



www.mitchkruse.com

Grounders:

Have you ever kept rules at the expense of a relationship? Accomplishments become embarrassments when we shoot at the wrong goal. In Philippians 3, Paul describes the wrong goal of legalism which says that rules are greater than relationships. However, God can change our embarrassments into the *joy* of accomplishments when we shoot at the right goal of love where relationships are greater than rules (Phil. 3:12-4:1).

In order to give God our embarrassments *first we must turn*, which requires that we humble ourselves and press on toward the goal of love (Phil. 3:12-16). Paul said that he did not consider himself perfect (3:12, 13), but three verses later, he described himself as perfect, or mature (3:15). Therein lies the paradox of humility. The writers of Scripture used the word perfect in the context of being complete, rather than our western picture of flawlessness. Paul said that humbling ourselves to Christ, recognizing our incompleteness, leads us to being complete in Christ. No legalistic behavior, no rule keeping, will complete us. Only Christ can complete us when we humble ourselves to His love. We can experience the joy of believing in Him by humbly recognizing that we are in process (3:12, 13).

This is true because Christ loved us first (Phil. 3:12, 14; cf. 1 John 4:19). Just as Christ took hold of Paul in dramatic fashion, so He has taken hold of you and me by revealing His loving heart to us. He abhorred legalism (Matt. 11:28-30; 23:23). He preached love (Matt. 22:37-40; John 13:34). Rules were made for relationships, not relationships for rules.

Paul said how we can press on toward the goal of love. First, we forget what is behind us (legalistic accomplishments which became embarrassments), and second, we strain toward the goal that is ahead (3:14). Paul used athletic imagery throughout this passage, including the word for goal which is *skopos* in Greek. It was a post at the end of the race upon which the runner would fix his eyes. Paul said that our goal is Christ and His love (3:14). The writer of Hebrews 12:2 said that we fix our eyes on Christ, the author and perfecter (completer) of our faith who for the *joy* set before Him endured the cross and now sits on God's throne. In Acts 20:24, Paul said that his goal was to finish the race that God had called him to and that was testifying to the gospel of God's grace (undeserved love).

If you have followed rules at the expense of a relationship, humble yourself and turn from the goal of legalism toward the goal of love. You might have to apologize to someone and admit your fault.

*Second*, to experience the joy of our embarrassments becoming accomplishments to make us more like Christ, Paul said that we should *join with others in community and humbly serve others* (3:17). This is how we imitate Christ's humility described by Paul in the previous chapter. Serve the person you have hurt like Christ served you.

Paul said that we should remember the team name on our jersey, giving characteristics of legalistic behavior which is in opposition to Christ: their destiny is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame; their mind is on earthly things. But we are citizens of heaven: our destiny is construction; our god is Christ; our glory is in our name; our mind is on heavenly things (3:18-20a). He said that



[www.mitchkruse.com](http://www.mitchkruse.com)

we eagerly await our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ (3:20b-21). This is how our  
embarrassments of placing rules higher than relationships are transformed into joy (4:1).  
In Him,  
Mitch