

## A WALK THAT PLEASES GOD

Philippians 3:15-21

### I. A WALK OF MATURITY: (vs. 15-16)

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 (vs. 15)...

As many as are perfect...Paul isn't speaking of *practical perfection*...that would *contradict* what he said earlier in the passage. Rather, he's describing believers as *positionally perfect* in Christ...*spiritually mature* and *complete*.

*“For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.”*

~Hebrews 10:14

Have this attitude...refers back to verses 13-14...Paul's *goal in life*. It literally means *to think this way...to set your mind on this...be totally focused* on making the *maximum effort* to pursue the prize of *Christlikeness*.

On the one hand, we are *positionally perfect*. On the other hand, we must *continue working out our salvation...to pursue perfection...sanctification...Christlikeness*.

And if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you...Those who *refuse to heed* Paul's message *will hear that same message* from God. In other words, *if you don't agree, God will do whatever it takes* to make believers *recognize their need to pursue being conformed into the image of Christ*.

*“...His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.”*

~II Peter 1:3

However, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained (vs. 16)...

However...basically means *one more thing*.

Keep living...Gk. *stoicheo*, means to *line up* or to *follow in line*. It's like a runner *staying in his line* on the track.

There are *four key things* that God uses to *conform believers into the image of Christ*...*four things* to help believers *pursue the prize of Christlikeness*:

- The Word of God.
- Prayer.
- Godly examples to imitate and follow.
- Test and trials to refine and mold believers into the image of Christ.

*“And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope.”*

~Romans 5:3-4

*“After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.”*

~I Peter 5:10

*“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”*

~James 1:2-4

At the foot of one of the *Swiss Alps* is a marker honoring a man who *fell to his death* attempting the *ascent*. The marker gives his *name* and this *brief epitaph*...*“He died*

*climbing.*” That should be the epitaph of every Christian... *they died climbing the upward path toward Christlikeness.*

## II. A WALK OF WATCHFULNESS: (vs. 17-19)

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

**Join in following my example...**literally translates, *be fellow imitators with me.* Paul exhorts the **Philippians** to *imitate the way he lived.*

**Following...**being *led by the Spirit* and not the *flesh.*

*“For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.”*

~Romans 8:6

*“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”*

~Galatians 5:16-17

**Observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us...**Observe...means to *fix your gaze on.* What Paul is saying is for the **Philippians** is for them *to focus on and imitate those who live every day according to the way they have seen him live...to live according to the Biblical principles* he has taught them.

**For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ (vs. 18)...**

**Paul warned them** that in *pursuing* the spiritual prize of *Christlikeness* that they *must recognize* that there are

*many examples* to be *avoided.* There are those who you *don't want to imitate.* Many of these have *infiltrated the church* and have *disguised* themselves as *messengers of Christ* and *angels of light* (**II Corinthians 11:13-15**). The New Testament constantly warns of the danger posed by *false teachers.* The believer must have *discernment.*

**Paul** then gave *four marks* of the **enemies of the cross** in verse **19:**

**Whose end is destruction (vs. 19a)...**Their *ultimate destiny* will be *hell...eternal torment* and *punishment* (**Matthew 25:46; II Thessalonians 1:9**).

**Whose god is their appetite (vs. 19b)...****Appetite** refers to the *abdomen...*particularly the *stomach.* It is used *metaphorically* to refer to *all unrestrained sensual* and *fleshy desires* (**I Corinthians 6:13**). The *false teachers* were *condemned* because they *didn't worship* God but *bowed down* to their *sensual desires* and *indulgences.*

**And whose glory is in their shame (vs. 19c)...**The *false teachers* actually *boasted* in the *very things* that brought them *shame.* They were *proud* of their *worst perversions.*

**Who set their minds on earthly things (vs. 19d)...**Their *earthly focus* offers evidence that they were *not saved.*

*“...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.”*

~James 4:4

*“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”*

~I John 2:15

The **enemies of the cross**, whether they *add to* the Gospel or *take away* from it, are to be *avoided, never imitated.*

### III. A WALK COMPLETED: (vs. 20-21)

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself (vs. 20-21)...

The *main motivation* for pursuing Christlikeness is the *hope* of the day that *we will see* Jesus *face-to-face*. Those who love Jesus will be *preoccupied with heaven*...longing for the day that He *will come* and *take us to be with* Him (John 14:3). Paul had *little interest* in the *comforts* and *pleasures* of *this world* (II Corinthians 4:8-10; II Corinthians 6:4-10; II Corinthians 11:23-29). This is what led him to the *conviction* that made him write back in Philippians 1:23... I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better.

For our citizenship is in heaven...This is the *only time* this word for **citizenship** is used in the New Testament and it refers to *the place where one has official status*... where one's *name* is *recorded* on the *official register* of *citizens*. Though we believers *presently live in this world*, we are *citizens of heaven*...we are *members of Christ's kingdom*. Our *names* are *recorded in heaven* (Luke 10:20; Revelation 13:8; Revelation 21:27).

That's why it's *eternally important* to make sure your *name is written in heaven*...in the *Lamb's book of life* and not just on a *church membership role*.

Paul's reference to **citizenship** was especially meaningful to the **Philippians**, since **Philippi** was a **Roman colony**. The **Philippians** were **Roman citizens**, though obviously

*living outside* of **Rome**, just as we *believers* are *citizens* of *heaven living outside of heaven...here on earth*.

From which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...As believers our wait for Christ is to be a *patient eagerness*...we must have an *anxious anticipation* of being with the **Lord**.

*“In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.”*

~John 14:2-3

When we *get to be with* Christ, that will be the *end of our struggling pursuit* of the *elusive prize* of *holy perfection*.

**Who will transform the body of our humble state...**

When we see Jesus our *eagerly awaited redemption* of this *body* will take place.

*“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”*

~I John 3:2

Christ will *totally transform* the *bodies* of all believers to make them *fit for heaven*. From our *earth suits*...our **humble state**...into the *likeness* of Christ's *resurrected body*...our *glorified bodies*.

**Into conformity with the body of His glory**...Paul gives the most detailed description of the believer's *resurrection bodies* in I Corinthians 15:35-49.

*“But someone will say, ‘How are the dead raised? And with what kind of body do they come?’ You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; and*

*that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare grain, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own...So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So also it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living soul.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly."*

~I Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-49

Just like Christ's *resurrection body*, believers' *resurrected bodies* will be *recognizable*. They will be able to *eat, talk, and walk*, but they will not have the *physical restrictions* of our present bodies. After His resurrection Christ *appeared and disappeared at will*, even entering a room whose *doors were locked* ([John 20:19](#)).

The *combination* of a *redeemed spirit* and a *glorified body* will enable all believers to *perfectly manifest the glory of God*. *Salvation* involves far more than mere *deliverance from hell*. God's *ultimate goal* in *redeeming* believers is to *transform their bodies into conformity with the body of His glory*.

And if you have *any doubt* whether this *can take place*. Paul reminds us of the *omnipotent power* of God.

By the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself...Paul's point is that if Christ can *subject the entire universe* to His *sovereign control*, He has the power to *transform believers' bodies into His image*.

#### LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- As we run the spiritual race, we need to find godly examples to **IMITATE** and **FOLLOW**. We must look to *godly examples* for *inspiration* and *instruction*.
- We must also look out for those **ENEMIES OF THE TRUTH** who would lead us astray. *Recognize, expose, and stay way* from *false teachers*. Have *discernment*.
- We must focus on the **GLORIOUS HOPE** that is ours when we see Jesus face-to-face...the *transformation* of our bodies into *conformity* with His.