

“Rippin Religion!”

I. **INTRO:**

A. Listen to these quotes regarding *achievement* from some celebrities:

1. I discovered I didn't feel worth a *damn*, and certainly not worthy of love, unless I was accomplishing something. I suddenly realized I have never felt I could be loved just for being. Oprah Winfrey¹
2. My drive in life is from this horrible fear of being mediocre. That's always been pushing me, pushing me. Because even though I've become somebody, I still have to prove that I'm SOMEBODY. My struggle has never ended, and it probably never will. Madonna²
3. I had no idea who I was, or what I could be away from tennis,” says Chris Evert, recalling the final years of her career. “I was depressed and afraid because so much of my life had been defined by my being a tennis champion. I was completely lost. Winning made me feel like I was somebody. It made me feel pretty. It was like being hooked on a drug. I needed the wins, the applause, in order to have an identity. Chris Evert³

a) Paul deals with, is life about what we **achieve** or what we **receive**???

II. **RIPPIN RELIGION!**

A. **PAUL'S WARNINGS!** (1-3)

B. **Rejoice** - If you cannot rejoice in your circumstances...

1. You can always rejoice in **the Lord** who controls your circumstances.
2. **Fix your attention on Him**. He may not change your situation, but He will change **you**; & that is even better. (www)

C. (2) **Beware of** - look out for...(3 x's) *These: Joy stealing, evil working, ankle biting, legalists* were always fast at his heels! - Barking legalism wherever he taught Grace!

1. **Beware of dogs** - Don't picture pets. **Speaking of: diseased, flea bitten, wild, mangy, mutts!** [they bark, bite, & travel in packs, seeking to lure others away to roam with them!]

a) “These dogs weren't on leashes & could be very dangerous if they traveled in packs - They sniffed out new converts to devour w/their strict laws!” (Swindoll)

¹ Good Housekeeping, Sept, 1991, p. 63.

² Quoted from Vogue, in What Jesus Would Say, by Lee Strobel.

³ Chris Evert, retired tennis star, Good Housekeeping, October 1990, pp 87-88.

2. **Beware of evil workers** - *Evil Workers vs. Good workers!*
 - a) **The difference?** Those who “*worked for*” their salvation, **vs.** Those who “*worked out*” their salvation!
3. **Beware of the mutilation** - A play on word’s for a botched circumcision. ***Ouch!***
 - a) The mutilation meant...the circumcision on which they insisted was harmful rather than helpful to spiritual well-being.
 - b) **Circumcision as a religious rite was rendered null & void by the Cross of Christ!**
Col.2:11 “**In Him(Jesus) you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, (How?) by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.” [circumcision of the heart]**
4. Basically then, **beware of Religion & Religious people!**
 - a) Religion basically shouts “***clean up your act!***”! **Some just say it louder than others!**
 - b) **But**, they don’t tell you **how** to; they don’t **empower** you to be able to do so; & they usually don’t give you any time to work through your former life/ways.
 - (1) Jesus says, **I would like to *clean up your act!* I would like to empower you to do so! And I will be patient with you as you grow!**

D. (3) **Paul sees 3 differences between true believers & the Judaizers:**

1. **Worship God in Spirit** - Focus is on God not on their own achievements.
2. **Rejoice in Christ Jesus** - Not boast in *their* works **but** glory in the work of J.C.
3. **Have no confidence in the flesh** - Can’t trust in their own works for salvation - Only confidence in Jesus.
 - a) Never rely on it! **Don’t even trust it!** Flesh will always steer you wrong!
 - (1) No Christian *arrives*...till he arrives in glory!
 - b) **How far are these true of you?**

E. **PAUL’S ACHIEVEMENTS!** (4-6)

- F. **Wow! Nice Resume!** - Paul says you want to talk confidence in the flesh?...**Let’s go!** - **Check out my wall of Degrees, Plaques, & Certificates!**
1. See, when Paul was *Saul* he was a proud Pharisee; he was B.M.O.C.; Top Dog of the Kennel; The Cream of the Crop!
 2. **Then** Saul ran right into “***The Yard Stick***” Jesus himself! [**That changed everything**]
 3. **Circumcised the 8th day** - He bore in his body the badge of the chosen people
 4. **Stock of Israel** - A member of the nation in covenant w/God.
 5. **Tribe of Benjamin** - Was the only Patriarch born in the Land of Promise. 1st king came from Benjamin.

6. **Top Hebrew** - He knew the language of his fathers.
7. **A Pharisee** - He was more than a devout Jew, he was a “*separated one*” keeping the Law Blamelessly.

G. (6) **Picture an old doctors scale here** (*sliding one weight at a time over*):

1. Concerning the **Law**(slide); Concerning **zeal**(slide); Concerning **Rt.** (slide).

H. **PAUL’S P&L (profit & loss) STATEMENT!** (7-9)

I. (7,8) **But** - Then Whamo! **He ran rt. into perfection.** Jesus stepped onto the scale & invited Paul to step onto the other side!

1. Paul went from the worlds crows nest **looking down** on all, to the oceans depths **looking up!**

J. **Loss for Christ** - Lesson: ***Hold Things Loosely!***

1. **Like** the Toddler w/a new toy, **we** grip things too tightly!
2. **Like** the proper way to hold a golf club is like holding a tube of toothpaste.
3. **With relationships** we’re often better at *smothering* rather than *loving*.
 - a) Whether it’s a girlfriend cutting off a relationship that you don’t want to let go of; **or** a son/daughter heading off to college/mission field.
 - b) “**The greater the Possessiveness, the greater the Pain!**”

4. We don’t want to give up our **treasures** for fear of *their safety*.

- a) **YET** remember everything which we commit to Christ...**is safe!** [In fact nothing is safe outside of Him!]

(1) ***No Child; no Job; no Romance; no Friend; no Future; no Dream...is safe outside of Him!***

- b) Need some proof? See Abraham w/his son Isaac.

(1) Gen.22:2 **Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.**

(2) **Abraham had to open his hands wider than any earthly man ever had to!**

K. **God wants to reign w/o a rival!** - Keep your hands empty & your hearts warm! (Swindoll)

1. **Q:** Can you name 1 person, or object, you need to loosen your grip on?
2. Jim Elliot said, “**He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose!**”

L. **Do you feel you’ve made sacrifices to follow the Lord?**

1. Paul did not feel he lost anything worthwhile by trusting Christ.
2. **Instead**, he gained everything really worth having! :)

- M. (8) Paul had *not failed* at his religion. The point of his testimony is that he had seen a better way & chosen to follow it.
- N. **Rubbish** - (used only here!) **could be speaking of excrement, dung, or trash, the kind thrown to the dogs!** [**Illus.** Picking up doggy-doo in my backyard a few weeks ago...barefoot &...]
1. Yep...all my works, squished right there on the bottom of my foot!
- O. (9) Faith in Christ is the sole ground of acceptance with God! [**Luther called, The great exchange!**]
1. **This was why the whole reformation was fought.**
 - a) The **5 solas** (5 Latin phrases) emerged during the Protestant Reformation & summarize the Reformers' basic theological beliefs *in contradistinction to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church of the day.*
 - (1) **Sola scriptura** (Scripture alone) is the teaching that the **Bible** is the only inspired & authoritative word of God & it is the **only source** for Christian doctrine, & is accessible to all - that is, it is perspicuous (easily understood) & self-interpreting.
 - (2) **Sola fide** (faith alone) is the teaching that **justification** (being declared right by God), is received by **faith only**, without any mixture of or need for good works. **Though in classical Protestant theology, saving faith is always evidenced, but not determined, by good works.**
 - (3) **Sola gratia** (grace alone) is the teaching that salvation comes by God's grace or "**unmerited favor**" only - **not** as something merited by the sinner.
 - (4) **Solo Christo** (through Christ alone) is the teaching that **Christ** is the only mediator between God and man, and that there is salvation through no other.
 - (5) **Soli Deo gloria** (glory to God alone) is the teaching that **all glory** is to be due to **God alone**, since salvation is accomplished solely through His will and action.
- P. Here we have a *Previously Proud Pharisee*, now a **humble bankrupt believer!**
1. Righteousness is either "from the Law", **or** "through faith in Christ!"
 2. Note it's defined as "**from God**" & "**by faith.**"
- Q. To be **found in Him**, is **Salvation truth!** - *Christ found in us*, that's **Sanctification truth!**
1. To be **found in Him** means that when God looks at me He sees Christ!
 2. To have **Christ found in me** means that when other people look at me they see Christ!
 - a) When someone asks, "**what is God like?**" we **should** be able to say, "**Look at the church**" **or** "**look at me!**"

R. **PAUL'S QUEST!** (10-11)

S. (10) Notice the natural lead into *Sanctification* **from** vs.9's *Salvation*.

T. Here lies 3 *Secrets* of a **Holy Life!**

1. **KNOW HIM!** - Not just know about Him.

a) Knowing Him requires genuine interest! Spending quality time w/Him.

b) Having a progressive relationship where each person **reveals** Himself to the other; both **listen**; both **talk**; both **respond!**

2. **KNOW HIS POWER!** - The Power of His Res. (a dynamic power which operates in the life of the individual Christian).

a) Look how the Res. changed Peter's life!

3. **KNOW HIS SUFFERING!** - Know them more personally.

a) Trust in **your own achievements** brings you glory now, **but** leaves you spiritually bankrupt later! - Trusting in **Jesus' accomplishments** gives Him the Glory now, **&** results in your eternal righteousness forever.

U. (11) **Attain** - To arrive at a destination, finish the race.

1. ***That I may arrive at my destination!*** (see attained in vs.12 also)

V. (10,11) **Amplified Version:** [For my determined purpose is] **that I may know Him** [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], **and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection** [which it exerts over believers], **and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed** [in spirit into His likeness even] **to His death**, [in the hope] **That if possible I may attain to the** [spiritual and moral] **resurrection** [that lifts me] **out from among the dead** [even while in the body].