

## The Serious Danger of Self-Confidence: Part 3

Philippians 3:2c

**Big Idea:** Too often we divide around secondary issues. Christ has called us to unite around the gospel.

**Question 2:** What is our greatest enemy to our joy in the Lord?

**Answer:** Self-confidence.

**Self-Confidence:** Finding our assurance of acceptance before a holy God or our ability to overcome the sin-filled nature in anything other than Christ.

### 1. The Warning Against Self-Confidence

**Philippians 3:2 (ESV)** — 2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

- a. Dogs
- b. Evil-doers
- c. Mutilators

**Philippians 3:2 (ESV)** — 2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

For the Israelites circumcision was not merely a surgical procedure... to the Hebrew nation it symbolized the physical and spiritual continuity of the Israelite generations. Through circumcision a person became **a member of Israel's community** and received the right to participate in public worship.<sup>1</sup>

**Acts 10:9-16; 15:1-21**

**Peter is so steeped in his cultural identity it is hard for him to fathom God's love for those who don't look like him, act like him, eat like him, or live like him.**

<sup>1</sup> Myers, A. C. (1987). In *The Eerdmans Bible dictionary* (p. 218). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

**Galatians 2:11–14 (ESV)** — 11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. 13 And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

**Too often we think that God accepts us on the basis of how we \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and not on the basis of Christ. And so, secondary issues tend to define us instead of the gospel of Christ.**

**Galatians 3:28–29 (ESV)** — 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

---

***Our primary identity is found in Christ, not in our distinct cultures, and therefore Christ ought always be the thing that we unify around.***

---

**We have to fight against the fleshly impulse to divide! In Christ we are one!**

### Questions to Consider

- What was the decision of the early church concerning the inclusion of the Gentiles with their cultural distinctives?
- How should we view our cultural distinctives?
- How does our culture encourage division around secondary identities?
- What secondary identities do you tend to elevate to moral superiority?
- How does 1Cor. 1:10-17 strike to the heart of these divisions?
- What does it look like to fight for unity in Christ?

## The Serious Danger of Self-Confidence: Part 3

Philippians 3:2c

**Big Idea:** Too often we divide around secondary issues. Christ has called us to unite around the gospel.

**Question 2:** What is our greatest enemy to our joy in the Lord?

**Answer:** Self-confidence.

**Self-Confidence:** Finding our assurance of acceptance before a holy God or our ability to overcome the sin-filled nature in anything other than Christ.

### 1. The Warning Against Self-Confidence

**Philippians 3:2 (ESV)** — 2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

- a. Dogs
- b. Evil-doers
- c. Mutilators

**Philippians 3:2 (ESV)** — 2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.

For the Israelites circumcision was not merely a surgical procedure... to the Hebrew nation it symbolized the physical and spiritual continuity of the Israelite generations. Through circumcision a person became **a member of Israel's community** and received the right to participate in public worship.<sup>2</sup>

**Acts 10:9-16; 15:1-21**

**Peter is so steeped in his cultural identity it is hard for him to fathom God's love for those who don't look like him, act like him, eat like him, or live like him.**

<sup>2</sup> Myers, A. C. (1987). In *The Eerdmans Bible dictionary* (p. 218). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

**Galatians 2:11–14 (ESV)** — 11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. 13 And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

**Too often we think that God accepts us on the basis of how we \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and not on the basis of Christ. And so, secondary issues tend to define us instead of the gospel of Christ.**

**Galatians 3:28–29 (ESV)** — 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

---

***Our primary identity is found in Christ, not in our distinct cultures, and therefore Christ ought always be the thing that we unify around.***

---

**We have to fight against the fleshly impulse to divide! In Christ we are one!**

### Questions to Consider

- What was the decision of the early church concerning the inclusion of the Gentiles with their cultural distinctives?
- How should we view our cultural distinctives?
- How does our culture encourage division around secondary identities?
- What secondary identities do you tend to elevate to moral superiority?
- How does 1Cor. 1:10-17 strike to the heart of these divisions?
- What does it look like to fight for unity in Christ?