

Philippians 3:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

Analysis

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ (Ἄλλὰ ἄτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη, ταῦτα ἤγημαι διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν, Alla hatina ēn moi kerdē, tauta hēgēmai dia ton Christon zēmian)—Alla ("but") pivots from credentials (vv. 5-6) to conversion-revaluation. Kerdē ("gains," plural) were his seven privileges—assets in religious economy. Hēgēmai (perfect tense, "I have counted, continue to count") shows settled judgment. Zēmian ("loss, damage")—accounting term opposite kerdē. Dia ton Christon ("for the sake of Christ, because of Christ")—Christ's surpassing worth renders everything else comparative loss.

This is radical revaluation: Paul's Damascus Road encounter (Acts 9) inverted his value system. What he pursued as ultimate goods became liabilities. Not because credentials are evil but because trusting them is idolatry—they compete with Christ. The accounting metaphor (gain/loss) recurs in vv. 8 ("I count all things loss"). Christ's infinite worth relativizes all else.

Historical Context

Paul's Damascus Road experience (Acts 9, 22, 26) revolutionized his life. The risen Christ confronted him: persecuting Christians meant persecuting Jesus (Acts 9:4-5). This shattered Paul's theology—the crucified Nazarene was God's Messiah, vindicated by resurrection. Everything Paul valued (Pharisaic righteousness, zeal, law-blamelessness) opposed God's purposes. His conversion required repudiating his former life's meaning.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What 'gains' have become 'loss' for you since encountering Christ?
2. How does Christ's surpassing worth expose the relative worthlessness of worldly achievements?
3. Are there credentials or privileges you still trust alongside (or instead of) Christ alone?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλ᾽	ἄτινα	ἥν	μοι	κέρδη	ταῦτα	ἥγημαι	διὰ	τὸν
But	what things	were	to me	gain	those	I counted	for	
G235	G3748	G2258	G3427	G2771	G5023	G2233	G1223	G3588

Χριστὸν ζημίαν

Christ	loss
G5547	G2209

Additional Cross-References

Luke 14:33 (Parallel theme): So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Matthew 16:26 (Parallel theme): For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Proverbs 13:8 (Parallel theme): The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke.

Luke 14:26 (Parallel theme): If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Genesis 19:17 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

Job 2:4 (Parallel theme): And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

Proverbs 23:23 (Parallel theme): Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

Genesis 19:26 (Parallel theme): But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

Luke 16:8 (Parallel theme): And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.