



## Daily Devotionals

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### PHILIPPIANS 3:2-11 COMING TO JESUS

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*<sup>2</sup> Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. <sup>3</sup> For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— <sup>4</sup> though I myself have reasons for such confidence.*

*If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.*

*<sup>7</sup> But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. <sup>10</sup> 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, <sup>11</sup> and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

Have you ever thought about the fact that you cannot have a relationship on your own? Even in the uneven playing field of pet ownership we can see evidence of the interactive nature of every relationship. Compare living with a dog, a cat, a gerbil and a wild raccoon. A domesticated dog will respond on a virtually constant basis to its owner, thus earning the popular title of “man’s best friend.” By contrast, at best a cat will respond whenever it deigns to grant an audience to its local human companion. Cats are cute, entertaining, and fit easily on one’s lap, but they are also aloof and independent little balls of fur who are not known for performing heroic acts on behalf of their owners (if that word can be accurately used with regard to cats). But even less relational is the gerbil that has to be kept in a cage and observed more as a captive than a companion. The little rodent does not appear to have any real awareness of its owner. And finally we have the raccoon; an animal that for the most part defies domestication at all and lurks about the trash can

in the dark of night and would just as soon avoid human contact. Our relationship with each species is not dictated by our work of relating to them, but rather is the product of the ability of both parties to interact relationally.

We cannot earn a perfect relationship with Jesus by being the best human being or even living the most “righteous” human life. Yes, like in our world of pets, our relationship with Jesus is an uneven one. We have been provided with the opportunity to have a relationship with Jesus, but like our pets, the quality of the relationship is determined by our response to our Master. When we believe in Jesus we move from raccoon to house pet in our relationship with Jesus. But it is with increasing relinquishment of our independence that we move through the gerbil, cat and dog stages and finally into the relationship of a son. It is only as a son that we can “*know the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.*” Our goal is not to be all we want to be in this world or even all we think he would want us to be, but rather we are to aspire fulfill the description, “like father, like son.”

***Bend my will, Father that I might truly become your son. Jesus, you are the perfect revelation of the nature of a son of God, may I aspire to look only to you as my Savior and my Guide to the Father. Purge me of my self-centered willfulness and independence so that I will value a perfect relationship with you far above all else. Amen.***

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