

## SATISFIED?

Philippians 3:2-11

V. 7: “But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.”

Striving for excellence never reaches satisfaction. Satisfaction means being happy with the end result. Perfection. Jesus-empowered confidence brings contentment in life. (See *Empowered Confidence* devotion). But contentment is different from satisfaction. Satisfaction is total approval of the outcome. A fulfilled end result. As long as we’re alive, we continue striving, achieving, and reaching towards excellence.

The apostle Paul listed his history of achievements in Philippians 3:4-6. He was very confident, and impressed with his own success. Paul was proud, saying he is a Hebrew of Hebrews from the Benjamin tribe, trained as a Pharisee, a zealot (or extreme fanatic) for the faith. Why did he consider all this a loss for Christ’s sake?

His pedigree (PED-i-gree meaning lineage, bloodline, or ancestry) was perfect—according to his standards. He felt as though he was envied by everyone around him. Paul’s making a point when he insists that it means less than nothing—in fact—a loss for the sake of Christ. He realized how worthless the things achieved in the flesh (human strength) are compared to what’s eternal.

Paul recognizes the difference—pointing out that his drive for excellence comes from God’s Spirit—and has nothing to do with earthly success (Philippians 3:2-3). His

pride, after “finding” Jesus on the road to Damascus, came from the relationship that formed between them (Philippians 3:8-9).

Kids learn things from day one. It takes years to perfect walking, talking, and growing strong. (And that’s only if everything works perfectly). Believing in Jesus produces confidence. Becoming His friend yields growing contentment—more each day. A Spirit-filled life creates hunger for more of Him and less of you. Aspiring to satisfaction this way is measured by eternal success.

Realistically, Paul writes about balance. In his letter to the Philippians, he contrasts contentment with satisfaction. Even in prison, Paul was content in his circumstances—trusting God for his care (Philippians 4:11). But he refused to be satisfied with his spiritual growth. He never stopped learning, improving, and reaching upwards. His continued drive for excellence never stopped because he hadn’t yet arrived at the finish line. He continued pressing towards perfection because Christ had a hold of him, straining for what was ahead. (Philippians 3:12-14).

What was Paul’s goal, the prize at the end of his race? Heaven.

### **Take Home Nugget**

Balancing contentment with striving towards excellence is the key to satisfaction. Building a relationship with Jesus exceeds any earthly achievement, and yields ultimate **eternal** satisfaction.

Striving for excellence in Jesus—more each day,

Yields contentment when we follow and obey.

Never stopping nor swerving left or right:

Heaven—straight ahead—remains in our sight.

J.D. Griffith