

Confidence in Christ

GETTING STARTED

Read, reflect on, and answer the following questions:

- ❶ What would people say are your best qualities?
- ❷ What is something you're good at?
- ❸ What are a few ways you have been affirmed?



PHILIPPIANS 3:1-9

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. **2** Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; **3** for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, **4** although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: **5** circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; **6** as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. **7** But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. **8** More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, **9** and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith...



How might Paul define confidence in the flesh?

How do you think the new context could affect these distinctions?

What is the relationship between gaining Christ and confidence in the flesh? Why do you think that's the case?

INTERVARSITY®

LEADING
EDGE

Loss is Gain

CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH: a sense of worth or [] that comes from birth, role, achievement, or performance. These traits can be referred to as [] .

OUR HUMAN TENDENCY will always be to try to find our worth or identity in [] and our personal [] and his []

A KEY STEP in having our worth and identity rooted in [] is to let go of the ways our worth and identity comes from our personal distinctions. Entering [] is a wonderful way to make our personal distinctions [] .

Case Studies

- 1 Andre is a black sophomore from the East Coast who is easy-going, confident, and known in his fellowship as a pretty cool guy. He was an excellent high-school basketball player, and can still dunk, even though he's only 5'9". He tends to be introverted, but his charisma seems to allow him to make friends easily. He is going on a summer mission to the Pico-Rivera district of Los Angeles, and will be working with a tutoring program for children of recent Mexican and Central American immigrants.
- 2 Michelle is a Latina Senior who is an academic scholarship student. Her parents immigrated to the U.S. from Columbia and Peru, but she grew up in a North-West Chicago suburb. She comes off as shy when you first meet her, but has formed friends through her cleverness, and participation on the college trivia team. College has been an important time of her developing a sense of ethnic identity. As a result, she is excited to go across town to help pioneer the new InterVarsity group as the local city college, which is a mostly Latino, two-year college. She will be helping gather new students, and leading them in a small group Bible study.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

What might the student view as his or her distinction?

How do you think entering the new context could affect those?

What choices will each student face in the new setting?

At the end of the day...

1. What are you learning by doing these case studies?
2. Try a case study on yourself. What are some of the distinctions you cling to?
3. How would cross-cultural experiences be good for your own sense of identity?

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How might Paul define confidence in the flesh?

A sense of worth, value, identity or righteousness that comes from his own birth, achievements, or qualities.

How do you think the new context could affect these distinctions?

Because not only do they not count for anything in the kingdom of God, but they tempt him to find his worth in them rather than finding it in Christ. As a result, not only are they not worth anything, but they are a hindrance to his spiritual growth and right dependence on God.

What is the relationship between gaining Christ and confidence in the flesh? Why do you think that's the case?

In order to gain Christ, you need to count your best attributes as rubbish. Somehow, given the nature of human depravity, if we have any other place to root our identity and worth other than Christ, we will always drift toward finding it there.

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Loss is Gain

CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH: a sense of worth or **identity** that comes from birth, role, achievement, or performance. These traits can be referred to as **distinctions**.

OUR HUMAN TENDENCY will always be to try to find our worth or identity in **ourselves** and our personal **distinctions** and his **Christ**.

A KEY STEP in having our worth and identity rooted in **Christ** is to let go of the ways our worth and identity comes from our personal distinctions. Entering **context** is a wonderful way to make our personal distinctions **rubbish**.

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