

**Read: Philippians 3:4b-14**

## It's Time to Take Out the Trash

### **Philippians 3:8-9**

I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

There's a tradition in homes and churches this time of year. With the weather warming, it's a great time to open doors and windows and do some spring cleaning. There are places around your house where clutter accumulates, like the crushed boxes and hefty bags stuffed in the trash can that we push to the street curb. Or like the moldy apple cores and dried out leftovers that go down the garbage disposal. It's the dirt you vacuum up from the carpet or sweep from the floors of your garages. What do you do after changing a diaper, do you keep it? Eww, wrinkle your nose and throw it away! Why do we jiggle the handle of the toilet after using it? Life would get pretty messy if we didn't, right?

Before Easter arrives, there's another place that needs spring cleaning. It's inside us and our lives. Sometimes, that's hard to admit. We like to think that we smell pretty good to God. The apostle Paul once thought that too. He worked so hard at being good for God. For a while, it made him feel good about himself. Then he discovered the only thing worth holding onto in life was Jesus. Nothing is as clean and pure and right as he is. Paul said, "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."

When you think of your life, what achievements make you proud? What things do you treasure? What relationships do you prize? Make a list of all the things that you are and all that you own and all that you want for the future and ask: Does it help or get in the way of Jesus? And if it does get in the way—get rid of it. Park a garbage truck by the back door of your life. If something doesn't get you closer to Jesus, toss it in! It's garbage. It will never be able to make you right with God.

Easter is days away. That makes today the perfect time for spring cleaning inside. It's time to take out the trash in order to better see and know how good and lovely and right Jesus is. Jesus is the one thing worth keeping!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- Who takes out the garbage in your house?
- What did Jesus do with the garbage of our sins?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Why does the apostle Paul not want anything to get in the way of knowing Jesus?
- If a garbage truck was backed up to the door of your heart, name three things (could be a feeling, a memory, or action) that you would want to toss in and get rid of.

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- List the top three things you value most in your life. Then ask this question: Do they help or get in the way of your relationship with Jesus?
- Explain: For those who follow Jesus, every day is spring cleaning.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Jesus, I admit there's a lot of garbage that clutters my heart. Help me get rid of it all so the only thing that remains is you. Everything of this world is nothing. But you are my everything!  
Amen.