



# Searching for Righteousness

Philippians 3:1-14 | Ryan Pfeiffer | Oct 20, 2024

INTRO. Let's re-read vs 9 I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 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 on the basis of faith.

When you think of righteousness... what comes to mind?

- First thing comes to mind... self-righteousness... moral snobbery. PPT.
- Or we think of it in terms of religious rules...

Reading The Righteous Mind. Jonathan Haidt. Atheist... social psychologist

I want to show you that an obsession with righteousness is the normal human condition. It is a feature of our evolutionary design, not a bug or errors that crept into minds that would otherwise be objective and rational.

His point... the search for righteousness is pre-wired into our brains. Innate!

Paul would agree with Haidt... everyone is searching for righteousness.

But he'd disagree w/ Haidt's guess that its the product of evolution...

For Paul, our shared longing for righteousness is the product of our Imago Dei

The search for righteousness? The longing to be a good person... and to live a good life...

1. To feel confident in ourself.
2. To feel connected with others
3. And aligned with something/ someone larger than ourselves.

The question is not are we reaching for righteousness rather where do we seek to get our righteousness from?

FOCUS.

- Paul warns us against the danger of self-righteousness.
- Paul guides us to God's righteousness.
- Paul teaches us how to take hold of the righteousness we're all searching for.

SELF RIGHTEOUSNESS. 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. 2 Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh.

Jewish Christians telling Gentile Christians they had to get circumcised.

- To be accepted in the club of God's people
- To be accepted by God himself.

Self righteousness is any attempt to define & achieve a confidence in our goodness apart from God.

It can be religious... as in case here... goodness thru ritual, rules, law

There are many secular ways we seek "righteousness" ... set up laws, standards, rules to measure up to give us a sense of fulfillment...



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Law... a moral code... a code of conduct... standard...we are good enough:

1. Sports... the “right” team, skill set... the play time... starting—> Scholarship!
2. School... straight A’s... righteous... good... SAT scores—> College of choice
3. Social space... “right” style, humor, social events—> Popularity

ILLUS... acid washed jeans- pegged/ members only- sleeves pulled up...PPT.

In every case... meeting a standard... performance... achievement.

Paul highlights his list Read vs4-6. ... Notice... “reasons for confidence”...

Problem is...

- based on humans standards—> [Proverbs 14:12](#) There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.
- based on what I can achieve—> human strength—> Failure... Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... (Pride/Fear).

GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS. vs 9 I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 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 on the basis of faith.

1. I consider them garbage... every path, effort to righteousness w/out GOD.
2. A righteousness of my own... from the law... right standard... LAW is good.

Impossible to meet... 2 PATHS: 1) Lower the bar. 2) Live in shame. PPT.

Next But that which is through faith in Christ... What does Paul mean?

- Jesus is the embodiment of God’s righteousness- The LAW in human form

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...and Love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 22:36.

10 commandments are about loving God, neighbor and self...  
The righteousness that saves us puts us right with God...

Being in right relationship with God puts us right w/ everything else!

This is the righteousness we are all searching for... this happiness...

Matt 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be satisfied.

Haidt. Happiness comes... from getting the right relationship between yourself and others, yourself and your work, and yourself and something larger than yourself.

2) Jesus is the only way... “I am the way, the truth, and the life” Jn14:6.



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TAKE HOLD. 12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

- Not that I have already obtained all this... I haven't arrived, I'm growing, process!
- Take hold for which Christ Jesus took hold of me...?

1) Believe/ Accept that you cannot make yourself righteous but Jesus can!

Jesus' death on Cross was Jesus taking our sin to give us his righteousness.

2 Cor 5:21 God made [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Putting our faith in Jesus is the only way to be made right with God.

The Great Exchange: The Cross... marriage metaphor.

2) To take hold of Jesus' righteousness we have to LET GO... OF OURS.

V7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

Consider loss means to let it go... to surrender to Jesus.

- Some things need to be surrendered... Circumstances that take things from us.
- Some things need to be renounced... Choose... throw away... stop trusting in

ILLUS. Afraid of what people would think... Jesus freak...

- People's opinions, approval... to be cool... to meet their standards...

Took a Public Stand... Wearing a shirt... Ask me about Jesus...