



# Writing a Spiritual Resume

—Phil. 3:7-11; 2 Cor. 11:22-30

## Listening Guide

### Is it time to: Review – Refresh – Refocus?

### Why should we recalibrate when we become a basket case?

**Introduction:** If the Apostle Paul was asked to write a spiritual resume, what items do you think he would include? We don't have to guess, because many passages record his resume. Likewise, if we were asked to write a spiritual resume (a history of our walk with God), what items should we include? If we look at what Paul wrote, it will help us to include items we might never list or even think about.

#### A. **Knowing God**—Phil. 3:7-11

##### 1. **What did Paul initially think should be on his resume?**

- a. First, his **ancestry**. Phil. 3:5a—“...circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews...”
- b. Second, his **orthodoxy** (his belief system, spiritual pedigree and heritage), which he felt, also gave him the right to claim the favor of God. vv. 5b—“...in regard to the law, a Pharisee...”
- c. Third, his **activity**. v. 6a—“...as for zeal, persecuting the church...”
- d. Then fourth, he took pride in his **morality**. v. 6b—“...as for legalistic righteousness, faultless.”

##### 2. **Later on, however, what did Paul discover should be his personal pursuit and the most important item on his resume?** Phil. 3:7-11

- a. He hadn't achieved this yet, but this was his number one pursuit—vv. 12-14.
- b. All who are mature should make this their number one resume item, too—v. 15.

#### B. **Knowing hardship**. 2 Cor. 11:21-27—“*I have worked much harder...*” Background—2 Cor. 11:1-21. What a list!

#### C. **Knowing pressure**. 2 Cor. 11:28—“*Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.*”

#### D. **Knowing weakness and failure**. 2 Cor. 11:30—“*If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness... 32] In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. 33] But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.*” Example: Acts 9:23-25

1. This experience marked Paul.
  - a. For the rest of his life, he looked back to that event as the time when God began to teach him the most important lesson in his life.
  - b. In Damascus, he had brought all his resources (his abilities, brilliance), but that night it all came crashing down around his feet.
  - c. He found himself hunted like a criminal, driven out of the city, and finally, LET OVER THE WALL IN A BASKET. What grinding humiliation!

## Recalibrate

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2. He then did the hardest thing on earth to do. He went down to his hometown (Tarsus), and lived there in humility and obscurity for about 5 years.
  - So what's the high point of Paul's ministry and life?
  - When he became a basket case and went over the wall in defeat.
3. Likewise, an item needed on everyone's spiritual resume is a "basket-like" experience!
  - a. For some, it's relatively short, e.g., a devastating illness, trauma, or failure.
  - b. For some, it happens while they continue in their life and service; this experience takes place over years.
  - c. Why is a basket case needed or usual?
4. **Recalibration and Adversity Principles: Review - Refresh - Refocus**
  - a. The secret of ministry life that enables us to focus on Christ and not ourselves is the **death of self - our ideas, qualifications, etc.**
  - b. It's while we're in the basket, or crushing disappointment and defeat, that we're changed at the deepest level; it's what makes us, i.e., character, values, spiritual disciplines.
  - c. When we come to the end of ourselves and we wholly rely on God's resources and power, then we can leave our basket exile and be most effective in our life and service/ministry.
    - 1) Some will MISS the BENEFIT of the basket - the defeat, the disappointment, or the negative experience, and it will DEFINE them but NOT CHANGE THEM.
    - 2) I call all of us to go over the wall, to experience a radical change of focus.
  - d. We'll get a variety of responses from those who view our circumstances:
    - 1) Some of our friends/family will label our basket experience a defeat.
    - 2) Others will call it a sin, because they will reason God can't be in this, e.g., Job; Paul and his snake bite—Acts 28:4.
    - 3) Some will try to fix it for us and only make it worse.
    - 4) But no matter what anyone says, we're the key person in the experience.
    - 5) Most of the baskets are one-person size, and the lessons are best understood and applied by the person in the basket.

The summary resume item is:

- E. **Knowing strength in weakness**—2 Cor. 11:29 (Paul had weaknesses!)  
 Background—2 Cor. 12:1-10 (another basket? Paul prayed 3 times about this thorn).

## Conclusion

- Let's focus on what is most essential - knowing Christ, and make that the chief focus of our life.
- We should also be prepared to come to the end of ourselves sooner than later, i.e., be prepared to be a basket case and have our prowess, qualifications, reputation, acclaim and wisdom not be enough.
- This prospect won't inspire the fickle and the immature to follow in our footsteps.
- Many will find this potential very unattractive...and it is.
- The end of self and the cross is horrible, ugly and hurtful, but it's only in death that God's resurrection power is ultimately seen and experienced—Mark 8:34-35.

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