

Read Scripture: Philippians 3:1-11  
Gains and Losses

NIV

Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. <sup>2</sup> Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. <sup>3</sup> For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— <sup>4</sup> though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have 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 righteousness based on the law, faultless.

<sup>7</sup> But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, 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<sup>[a]</sup> Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. <sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

## REFLECTION

Every job seeker or college applicant has had the occasion to put together a resume. Take a few minutes to compose a brief spiritual resume. Don't be bashful. List your spiritual gifts, and God-given abilities. Jot down some of your most meaningful spiritual experiences. Summarize your goals and objectives.

### For Thought and Discussion

How do you respond when you see a sign or hear an announcement with this one word only: "WARNING!"?

### For Thought and Discussion

According to 3:1-11, why should a Christian rejoice?

## **Application**

How could you grow to know Christ more intimately?

- a. Ask God to nurture in you a desire (see 2:13) to know Christ that outweighs every other desire. Plan to pray about this daily.
- b. To know Christ better, meditate daily on 2:6-11 or another passage, such as Colossians 1:15-20 or Isaiah 52:13-53:12.
- c. Study Jesus' character in one of the gospels. Let Philippians 3:10-11 be your motive.

## **Inspiration**

Computers are legalists, impersonal pragmatist. Push a button and get a response. Learn the system and get the printout. Blow the system and get ready for a long night.

Computers are heartless creatures. Don't expect any compassion from your laptop. They don't call it a hard disk for nothing. (Even the shell is hard.)

Some folks have a computer theology when it comes to understanding God. God is the ultimate desktop. The Bible is the maintenance manual, the Holy Spirit is the floppy disk, and Jesus is the 1-800 service number.

Call it computerized Christianity. Push the right buttons, enter the right code, insert the correct data and bingo, and print out your own salvation.

It's professional religion. You do your part and the Divine Computer does his. No need to pray (after all, you control the keyboard). No emotional attachment necessary (who wants to hug circuits?). And worship? Well, worship is a lab exercise-insert the rituals and see the results.

Computerized religion. No kneeling. No weeping. No gratitude. No emotion. I's great-unless you make a mistake. Unless you err. Unless you enter the wrong data or forget to save the manuscript. Unless you're caught on the wrong side of a power surge. And then...tough luck, buddy, you're on your own.

Religion by computer. That's what happens when...

You replace the living God with a cold system;

You replace inestimable love with pro-forma budget;

You replace the ultimate sacrifice of Christ with the puny achievements of man.

When you view God as a computer and the Christian as a number-crunching, cursor-commanding button-pusher...that is religion by the computer.

God hates it. It crushes hos people. It contaminates his leaders. It corrupts his children. (From And the Angels Were Silent by Max Lucado)

***Q: What has been your experience of "computerized Christianity"?***