

Devotional Thought
The Week of February 17, 2008

THEME: Getting To Know Christ

The Apostle Paul had a passion to serve God. Even before his conversion on the road to Damascus he was "faultless" in the observance of every one of God's laws. But after being confronted by Jesus, his focus changed; his passion remained, but his desire was now centered on Jesus and the good news of His gospel message.

Paul wrote in Philippians 3:10 *"I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death."* Paul pursued an intimate relationship with Jesus and sought to be identified with His death and resurrection. He knew the only way to experience the power of Jesus was to crucify his sinful nature and live as a new creation in Christ; and as a new creation, he continually desired to know his Creator.

Truly knowing Jesus Christ is much more than simply knowing "about" Him. We can fill our head with every possible biblical fact and still never know Christ. To know Him is to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to draw close to His side in our joy as well as our suffering. Nothing else in life has any real meaning: *"I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord"* (Philippians 3:8a).

Paul's passion for Jesus allowed him to loose his hold of all worldly attachments: *"I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ"* (Philippians 3:8b). This uncontested supremacy of Christ allowed Paul to be *"content in any and every situation"* (Philippians 4:12). By giving himself fully to knowing Christ, Paul gained contentment and peace.

We have the same ability to know Christ today. We are also promised the same results! Peace and contentment will never be achieved through more possessions, activities, or relationships because these are temporary and will fade away with time. Our life will only be truly content when we give ourselves to Jesus and love Him without reservation. We will only be filled with His peace as we seek to know Him.

We may never be asked to give up things for the sake of the gospel, but our heart must always hold on to things very loosely. Anything we cannot release has effectively become a god and crowds the throne that must be reserved only for Christ. Let's reconsider our priorities. Where do we spend our time and what commands our thoughts? Let's give ourselves to Him and make sure nothing has become more important than knowing Christ.

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