a child of God. Only personal faith in Jesus does that.

Are you a captive, or have you been set free?

Application:

1. Have you personally trusted Christ as your Savior? If not, talk to someone about that today!

2. It is so easy to go through the motions of Christianity and not actually be a believer. Name two things that Christians "do" that some people might be tempted to trust in for their salvation:

Written by: Vernon Grounds

The Highest Goal

Read: Philippians 3:10

What are you living for in your few fleeting years here on this earth? Anything other than fame, wealth, or influence? When Thomas Naylor was teaching business management at Duke University, he asked his students to draft a personal strategic plan. He reports that “with few exceptions, what they wanted fell into three categories: money, power, and things—very big things, including vacation homes, expensive foreign automobiles, yachts, and even airplanes.” This was their request of the faculty: “Teach me how to be a money-making machine.”

That’s not exactly an exalted ambition! No thought of humanitarian service, and no thought of spiritual values! Yet, what those students wanted was what many people want—maybe what most people want. The apostle Paul’s overriding ambition was totally different. His consuming desire was to know Jesus and become increasingly conformed to His holy example ([Phil. 3:10](#)). He wanted to serve Him by proclaiming the life-changing good news of God’s grace.

What is our highest goal? Do we want to be a money-making machine, which can never buy lasting happiness? Or do we want to become more like Jesus?

Application:

1. Name your dream job:

2. How should we balance having goals and keeping Jesus as our highest goal?

Pressing On

Read: Philippians 3:11-12

At a Christian men’s conference, I talked with a longtime friend who has encouraged and mentored me for many years. With him were two young men from China, new in their faith and deeply grateful for this man’s faithful friendship and spiritual help. My friend Clyde, nearing 80 years of age, glowed with enthusiasm as he said, “I’ve never been more excited about knowing and loving Christ than I am today.”

Paul’s letter to the Philippians reveals a heart and purpose that never diminished with time: “That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death” ([Phil. 3:10](#)). From the root of Paul’s relationship with Jesus came the fruit of his undiminished fervor that others be guided to faith in Him. He rejoiced to share the gospel and was encouraged that others became bolder because of him (1:12-14).

If our goal is merely service for the Lord, we may burn out somewhere along the line. But if our purpose, like Paul’s and Clyde’s and many others, is to know Christ and love Him, we’ll find that He will give us the strength to make Him known to others. Let us joyfully press on in the strength God gives!

Application:

1. Life seems to get busier and busier. What keeps us from burning out according to this devotional?

2. What should our attitude be as it relates to service opportunities?

A Time to Forget

Read: Philippians 3:13

The end of one year and the dawning of a new one provides an excellent opportunity to wipe the slate clean and make a fresh start. The well-known preacher Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887) said: “We have passed through one more year. One more long stage in the journey of life, with its ascents and descents and dust and mud and rocks and thorns and burdens that wear the shoulders, is done. The old year is dead. Roll it away. Let it go. God, in His providence, has brought us out of it. It is gone; . . . its evil is gone; its good remains. The evil has perished, and the good survives.”

Those who know the Lord Jesus as their Savior can let go of the past and move ahead with assurance because Jesus provides forgiveness and hope. Having confessed their sin, “forgetting those things which are behind,” they can confidently face the future, “reaching forward to those things which are ahead” ([Phil. 3:13](#)). Remembering God’s faithfulness and forgetting past mistakes will make entering the new year a time of joyous anticipation.

Yes, we can leave the sins and failures of this past year behind us, accept His forgiveness, and press on to higher ground. As far as our shortcomings are concerned, we can make the beginning of the new year a time to forget.

Application:

1. Are there words, decisions, or choices in your life that you have regrets about and wish you could take back?

2. This devotional is set in the context of the new year – how can you receive a fresh start in your life today?
