

Understanding How It All Works

Text : **Phil. 3: 7-17**

INTRODUCTION :

A. Do you enjoy watching a good game of Rugby ? How about La Cross ?

1. They are almost never on TV. **Why ?**
2. Why are they not popular sports in the U.S. ?

B. Why is it that fewer women become sports fans than men ?

1. Is it that women are less competitive ? Probably not.
2. Women don't get into sports for the same reason men don't get into La Cross.
3. In general, **people** don't enjoy watching something they don't understand.
 - a. It's like watching a movie in a foreign language.
 - b. **Or ...** like listening to a spiritual conversation when you are carnally minded.

C. Vince Lombardi was recognized as the greatest pro football coach of his era.

1. He started each season the same way ... **teaching the basics to the pros.**
 - a. This is a football.
 - b. The game is played on a field that is 100 yards long. **Etc.**
2. Vince understood that no one becomes proficient at anything before he masters the basics. *The fundamentals must be instinctive to the player.*
 - a. The first instinct of a young defensive player is to try to tackle the guy with the ball, but when a team does that they lose every time.
 - b. Every member of the team has a responsibility and he must accomplish his job.
3. One will not consistently succeed if he does not build on the basics.
 - a. "Glory passes" are exciting, but a team that can gain 3 yards every play wins.
 - b. Having the ability to pass depends upon also having the ability to run the ball.

D. One or two good players do not make a successful team.

1. Every player must know his job and do it well before the team can win.
2. Few people know the names of the linemen, but no team wins without them.
 - a. Typically, only the quarterback is paid more than the left guard.
 - b. Can you name the left guard on any team ? (*On the Steelers it Alan Faneca #66*)

E. One must cross the goal line in order to score, but the team that goes for the goal line every play loses consistently.

1. The key is to keep progressing toward the goal line until you ultimately cross it.
2. This done by consistently gaining as little as 10 yards every four attempts.

Before you ladies go to sleep, this lesson is NOT going to be about football. It's going to be about the fundamentals of being a Christian.

I want to approach this lesson as Vince Lombardi did his first practice.

I. What are the basic primacies of the Christian religion ?

A. There is a God.

1. **Gen. 1:1** ... The bible starts assuming God. **"In the beginning God ..."**
2. Because God is the creator of all, He is the sovereign ruler of all.

B. As the ruler of the universe, God has a law which man must follow.

1. God's law is revealed to man in two ways.
 - a. Man instinctively knows that some things are wrong. (Killing, Stealing, etc.)
 - b. God has revealed His will for man in the bible. (*God's inspired word*)
2. No man consistently complies with God's law.
 - a. Some never seek God's will.
 - b. Some reject God and deny His authority over their lives.
3. Even those who try to comply with God's will fall short of perfect obedience.

C. There is a penalty for violating the law of the sovereign ruler.

1. That penalty is banishment, separation from the sovereign ruler. (**Rom 6: 23**)
2. The sovereign ruler is the source of life and all that is good. (**Ax 17:28, Jas. 1:17**)
3. **Thus**, to be separated from the sovereign God is to be separated from all He gives.

D. When man is separated from God by his (*man's*) violation of God's law, man has no way to reconcile himself back into a relationship with God.

1. God requires 100% compliance so man has nothing left to give as atonement.
2. God does not want His relationship with man to be destroyed so He provided a way for atonement to be made for man's violations. (**John 3: 16**)
3. God sacrificed His Only Begotten Son to atone for the transgressions on men.

II. The atonement (*payment of penalty*) is available to all, but in order to receive it, man must agree to God's terms.

A. Jesus, God's Son will pay one's penalty, but he must first ask Him to do so.

1. This requires that one learn about what Jesus has done and will do. (**John 8: 24**)
2. It requires that one trust Jesus to pay the ransom to bring him back to God.

B. In order to have Jesus pay the ransom for his violations, one must accept the terms that Jesus requires.

1. Neither God the Father nor His Son owes anyone salvation from their sins.
2. No one is doing God a favor by allowing Him to save him from his own folly.
3. When Jesus saves a person He enters into a covenant, i.e., a contract with them.

C. The terms of the agreement are easy.

1. The covenant involves Jesus ransoming the law violator.

I Tim. 2 : 5- 6 For there is one God, *and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,* 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time

2. When Jesus ransoms a person, He then owns that person.

I Cor. 6: 19-20 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

3. As the owner of the redeemed person, Jesus demands fidelity to Him alone.

a. **Luke 16: 13-** No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

b. **James 4: 4-** You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

4. Ongoing relationship is contingent upon ongoing fidelity, regardless of circumstances.

a. **Rev. 2: 10-** Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (*Smyrna*)

b. **Luke 12: 8-9** And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; ⁹ but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

D. Jesus requires certain actions before He will ransom one back from sin.

1. To be ransomed, one must make a verbal commitment to him.
 - a. **I Tim. 6: 12-** Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
 - b. ***This is not a onetime act done just before baptism.***
Remember ... **Luke 12: 8-9**
2. There must be a commitment to leave the value system of the unredeemed and to adapt the value system of the family of God. (***change allegiance***)
 - a. **Acts 3: 19-** Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;
*** NOTICE ...** *Sins being wiped away was contingent upon repentance to God's rule.*
 - b. **Luke 3: 8-** Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father ..."
*** LIKEWISE ...** *Repentance requires action ... the bearing of fruit.*
3. In addition to one telling others of his commitment to Christ and changing his lifestyle he must solemnize that commitment by being baptized in water.
 - a. It is when one's faith causes him to obey this form of teaching about the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus he is reconciled with God .
Rom. 6: 17-18 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.
 - b. This act separates those who surrender to God's rule from those who don't. Peter compares it to the ark lifting the family of Noah above the flood.
I Pet. 3: 20-21 ... when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through *the water* ²¹ corresponding to that ²¹ Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you – not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience – through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

III. Baptism is the starting point, not the conclusion of the process.

- A. When a person is baptized into (**Gal. 3: 27**) Christ, he is placed in, set in, added to God's church.
 1. **Acts 2: 41-** So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.

2. **Acts 2: 47-** ... And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.
3. **I Cor 12: 18-** But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. (The church is the body **Eph. 1: 22-23.**)
** The context of chapter 12 is that Christians work together as a unit, one body.*

B. The one who is ransomed becomes a servant who is placed in a group with other servants to accomplish specific tasks assigned by the master / owner.

1. Logical : No human employer hires a worker and does not assign him a job to do.
2. Before God redeems a person, He has some work planned for him to accomplish.
 - a. **Eph. 2: 10-** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
 - b. It is GOD who determines what He wants the redeemed to accomplish.
 - c. "... walk in them." indicates that the God's assignments are permanent.
 - d. "... good works," indicates that the God's has multiple assignments for redeemed.

C. Every person who is reconciled to God is given a ministry ... reconcile others.

1. **II Cor. 5: 14-21** For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵ and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

¹⁶ Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. ¹⁸ Now all *these things* are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
2. All who have been reconciled to God, are assigned the work (*ministry*) of urging other people to be reconciled to God. (*Ambassador = representative*)
3. This is done by functioning as ambassador for Christ "*begging*" people to come.

D. This ministry is the life's work of the one who is ransomed / reconciled.

1. **Eph. 2: 10** "... **walk in them.**"
2. **Luke 9: 23-25** And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.
²⁴ For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. ²⁵ For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?"
 - a. The following of Christ is a daily activity. (*Not just Sundays and at events.*)
 - b. The denying of self resulting in the loss of profit is a daily activity.

CONCLUSION :**A. In order for any cooperative effort to be successful, there is a universal formula.**

1. Everyone must know his job and become skilled at it.
2. Everyone must perform his assigned task.
3. Everyone must work together.

B. God's work must be accomplished in the same way.

1. Like any sport : *We must understand the game and know the objective.* (save souls)
 - a. **I Tim. 2: 3-4** ... God our Savior desires all men to be saved.
 - b. **Matt. 28: 19-20** ... God has instructed all of His servants to work toward that end.
2. Every member of the church must contribute what he can to the effort.
 - a. **Eph. 4: 14-16** As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.
 - b. **I Cor. 12: 12-27** ... *Though every member is different, all are important.*

C. You are important to this church and to its success in serving God.

1. Have you identified what you can contribute toward the growth of the church ?
2. Are you really doing what you can ? *Christ invested His blood to purchase you.*

Lesson Text :**Philippians 3: 7-17**

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. **8** More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, **9** and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, **10** that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; **11** in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained *it* or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. **13** Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. **15** Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; **16** however, let us keep living by that same *standard* to which we have attained.

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.