

## Reflection Questions for Chapter 3

Please read Chapter 3 in Philippians and pages 120-138 in the *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* commentary. Begin with this or another prayer of your choice: "*Blessed Lord, you speak to us through the Holy Scriptures. Grant that we may hear, read, respect, learn, and make them our own in such a way that the enduring benefit and comfort of the Word will help us grasp and hold the blessed hope of everlasting life, given us through our Savior Jesus Christ.*" Your reflections will be shared **May 16<sup>th</sup>** in your small group. Your group may not get to all the questions. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you to those questions most important for your group.

The reflection questions are excerpted from the author's small group study and from the *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible* by Scott Hahn.

**1. In 3:1b-11 Paul appears to belittle his accomplishments as a professional practitioner of his Jewish tradition. Yet that is not his point. He mentions his "zeal" and his "righteousness based on the law" only to say that, however much these achievements are good, his coming to know Jesus as his Messiah and Lord is far greater. Can you say the same of your own discovery of Jesus as your Messiah and Lord? If not, why not?**

**2. Paul writes of knowing Jesus and "the power of his resurrection" already in this life (i.e., long before his own anticipated resurrection from the dead, vv.11-12). How has he shown in chapter 1 the ways in which he knows the power of Jesus' resurrection?**

**3. In verses 12-16 Paul describes his gradual growth in Christian maturity with the metaphor of running in a race toward a goal. Does this image help you understand your own growth as a disciple of Christ?**

**What is Paul, like a sideline coach, urging his readers to do?**

**How is your Christian story like an extended marathon?**

**What does this analogy imply about our salvation?**

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**4. Paul writes: "Join with others in being imitators of me, brothers, and observe those who thus conduct themselves according to the model you have in us" (v. 18). We imitate models whose way of living attracts us. They can be family members, friends, or saints we read about. Who has been such a model of faith in your life?**

**5. In a Roman colony, where Roman citizenship was highly prized, how would the readers hear Paul's statement. "Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 20)? Does that help you think about what it means to be a "faithful citizen" in your state or nation today?**

***For your personal application:***

**3: 3-7 What are your "Christian credentials"? That is, what accomplishments, degrees, contacts, memberships, efforts, and so on, could you list that might convince people or God that you are a person of note? Whether you have anything to list or not, how would you echo Paul's sentiment in v. 7?**

**3:8 How do you know Christ Jesus as your Lord? Do you know him or only know about him? How would anyone else but you know whether your assessment is reliable? What is that relationship worth to you?**

**3:12-16 What is your attitude toward the call you have from God to be holy? How are you "straining forward" (v.13) for it? Paul looks on a desire for holiness as a mark of maturity; what do you think of it (especially in the light of your own circumstances)?**

**3:17-19 How comfortable would you feel asking someone else to imitate your Christian commitment? If you feel uncomfortable, how would you speak to those to whom Paul refers in vv. 18-19?**