

# ***Thinking it through - Your goal as a health care student for the year ahead***

*(Suitable for use within a group over approximately one hour, or for an individual's personal Bible reading)*

---

## ***Thinking about life as a student in healthcare***

1. Think back to when you decided to study in the health care profession. What were your reasons for doing so? Were your reasons for starting then the same as your reasons for continuing now?
2. What do you hope to achieve this year as a student in healthcare?  
Identify a goal you have in each of the following categories:
  - a. Personally
  - b. Professionally
  - c. Relationally
  - d. Spiritually

### **Case Study:**

Imagine you have been graduated for 12 years and you're called to have dinner with the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has heard of the great work you've been doing in your field and wants to honour you. You get dressed up nicely and go to the restaurant, being padded down by some scary looking gentleman in dark suits and tinted sunglasses - despite the fact that it's dark outside. Eventually you sit down, right beside the Prime Minister. You don't know what to say. So the Prime Minister asks you a question to get the ball rolling: "What do you consider to be the crowning achievement of your life?"

With what content do you hope to be able to answer the Prime Minister?

### ***What does God have to say?***

Read and consider Philippians 3:1-14.

Philippians is a letter written by the apostle Paul to the Christians in Philippi (modern day Greece). They are mostly new converts from a gentile background. The purpose of the letter is to encourage the Philippian Christians to continue in the gospel, and give thanks to them for sacrificially partnering with him in his service to peoples who don't understand the truth about Jesus. Philippians is a book about being God-focused, Christ-centred and gospel-purposed. It is a book that makes one resoundingly clear point: a life worthy of the gospel is a life totally abandoned for the sake of the gospel.

1. In verse 1, Paul directs the Philippians to 'Rejoice in the Lord'. What can 'rejoicing in the Lord' be a safeguard for (verse 1b)?

Paul has some pretty strong words for those who ‘mutilate the flesh’ (v2). Those who ‘mutilate the flesh’ are probably Christians who have converted from Judaism. These people were insisting that the gentile converts to Christianity must also be circumcised in order to be part of God’s covenantal promises. Within his writings, Paul reserves some of his harshest language for this particular heresy; not because circumcision in and of itself is a bad thing, but because circumcision is being used by these people to suggest that righteousness comes through the law. This negates the gospel and shows contempt for the saving work of Jesus in his death and resurrection. For further reading on this topic, see Galatians 5:1-15. Note, Paul is not expounding a Gospel of Grace because of his own failure to be more righteous than other men. Indeed, if righteousness was gained by fulfilling the Law, Paul would have a better case than anyone to enter heaven; and he has the accolades to prove it (v

2. In what sense does Paul count all of these accolades of ‘righteousness’ as ‘loss’ (v7) and ‘rubbish’ (v8)?
3. What does Paul gain in exchange for losing all his accolades? Was it worth it?
4. Paul seems to be quite convinced that attaining the resurrection from the dead (v11) means suffering with Christ and becoming like him ‘in his death’ (v10). How do we as Christians, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century healthcare students in Australia, become like Christ ‘in his death’?  
Are we willing to do this to ‘attain the resurrection from the dead’ (v11)?
5. What does Paul mean by, ‘the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus’ (v14; ESV)? Consider also Ephesians 1:1-14.

### ***Putting it into practice:***

1. Health care professions are generally looked up to by society. Often, people in health care professions were the best and brightest at school. Being bright and respected tends to form our identity. Do you have a list of accolades like Paul does? If so, how willing are you to ‘count them all as loss’ for the sake of Christ?  
What might this look like as you interact with your classmates?
2. With what measure do you consider knowing Christ?  
Do you value knowing Christ as the greatest of your possessions – as Paul does (v8)?  
What elements in your clinical, social, and family environments impede you from simply knowing Jesus as your greatest possession?
3. What is your goal this year? Does God get a showing in your New-Years resolution?
4. Paul’s goal is ‘the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus’ (v14). In what ways can we help each other to make the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus the goal of our lives?

This passage is enormously challenging. Even the apostle Paul says that he has not yet achieved it! The issue of pride and legalism is a very difficult one. It’s an issue for most Christians, and it is very insidious; perhaps especially amongst health student cohorts. If this is an issue for you, talk to a brother or sister in Christ and ask them to help you work through it. Chances are, they will be struggling with it too! You can help one another. When you get the chance, read all of Philippians. Be challenged by its honesty and be encouraged by the life we



# ***Bible Bites***

(Suitable to be completed over approximately 20-25 minutes)

## **Thinking it through - Your goal as a health care student for the year ahead**

### ***Thinking about life as a student in healthcare***

1. What do you hope to achieve this year as a student in healthcare?

Identify a goal you have in each of the following categories:

- a. Personally
- b. Professionally
- c. Relationally
- d. Spiritually

### ***What does God have to say?***

Read Philippians 3:1-14 (Note this is the ESV Bible version):

<sup>1</sup>Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. <sup>2</sup>Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. <sup>3</sup>For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— <sup>4</sup> though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for 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; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup>But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup>Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order 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 comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— <sup>10</sup> that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup>that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. <sup>12</sup>Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. <sup>13</sup>Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.’

Within his writings, Paul reserves some of his harshest language for the heresy regarding circumcision he is pointing out here; not because circumcision in and of itself is a bad thing, but because circumcision is being used by these people to suggest that righteousness comes through the law. This negates the gospel and shows contempt for the saving work of Jesus in his death and resurrection. For further reading on this topic, see Galatians 5:1-15.

1. In what sense does Paul count all of his accolades of ‘righteousness’ as ‘loss’ (v7) and ‘rubbish’ (v8)?
2. What does Paul gain in exchange for losing all his accolades? Was it worth it?
3. Paul seems to be quite convinced that attaining the resurrection from the dead (v11) means suffering with Christ and becoming like him ‘in his death’ (v10). How do we as Christians, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century healthcare students in Australia, become like Christ ‘in his death’? Are we willing to do this to ‘attain the resurrection from the dead’ (v11)?

### ***Putting it into practice:***

1. Health care professions are generally looked up to by society. Often, people in health care professions were the best and brightest at school. Being bright and respected tends to form our

identity. Do you have a list of accolades like Paul does? If so, how willing are you to “count them all as loss” for the sake of Christ?

2. What are your goals for this year? Identify your top 3.  
Does Paul’s goal to attain ‘the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus’ (v14) resonate with your identified goals?  
Let the answer to the latter be a stimulus for prayer.