

# The Highest Priority in Life

by Bob Hoekstra

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*Knowing God is the highest priority in life, and it is the means by which we live.*

**Duration:** 53:42

**Scripture:** Philippians 3:7

**Topics:** "Knowing God", "Christian Growth"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the highest priority in life, which is knowing God. It highlights the importance of meeting the Lord, renouncing self-righteousness, and growing in an intimate relationship with Christ. The passage in Philippians chapter 3 is explored, focusing on the marks of knowing the Lord, the surpassing value of knowing Christ, and being found in Him for righteousness through faith.

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## Transcript

We'll have two studies together, one this day, but they'll both be on the same theme. The theme is really the core of the entire Word of God, and you can put it in two words. Knowing God.

Knowing God. That's what life is about. That's what this great Word of God is all about.

Knowing God. And our first study is going to be about the highest priority in life. The highest priority in life.

We sang about it, really. Life's greatest treasure, you could call it. Also life's ultimate reality, life's ultimate purpose, our reason for living, and also the means by which we live.

It's also how we measure true success in living. People talk about success in all kinds of terms. Well, God talks about it in one fundamental way, and that is whether or not we know Him, and are we growing in knowing Him.

Also this speaks of our source of help, our hope for the future, our security now and forevermore, and really on and on and on the story could go, because I think ultimately everything in the Word of God is going to point to this issue, and then the realities of God flow out of this issue. Knowing God. And our first study, the highest priority in life.

If this priority is out of order, actually everything else in our lives is out of order. If this priority is in order, everything else will be growing into its proper perspective and its proper place. How good of God to bring it down to such an issue.

And you can catch by the title, Knowing God, that these studies are about an ongoing, growing relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's pray together before we begin to read the Word. Lord, we thank you for the great invitation to come to know you.

We thank you for the privilege of having an acquaintanceship with you. We thank you for the Word of God that explains these things to us. We thank you for the Holy Spirit that guides us into all of this truth.

Lord, we acknowledge your presence with us here this day. Our hope is set on you. We need to hear from you.

We don't need the conjectures and speculations and opinions of man. We just need to hear the living and abiding words of the true and living God. So Lord, by your Holy Spirit, work.

In fact, we ask you to pour out your Holy Spirit that there might be abundant measures of insight and light and life abundant, we pray in Jesus' name, Amen. Philippians chapter 3 is perhaps the classic passage in all of the New Testament on this grand subject of knowing God. Philippians chapter 3. In verses 2 and 3 we'll see the authenticating marks of knowing the Lord.

When a person truly has met the Lord and knows the Lord and has the Lord in their lives, that begins to leave spiritual characteristics upon your life as our pilgrimage with Him is developed. Philippians chapter 3, verses 2 and 3. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation, it could be translated the false circumcision, for we are the circumcision, that is the true circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Beware of the dogs, this is not a warning of wild animals running the streets.

Beware of spiritual dogs, what a category that is, God help us to never be in that category. But it is a warning, and often the warnings in the word of God are ignored in our contemporary society, often in the church world. Thank God for warnings.

Our Heavenly Father, the perfect parent, good parents warn their children, they don't pamper their children, they love their children, but they warn them when needed, and this is a strong warning. Beware of dogs, spiritual dogs, those who are a danger, are not really coming into the fullness of humanity, which would be a born again growing believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Beware of dogs, beware of the evil workers, there are those out there in the world that are working hard at a bad agenda, they're called evil workers.

And of course, this is referring to religious leaders, that's what this is all about, really talking about the Judaizers, the legalists, those who think you can either earn your way to heaven on your own performance, or once you have that access settled, that you can increase your righteousness by your own resources and effort. Beware of the mutilation, could be translated false circumcision, you know, the people of God of old had the mark of circumcision upon their bodies that they were set apart to the true and living God. Well, beware of those who carry religious markings upon their life and their jargon and their behavior, but they're not the real deal.

Verse 3, for we are the circumcision, we are the ones truly marked by God, that is, we truly know the Lord. And here are the three marks that are given at the opening of this great section of Scripture. For we are the true circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and third, have no confidence in the flesh.

Boy, what powerful marks. May we be marked out by these realities. May this be the way we think and walk and talk and live.

Those who worship God in the Spirit. God is to be worshipped, all of life is to be a worshipped life. And those who know the true and living God and see His glory and His holiness and His majesty and His love and His truth, they just want to worship Him.

But true worship must take place in the Spirit. God is Spirit. Those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and in truth.

You can't just set up a human procedure and automatically worship God. Worship must be of the Spirit. First, the Holy Spirit has to reveal to us the living God, who He is, what He's like, what He's done.

And that will stir a sense of awe in our hearts about His glory and His greatness, and we'll want to respond to that. And that's worship. But we'll want to respond appropriately.

Living lives that declare that God is great and we are struck with awe by His majesty and His reality. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal God to us, and only the Spirit can guide us into what is appropriate worship response in word and in deed. And, of course, that's all revealed in the Word of God.

This is not just guesswork or preference. It's revealed in the Word of God, who He is, and how to respond in a life before Him properly. And the Spirit is the one who has inspired the Word of God, and the Spirit must be our teacher of the Word of God.

So we worship God in spirit. But here's another mark that comes upon the lives of those who are the true circumcision, truly marked by knowledge of the Lord. They rejoice in Christ Jesus.

Actually, that could be translated, and it is in many versions, boasts in Christ Jesus. And, of course, both of them are a perfect translation of the Word, and they're greatly related. You know, we get our joy over who the Lord is, the excitement of life, the stirring of our souls.

But not only joy, a boasting in, a bragging on. When Christians gather near and far, they're to gather in the name of Jesus. And if those of us who gather in His name do not spend time in our hearts and minds, and even in our discourse one with another, in boasting in the Lord Jesus Christ, we've really missed a great opportunity.

We're really not letting a demonstration of one of these great marks of reality, of relationship with the Lord, work in our lives. Boasting in the Lord. Everybody knows about boasting.

The new thing is boasting in the Lord. Boasting is the way of humanity. And really, actually, we were created to be boasters, but for many of us it takes half a lifetime to catch on who is to be the object of our boasting.

You know, typically, what do we want to boast in? Self. Self, or the things that self loves by which self pleases self. That's generally our focus.

The true circumcision, the true mark of knowing the Lord, He's the one we're caught up in. He's the one we love to say great things about. And we can only understate His greatness and His glory.

And that fits very much with this third mark. And, have no confidence in the flesh. Boy, that is so contrary to the ways of man.

Kingdoms are built on confidence in the flesh. The flesh being the natural human life, and all of its resources inherited from the original one to pass on life on a human level. Who is that? Adam.

And that's a fallen life. That's a life that's alienated from God. And that's how the world lives.

And the world builds kingdoms on this. But the kingdom of heaven is not built on this. Those who are truly marked by knowing the God of heaven above.

More and more, it's evident in their lives, the way they talk, the way they live, where they put their hope, where they put their expectations. It's more and more evident that such a one wants to have no confidence in the flesh. Now think of it, that's so contrary to the way most of us grew up, or at least how our culture wanted to raise us.

I mean, one of the great virtues of our culture and many cultures around the world is self-confidence. What do you want to be? I just want to be a self-confident person. Well, if you don't mind, may we all together groan for you and intercede for you.

What a meager place to put our confidence. Oh, not that you can't accomplish very impressive things on the scale of time and space and just human interest. But, what does it amount to? Jesus said, apart from me, you can do nothing.

It amounts to nothing that really matters for time and eternity. May we be those who put no confidence in the flesh. All the way from New Age philosophy to many false religions to some aberrations even in Christendom, we're exhorted that it's all about self and it's for self and whatever you want to make happen, you got to dig in and produce it out of self.

When a Christian thinks and lives like that, he's walking not according to the spirit, but according to the flesh. And at that point, we are drawing on the same resources that fallen humanity draws upon. And you can just picture, if that's the way the true saints of the true and living God think and walk and talk, how anemic the church world can become.

And, in many ways, in many places, there is a crisis right on this very issue. And in our culture, which is so astoundingly psychologically oriented instead of what? Spiritually oriented. Everywhere we hear a message, it's some way or another, you know.

It's about you, it's from you, it's for you, and you can do it, you know you can. Come on, let's get going. May God mark us with these realities.

Make us the true circumcision, the true people of God, set apart from humanity for God, who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Now, at this point, the spirit of the Lord reminded Paul and had him give a bit of a testimony on how much reason he had himself to put confidence in the flesh. You might think, boy, who is this weak-kneed, weak-necked, negative writer here? Who is this guy? He must have had a very weak life, a very ineffective life.

He must have been the butt of everyone's jokes and became kind of a hopeless, pathetic mess. You know, it's quite the contrary. Paul was kind of Mr. Everything.

You talk about someone in his culture who had life all put together and had risen to the top. Look at the reasons that he had to put confidence in the flesh. Verse 4, Though I also might have confidence in the flesh.

If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, you think you have reason to trust in yourself? He says, circumstantially, culturally, personal lineage and history speaking, I more so. Then he goes to give his human pedigree. Circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

Concerning the law, a Pharisee. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church. Concerning the righteousness, which is in the law, blameless.

Wow, pretty impressive. He was circumcised the eighth day. Set apart, as it were, culturally speaking and religiously speaking, though he didn't have a true relationship with the Lord yet, of course, but he was, just like the law said, circumcised that child on the eighth day.

From the beginning he was right in line with the law of God. He was of the stock of Israel. Hey, this is the chosen people, the chosen nation.

He was a part of them. He was of the tribe of Benjamin. That's the source of their first king.

Wow, they were pleased with that. Didn't turn out to be a good king, though, did he? Remember who the first king of Israel was? Saul. You know how you spell Saul? F-L-E-S-H.

He looked to have such a good beginning. He looked to have such a good beginning. But as time went on, his confidence was misplaced in himself.

But, the tribe of Benjamin, the first king of Israel, and he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. If someone said, can you define for me what a true Hebrew, one of God's chosen ones, would really look like, and behave like, and talk like, and his values and all of that, they would point to Paul. You want to know what a Hebrew really is? Watch that man.

He's a Hebrew of the Hebrews. And concerning the law, he was a Pharisee. Concerning the law that God Almighty gave, holy God, giving a holy law, demanding that people be holy, for the Lord God is holy.

He was a Pharisee. Those were the very ones who took the law of God the most seriously. Gave attention to it.

At least spoke openly of a desire to follow it to the nth degree. In fact, they were sort of the ones to explain when you were in line with the law, when you weren't. They could even tell you on the Sabbath day, when you took one too many steps, and went from resting before the Lord to working and disobeying the Lord.

He was a Pharisee. He was of the conservative religious party. Verse 6, concerning zeal, was he zealous? Did he throw his life into this matter? Of godly, religious behavior? Concerning zeal? Here's how zealous he was.

He persecuted the church. He thought the church was a cult. And he was out persecuting them.

Arresting them. Dragging them off to prison. And he even took part in the execution of one of the early church leaders, Stephen.

Oh, concerning zeal. This man persecuted the church. Concerning the righteousness which is in the law? Blameless.

If people looked at the law, looked at his life, they could not find anything. Now, God could look right on his heart and know there was big trouble in this man's life. But if people were looking at the law, and people from the outside looking at Paul, they could not point a finger and say, I lay blame right here.

Was there reason in Paul's history to put confidence in the flesh? Was there a temptation? Absolutely. Maybe we've lived long enough to have many reasons not to put confidence in our flesh, though we still have a natural tendency to do it. But this man who is being used of God to speak about living with no confidence in the flesh, he knew what it was to develop a life by his own self-sufficiency.

He rose to the top of his religious culture through self-sufficiency. When he says, we who are the true circumcision have no confidence in the flesh, this is a man speaking who went from the heights of self-confidence, saw how spiritually bankrupt that self-righteousness was before God, to the pits of conviction and despair when the Lord struck him down on the road to Damascus as he was out persecuting the church. And the Lord busted him and said, you know, it's kind of hard to kick against the goads, against the conviction of the spirit, against his conscience.

And he fell before him, who are you, Lord? And he followed the Lord Jesus thereafter and learned these great truths. May we learn them. Same Lord, same spirit, same natural tendency in all of us toward the flesh, same word of God now to draw upon light and insight.

And by the spirit of God, not only see that these are the marks of those who know God, but we want the spirit of God to establish those in our lives, you know. We don't want to make the mistake that Paul made of self-righteousness. We see that the Lord must establish these in our lives.

And certainly, if we're looking to self and confidence in the flesh, we're really grieving the spirit, quenching the spirit. We are blocking spiritual progress in the Lord concerning these things. And then in verses 7 and 8, the heart of this passage is revealed.

The heart of God for us is revealed. We see it's all about knowing Christ. That's how you get out of this kind of self-sufficiency, self-confident, fleshly, carnal, earthbound life.

You come to know Christ. And we'll see in our studies that it's both an introduction to Him and then a growing in acquaintanceship with Him. Verses 7 and 8. But what things were gained to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish that I may gain Christ. Oh, what a phenomenal revelation in those two verses. But what things were gained to me, and he's listed them here.

How much gain the apostle Paul, to be, had found in his former religious, self-righteous life. I mean, he had literally come to the top of his culture. Undoubtedly a part of the Sanhedrin, the ultimate ruling body there in Israel.

Kind of like the Congress and the Supreme Court all wrapped up into one. He had gained so much. He had prestige.

He had power. He had influence. He had position.

But what things were gained to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. This is something when he wrote this great epistle of Philippians. This was something that he's giving testimony to having done in the past.

When? When he came to know Christ. He renounced the life he had built for himself. The great gain he found in that.

He counted it loss. He just considered it as a zero. Not a benefit, but something that was actually keeping him from the Lord.

That was his hope. That was his identity. He counted all of that loss.

That was a major spiritual accounting over a gigantic arena. It was his whole life. And really that's how we start out with the Lord.

The life that we were building for ourselves. To embrace the Lord Jesus, we had to let go of that life. Jesus said, if any man would come after me, let him deny himself.

Say no to the self-life. Take up his cross. Put that life on the cross of Christ and cling to the cross of Christ as our only hope.

A hope to deal with that old life that was alienated from God above. All of us had to do that. If you haven't done that, you haven't really started out with God.

If you've just kind of tagged church on as just kind of a nice little influence in a life that's kind of ignored God, well, praise the Lord for any stirring toward the Lord, but come the whole way to the Lord. The Word of God. The people of God.

The church of the living God. The true and living God Himself. These are not issues just to kind of tag on life, to just give it a little influence.

He is our life. And these other things become our life in Him. If you haven't said no to self and death to self, and Lord Jesus, I put my hope in you for time and eternity as the Savior of my soul and the Lord of my life, I would just encourage you.

Do it right now as you're hearing the good news of the gospel. Just do it. It's a heart transaction between you and God.

You can take care of that aspect of it right where you are, right as you hear, because the Lord is looking on your heart. Just say, Lord Jesus, forgive me a sinner. Lord Jesus, I renounce the life of self-sufficiency and self-righteousness or self-effort that I have had before.

I don't want to just be around the edge of the church. I want to be in the heart of God. And through that, receiving of the Lord Jesus, John chapter 1, you will become a child of God, born again, begotten again spiritually by the Spirit of God.

And if you have just poured out your heart like that to the Lord, even right now, I would encourage you at the first opportunity, after the Bible study, share that good news with someone. Confess that with your mouth. It's going to be good for your own heart and soul and gloriously edifying to those who hear it.

But what things were gained to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed, verse 8, yet indeed, I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Now, same word.

Counting something lost. But here, Paul is not speaking of something he did in the past as he started out with the Lord. He's talking about something he was doing day by day, including the day he wrote this part of this epistle.

Do you see the change in language? Verse 7, but what things were gained to me, past tense, these I have counted loss, past tense, something in the past. Verse 8 shifts now to the present in his life. Yet indeed, I also count all things loss.

Count, that's the verb in the present tense. This was something he was doing right as he was writing. For us, this is something we're to be doing right now as we're reading.

This was something that was an ongoing process that followed his monumental decision way back there to count all of that, self-righteous life, a loss. Not a gain anymore. What things were gained, oh, you've gained so much, Paul.

He said, I counted all loss. It's a zero quantity. In fact, it's in the way if I don't just set it aside and put the Lord in the place of all of that.

But that's also not only how you begin with the Lord, that's how you proceed with the Lord. Yes, we renounced that self-life back there when we started with the Lord. For me, it was the last week of 1965.

My only regret is I didn't do it before that. And you would probably have a similar testimony. But how about today? We're to have that same perspective today.

What purpose? I'm already saved. I turned from that to the Lord way back then. Well, how about growing in the Lord? That was an introduction to the Lord.

How about moving on to get to know the Lord? That's what Paul is talking about. Yet indeed, I also count today, now, all things lost. Anything I think I could gain myself or others might bestow upon me, I count it as lost, as a minus quantity, as an obstacle, as it pertains to what? The excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

Let me render a synonymous translation for that. The excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. That could be stated this way.

For the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. The excellence, the surpassing treasure of what? Of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. I like to use the word the knowing of.

Why? Because we too often think of knowledge as just a collection of information. And though the Lord, through His word, gives us astounding information to gather about Himself and His Son and the way of salvation, it's about a relationship, not just an accumulation of information. I'm so thankful that I have more concerning my wife than just now 41 years of accumulated information.

Get the point? 41 years of accumulated information is not equal to a marriage. It's just a lot of information. Marriage is about a relationship.

I'm thankful that through these years we've been getting to know each other. And so it is with the Lord. The Lord is infinite in person and character.

There's no end to the good information we can gather about Him. But what do we want it to be said of us? There goes Mr. Encyclopedia when it concerns God. The Lord's not going, Oh, good, you just went over the 11th billion bit of info on me.

Boy, that just ranks you about, oh, somewhere good. That's like being so near and missing the whole point. The Lord is our salvation.

Not a certain point of accumulated information. A person. The kingdom of heaven is about relationship.

And this strikes at the heart of the relationship. Yet indeed I also count all things lost for the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For the most excellent treasure of getting acquainted with Christ Jesus my Lord.

The Lord wants us to get acquainted with Him. He wants us to know Him better and better. He wants us growing in an intimate friendship with the true and living God.

Remember what Jesus said to His disciples in John 15? He said, I call you now my friends. Oh, what a privilege. What a privilege.

I mean, you can unintentionally blow someone's mind, you know. Hey, what are you smiling about? Well, it's about this friendship I have. Wow.

Who is this person? God. Whoa. Has He flipped out? No, He's flipped in.

He's finally in sync, you know, with what all of creation is about. I mean, that's why we're here. To get to know the true and living God.

Yet indeed I also count all things lost. Oh, may nothing get in the way of this. Certainly not the obvious evil, carnal, destructive things, but not even any good thing.

Anything that could have potential of blessing or encouragement or comfort or whatever, the Lord is the heart of it all. We count all things lost. Anything else that doesn't contribute to the growth of this relationship, the enriching of this relationship, the appreciation in our hearts of Him, the awe and worship of who He is and what He's done for us and what He means to us.

This is the highest priority in life. This passage is kind of on my heart because on the Pastor's Perspective radio broadcast just the other day, a young man called in and he was, he thought he knew the Lord. It sounded like he had met the Lord, but he had years of struggle and drifting and couldn't even figure out what life was all about anymore, you know? Oh, as he was pouring out his heart, my heart was breaking for him, but I couldn't stop thinking about this chapter.

Anyone who wonders what life is all about, saved or unsaved person, this is the answer. There is that which is called the excellence, the most excellent matter, not just an excellent issue, but the excellence. What's that? Knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord.

Meeting the Lord, being introduced to the Lord through the Gospel, but then growing in the knowing of the Lord thereafter. Remember Jesus said in John 17 3, this is eternal life, that they might know you, the only

true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. Yet indeed I also count today, this is something for you and for me, today.

No doubt most of us in this study right now know the Lord, have met the Lord, introduced to the Lord. We've counted things lost to reach out and hope and trust in and gain Christ. But what about today? What about since then? This is a today issues.

Well, what about tomorrow? Well, tomorrow will be today, tomorrow. Do you get what I'm saying? Today is the day of salvation. If you've never been saved, you know the day to do it? Today.

You know you can't do it yesterday, and it's still kind of a fantasy to do it tomorrow, why? Because as they say, tomorrow is always what? One day away. Today is the day of salvation. But it's not just for entering the family of the redeemed, it's for growing.

It's not just for being introduced to the Lord, it's for growing in the knowing of the Lord. It can only take place in the day in which you live. This is for us today.

Yet indeed I also count today all things lost for the excellence, for the surpassing value of the knowledge of the knowing of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and grant them as rubbish that I may gain Christ. Grant them as rubbish, as trash, as something to be dispensed of, as refuse literally, when it's compared to this great issue, that I may gain Christ. Wait a minute, he's still counting things lost that he may gain Christ? I thought in verse 7, he already counted those things lost for Christ and did gain Him.

Yes, both are true. Both are true. Think of it, when you meet a special person that God has for your life on any level, what a great gain that is.

But, if you go on day by day and develop a relationship with them, what is that? More gain, day after day after day after day. It's exactly what he's talking about here. There is no gain like meeting the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, what a gain! How much benefit and blessing came into our lives when He came into our hearts to dwell. What a gain that was, but you know what? That was just the beginning. He wants us to be gaining out of His glory and majesty and goodness and kindness and truth day after day after day.

Again, I was quite taken by my wife and I remember the day we were married. Yes, I do. June 25th, 1966.

Right? See, I remember that. And I must say personally, what a gain. Next to the Lord Himself, that was the greatest gain that ever occurred to me on one single day.

But, I must say, there have been countless gains added to that. How? Just getting acquainted. It is in Ephesians 5 where the Lord Himself uses the marriage relationship to depict the relationship of Christ and His bride.

That's us, the church. Oh, if we've gained Him in our lives, there's plenty more gain yet to receive. If you met Him, if you got introduced to Him, what an infinite gain.

But out of that infinite goodness, He wants to bless and work and shape and mark us day after day after day. The surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. And then our last verse.

Righteousness, now ours in Christ. And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith. This is the place to be found, dear ones.

To be found in Him. You know, there really, in this sense, are only two locations to be found for those who live upon this earth. In Adam or in Christ.

In Adam is sin and guilt, separation and alienation. In Christ, look what is ours. Righteousness.

And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness. Now that we're in Christ, we can be so thankful that we don't have to manufacture a righteous standing before a righteous and holy God. There'd be no hope.

But now we're found in Him. We're found in Christ. It's not about having our own righteousness, which is from the law.

A law righteousness will never be sufficient. What is a law righteousness? A rightness in us based upon how well we perform up to the standard of His perfect law. By the way, how high is that standard? Well, it's the law of God.

He's the standard. He's the standard. No wonder we read in the Scriptures that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

He is so glorious. He's perfect. He's infinitely, immeasurably perfect in every way.

Can you imagine standing up to be measured by God's standard and just stretch in your self-righteous frame as high as you can? Wanting God to say, well, boy, you measure up pretty well. Instead He says, I'm sorry like all the rest. You have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

We look up in the Word. We look upward through the Word to see what we're being measured by. And it's an infinite reality of righteousness that only God has.

Woe is me, I'm undone. But that's not where we are. We're found in Christ now.

Not having to produce our own righteousness by performance up to the law, but that which. In other words, that righteousness which is through faith in Christ. The righteousness which comes from God by faith.

Oh, that's the good news. And this is how we start and this is how we proceed. We trust in Christ, our Savior, who died for our sins, our forgiver, our Lord and Master.

We are thereafter in Christ Jesus, clothed in Christ, viewed by the Father as in Christ. And the Father is looking at the righteousness of Christ. Oh, what a blessed place to be.

But this is how we live day by day. Just be found in Christ. Not producing your own righteousness to measure up to the law, but that righteousness which is through faith in Christ.

The righteousness which is from God by faith. You know, when we start out with the Lord, righteousness is imputed to us for a standing in heaven above. Imputed.

You know, just credited to our account. Bob trusts in Jesus. Bob now has in his righteousness account the righteousness of Christ.

That's a perfect standing. Who do you think you are, Bob? An absolute sinner, washed in the blood of the Lamb, and imputed with the righteousness of Christ. Wow, what did you do to get that? Believed in Jesus, received the free gift.

But there's another aspect of this. Because it's about an ongoing relationship with the Lord. We not only need imputed righteousness for a standing before a holy God in heaven above, we need a day-by-day imparted righteousness for pleasing, honoring, righteous, godly growth day-by-day in our life here on earth below.

And whether you're talking about initially entering in or growing day-by-day, the just shall live by faith. Faith in the Lord. Faith in the truth of the Lord's Word.

Well, what it really becomes is Christ living in and through our lives. Oh, what good news this is. And this, this little section of the Word of God strikes right at the heart of life.

This kind of thinking, the Lord Himself meeting Him and growing in knowing Him, that's the highest priority in life. That's really what we're to be aiming about every day. This is a right thing, a righteous thing to be praying about at the start of every day.

Each day God gives us here on earth is to be this reality lived out between us and Him. Does that strike you a bit as a majesty in life? A huge significance in life? And yet it's not, oh man, I don't know how I can carry this, it's too big, oh no. Cast that care upon the Lord.

Just say, Lord, I see You've called me to get to know You better and better every day all along the way and help others do the same all the rest is just added to and filled in and flowing from that. What a privilege we have to walk through this life on this earth with Creator God, now our Redeemer and we're in Christ and He is in us and He just wants to reveal Himself to us and through us more and more day by day. It doesn't matter whether we're a banker or a teacher, a mother at home, a preacher, it doesn't matter, this is the great equalizer.

This is what we're really called to, all the rest is just kind of our cover. Are you an agent? Yeah, I'm an ambassador. For whom? For Christ.

For Christ. Well, let's pray together. Lord, how we thank You for this astounding calling.

We thank You for the great treasure, the great gain, the great privilege of having met You, Lord Jesus. And now it's upon our hearts, Lord, day by day to be seeking You, pursuing You in Your Word and to be growing in the knowing of our Lord. Lord, this is Your heart for us.

This is totally available for us. This is available in Christ for all of His people every day that we live. Lord, make it so by the mighty work of Your Holy Spirit.

For Your glory and the touching of many lives we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bob-hoekstra/the-highest-priority-in-life/>

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