

# Philippians 3:17-19 Commentary

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Philippians 3:17 Brethren, **join** in following my example and **observe** those who walk according to the pattern you have in us ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [Summimetai](#) [mou](#) [ginesthe](#). (2PPMM) [adelphoi](#). kai [skopeite](#) ( 2PPAM) [tous](#) houto [peripatountas](#) (PAPMPA) [kathos echete](#) (2PPAI) [tupon hemas](#)

**Amplified:** Brethren, together follow my example and observe those who live after the pattern we have set for you. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Lightfoot:** My brethren, vie with each other in imitating me, and observe those whose walk of life is fashioned after our example. This is the only safe test.

**Phillips:** Let me be your example here, my brothers: let my example be the standard by which you can tell who are the genuine Christians among those about you. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** Become imitators of me, brethren, and observe attentively those who conduct themselves in a manner which reflects the example which you have in us, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** become followers together of me, brethren, and observe those thus walking, according as ye have us -- a pattern;

BRETHREN **JOIN** IN FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE: [Summimetai](#) [mou](#) [ginesthe](#) (2PPMM) [adelphoi](#):

- [Php 4:9+](#); [1Cor 4:16](#); [10:32,33](#); [11:1+](#); [1Thes 1:6+](#); [1Th 2:10](#), 11, 12, 13, 14+; [2Thes 3:7,9](#); [1Ti 4:12](#); [Heb 13:7+](#); [1Pet 5:3](#) +
- [Philippians 3 Resources](#)
- [Philippians 3:15-21 The Subtlety of Error](#) - Jack Arnold
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#) - Steven Cole

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## BE IMITATORS OF PAUL WHO IMITATES CHRIST

In this section Paul is addressing the problem in the Church at Philippi that there were men whose conduct was an open scandal to the gospel, and who by their lives, showed themselves to be the enemies of the Cross of Christ. Paul says that a good "antidote" to these evil examples is a good example. Paul wants his life not to be admired, but imitated. All men will imitate someone. Paul wants us to be imitators of those who are wholeheartedly devoted to Christ.

The importance of this principle of imitating a good example cannot be over emphasized, especially when it is the apostle Paul who commands us to imitate him. Look at this parallel passage in First Corinthians (where the unruly saints were in dire need of someone to imitate!)...

**Be** imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. (1 Cor 11:1+)

Notice that the verb "**be**" (meaning also "become") is a command in the present imperative. In other words Paul is calling for this to be our lifestyle! Our habitual practice is to walk or live daily like Paul lived. The key in this verse is the little phrase "**just like**" which tells us that Paul (whose life was not perfect) was imitating the life of the One Whose life was perfect. But if you are following this logic, you must be saying "You've got to be kidding me! No one can live like Jesus lived as a Man because He was God!" But that rationalization misses one crucial fact about Jesus as the God Man. Recall that Jesus had "emptied" Himself of His divine [prerogatives](#) (Php 2:5-7). What many seem to have overlooked is that Jesus (the last Adam) gave us (who originated from the first Adam) a practical example to follow. How so? In a nutshell, Jesus as a Man on earth walked in the filling and power of the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit every believer has received. Remember when Jesus' ministry was inaugurated the Spirit came upon Him in Mt 3:16 and then Matthew records "Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." (Mt 4:1). Luke adds that "Jesus, **full of the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and was **led** around **by the Spirit** in the wilderness." (Luke 4:1-2+) After Jesus' temptation Luke records "And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. And He began teaching (where was His power for teaching?) in their synagogues and was praised by all. " (Lk 4:14-15+) Even Jesus Himself declared ""**THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED.**" (Lk 4:18+) Finally, Peter summarizes Jesus' entire earthly ministry writing "you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how **God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit** (just as every saint has been anointed - 1 Jn 2:20+, 1 Jn 2:27+, cf 2 Cor 1:21,22) and with power (cf our power - Acts 1:8+), and how (empowered by the Holy Spirit) He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts 10:37-38) Do you see it? That same power that Jesus manifested is available to you and I to enable us to live a supernatural, victorious Christian life. That's why Paul called us to imitate him. He knew that there was simply no other way to walk as more than a conqueror unless we are continually "**filled with Spirit**" (Eph 5:18+) Who enables us to obey the command (gives us the "desire" and the "power" as taught in Php 2:13NLT+) to "**walk by the Spirit**" (Gal 5:16+).

Lest you think this principle is mentioned only by Paul, read the words of two other apostles, John and Peter...

The one who says he abides (lives) in Him (Christ) ought (must, is obligated) himself **to walk** (present tense - habitually, as one's lifestyle) **in the same manner as He (Jesus) walked** (filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit). (1 John 2:6+)

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, **leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps**, (1 Peter 2:21+)

In view of what was at stake (the integrity of the Gospel message - because the lost are critically watching your walk) it is not surprising that Paul repeatedly emphasized **imitation** writing...

I exhort you therefore, **be** (present imperative = command to make this your lifestyle, your continual goal to which you press on toward) **imitators** of me. (1 Cor 4:16+)

You also **became imitators** of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, (1 Th 1:6+)

(To his beloved disciple Timothy) **Let no one look down on** (present imperative = with the negative means stop letting this happen [or at least don't let it bother you]) your youthfulness, **but** (Change of direction - this is the "road" to walk on that will change their opinion of you) rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, **show yourself an example** (literally = a pattern become - not a suggestion but present imperative) of those who believe. (1Ti 4:12+)

Therefore **be** (present imperative) imitators of God, as beloved children; (Like Father, like sons and daughters, so to speak.) (Ephesians 5:1+)

See related discussion - [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)

**William Barclay** renders this verse "Brothers, unite in imitating me, and keep your gaze on those who live, as you have seen us as an example."

As **Henry Morris** observes "Paul was not arrogant or conceited; he even called himself "less than the least of all saints" (Ephesians 3:8). However, the churches were being led astray by false apostles and false teachers "whose God is their belly... who mind earthly things" (Philippians 3:19). Therefore, he often had to defend himself and his teachings (2 Corinthians 11:17,18; 12:11; etc.). The church could not actually see Jesus, but they could see Paul, and compare his life and ministry to those of the false teachers. Therefore, he could say, in all humility: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1-+; 1Cor 4:16, 2Th 3:7). ([Philippians 3 Study Notes Defender's Study Bible](#))

The writer of Hebrews echoes the importance of imitating godly examples writing...

**Remember** (present imperative) those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, **imitate** (present imperative) their faith. (Heb 13:7+)

**Peter** likewise exhorted the spiritual leaders of the church "Don't lord it over (exercise "lordship" or dominion over) the people assigned to your care, but **lead them by your good example**. (1Pe 5:3NLT-+)

**Steven Cole** - Paul is not being egotistical. It is a false humility that denies the truth by saying, "Well, I'm really not worth imitating." Paul knew that he lived with integrity before God. He also just admitted that he was still in the process of coming to know Christ and the power of His resurrection (3:12-14), so he is not implying that he is sinlessly perfect. But his life was an example of how believers should live. He also adds that there were others, probably referring to Timothy, Epaphroditus, and men like them who walked with God. Such men show us in practical ways how we should walk with God, how we should deal with relationships, etc. **The most helpful source for spiritual growth for me, apart from studying the Bible, has been reading the biographies of men of God.** The summer of 1970 was a turning point in my walk with God because of reading [George Muller of Bristol, by A. T. Pierson](#). That book showed me in human form a man who lived by faith, prayer, and obedience to the Word. Since then I've been helped immensely to read the lives of John Calvin, Martin Luther, Jonathan Edwards, Adoniram Judson, C. H. Spurgeon, Hudson Taylor, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Francis Schaeffer, and many others. I have an article in print on this as well as a bibliography ([Reading Christian Biographies A Selected Bibliography](#)) if you're interested. ([Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#))

Note that this verse more literally reads "**become** followers together of me." Or one could translate it "continuously **be** co-imitators of me" or "**keep on becoming** fellow imitators of me."

**Become** (see note above) ([1096](#)) (**ginomai**) means cause to be or come into existence, in this context entering into a new condition (fellow followers). It is a command (**imperative** mood) to make this their lifestyle or habitual practice (**present** tense). (**present imperative**). The only way to obey this command is by faith where faith is manifest by renouncing self-reliance ("I can do this... ") and relying wholly on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

**Following... example** (followers together) ([4831](#)) (**summimetes** from **sun** = together with + **mimetes** = an imitator from **mimos** = an imitator) is an imitator of or follower with others, a joint follower, a joint imitator. Remember the preposition **sun** speaks of an intimate, almost inseparable relationship. **BDAG** says **summimetes** is "one who joins others as an imitator = fellow-imitator with." **Summimetes** is the first word in the Greek sentence which places emphasis on this word.

This Greek word reminds us our English "mimic" or "mime." Just as Paul mimics (mimes) Christ, so they should mimic or imitate him. It is interesting that the art of "mime" emphasizes the actions (the "mime" does not use words) so one application is to let our actions speak louder than our words!

Paul is not saying here to be imitators of Christ in common with me, but be together, jointly, imitators of me. Paul makes his own example a norm or standard of the new life in Christ because at this time in the history of Christianity there is as yet no tradition of the Christian life.

**W. Bauder** has the following note regarding **"imitators"** as it was used in secular Greek - Very early on (in Democritus of the pre-Socratics) the words were used to express ethical demands made on men. One should take as one's model the boldness of a hero, or one should imitate the good example of one's teacher or parents... The Rabbis were the first to speak of imitation of God in the sense of developing the image of God in men. In the Pseudepigrapha in addition to the exhortation to imitate men of outstanding character (Test. Ben. 3:1; 4:1) one can also find the thought of the imitation of God (i.e. keeping his commands, Test. Ash. 4:3) and of particular characteristics of God (Aristeas 188, 210, 280 f.). ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

Teachers based their whole educational procedure on imitation, as students imitated the behavior of teachers. Slowly the idea developed that people should imitate the gods, and Plato emphasized this.

**ILLUSTRATION** - The basic meaning of *mimetes* is seen in a **mime**. An English woman went to France to study under the famous mime artist, Marcel Marceau. All day he taught his students how to make the movements of **mime**, and each evening they went to see him perform. Their performances were marked indelibly by the style of the master. This is an excellent picture of a Christian who imitates the Lord by exposure to Him. And so we see that Paul exhorts the Philippians to observe his life attentively and to become imitators of him, and to do the same also with reference to those other Christians in whose lives they find an example of Paul's own manner of life.

In the last chapter of this letter **Paul** encourages the saints writing that "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you." (Php 4:9-+)

**William Barclay** rightly observes that "Most preachers begin with the serious handicap that they have to say, not, "Do as I do," but, "Do as I say." Paul could say not only, "Listen to my words," but also, "Follow my example." ([Philippians 3 Commentary](#))

**Lehman Strauss** explains that "Paul considered himself the recipient of God's mercy that he might be a "pattern"; thus his whole life, subsequent to his conversion, was dedicated to presenting to others an outline sketch of what a Christian should be. God saved Paul in order that he might show by the example of his conversion that what Jesus Christ did for him He can and will do for others. Was not this the special object our Lord had in view in extending His mercy to you and me? I believe He has saved us to be a pattern to all future believers. Are we serving as examples of those who have been saved by His grace? May it be so!" (Lehman Strauss, Philippians. Loizeaux Brothers. 1976)

**AND OBSERVE THOSE WHO WALK ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN YOU HAVE IN US: kai skopeite (2PPAM) tous houto peripatountas (PAPMPA) kathos echete (2PPAI) tupon hemas:**

- Ps 37:37; Ro 16:17- note; 2Th 3:14
- [Philippians 3 Resources](#)
- [Philippians 3:15-21 The Subtlety of Error](#) - Jack Arnold
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#) - Steven Cole
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 Two Ways to Live](#) - J Ligon Duncan
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**Wuest** translates it...

observe attentively those who conduct themselves in a manner which reflects the example which you have in us ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Observe those who walk** - Paul is saying keep your eye on those who conduct themselves as I do and make them your goal or model for conduct. We all need godly role models. "Keep your eyes on me as the goal." Mark and follow me, not mark and avoid as in Romans 16:17 (note).

**David** gave a similar exhortation...

Mark the blameless man, and behold the upright; for the man of peace will have a posterity. (Ps 37:37)

**Spurgeon** commenting on Ps 37:37 writes that...

After having watched with surprise the downfall of the wicked, give your attention to the sincerely godly, and

observe the contrast. Good men are men of mark, and worth our study; marvels of grace, and worth beholding.  
([See full note](#))

**Observe** (4648) (**skopeo** from **skopos** = distant mark looked at, goal or end one has in view; English "**scope**" as in microscope or telescope) means to "spy out", to look at, to observe, to contemplate, to mark (to fix or trace out the bounds or limits of). Skopeo implies mental consideration and so conveys the picture of attentively fixing one's attention upon something (in this case someone) with desire for (emulation) or interest in. The idea can be to "aim at". Contemplate, look into, examine, inspect, continue to regard closely, to notice carefully, pay attention to, keep one's attention on.

**Vincent** (quoting Schmidt) adds that **skopeo** means...

To direct one's attention upon a thing, either in order to obtain it, or because one has a peculiar interest in it, or a duty to fulfill toward it. Also to have an eye to with a view of forming a right judgment.

There are 6 NT uses of **skopeo** (mostly by Paul)...

**Luke 11:35** "Then **watch** (present imperative) out that the light in you may not be darkness.

**Romans 16:17** (note) Now I urge you, brethren, **keep your eye** (present tense = keep keeping your eye on them - this describes a continual need) on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

**2 Corinthians 4:18** while we **look** (present tense = habitually) not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**Galatians 6:1** Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one **looking** (present tense = continually - almost conveys an imperative sense in this context) to yourself, (Why do you need to continually "mark" yourself?) lest you too be tempted (passive voice = describes temptation coming from outside source).

**Vincent comments:** Notice the passing to the singular number — "considering thyself." (**Ed** = "yourself") The exhortation is addressed to the conscience of each. Before you deal severely with the erring brother, consider your own weakness and susceptibility to temptation, and restore him in view of that fact. (cp 1 Cor 10:12)

**Philippians 2:4** (note) do not merely **look** (present tense = continually - almost conveys an imperative sense in this context) out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

[Philippians 3:17 \(note\)](#) Brethren, **join** in following my example, and **observe** those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

Paul is commanding (**imperative mood**) the Philippian saints to continually (**present tense**) attentively keep fixing their attention upon, (with desire for or interest in) those who exemplify godly conduct. Make it your habit to "scope out" godly examples.

Imagine running the 110 meter low hurdles with your eyes on the track or only on the hurdles or constantly on the competition in the lanes on either side. That would be ridiculous. But no more ridiculous than running the race of life (see **notes** Hebrews 12:1; 12:2) aimlessly as if in a spiritual fog! Only one life. Will soon pass. Only what's done **in Christ** will last. Run with focus and endurance so at the end of your race you have no regrets... a life well lived for His Name and His glory.

**Walk** (4043) (**peripateo** from **peri** = around, about + **pateo** = tread, trample) (Click word study on peripateo) means literally to walk around, to tread all around, to go here and there in walking. The 39 uses in the Gospels always refer to literal, physical walking. Seven of the 8 uses in Acts are also in the literal sense (except Acts 21:21). (See Spurgeon's comments on what it means **to walk**) In the present context peripateo is used as a figure of speech meaning to live, to conduct or to pass one's life. In fact Paul uses **peripateo** only in the metaphorical sense (32 times in his Epistles) describing the ordering of one's behavior, passing one's life (with a connotation of spending some time in a place), etc.

**Pattern** (5179) (**tupos** from **túpto** = strike, smite with repeated strokes) (Click for in depth study of tupos) literally refers to a visible mark or impression made by a stroke or blow from an instrument or object. What is left after the stroke or blow is called a print, a figure or an impression. For example, the most famous reference to a literal mark (tupos) is when Thomas doubted Jesus' resurrection from the dead declaring "*Unless I shall see in His hands the **imprint** (tupos) of the nails*" (John 20:25). (See also [ISBE Article](#)) Stated another way **tupos** properly means a "model" or "pattern" or "mold" into which clay or wax was pressed (or molds into which molten metal for castings was poured), that it might take the figure or exact shape of the mold. Our English word "**type**" is similar and originally referred to an impression made by a die as that which is struck.

What Paul is doing here is exhorting the Philippians to observe his life attentively and to become imitators of him, and to do the same also with reference to those other Christians in whose lives they find an example of Paul's own manner of life.

**Application: Is our life enough of an example that we would want others to pattern themselves after us? What must be altered to answer affirmatively?**

**Phillip's paraphrase** makes an application out of this verse...

Let me be your example here, my brothers: let my example be the standard by which you can tell who are the genuine Christians among those about you. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Philippians 3:18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek:** [polloi gar peripatousin](#) (3PPAI) [hous pollakis elegon](#) (1SIAI) [humin, nun de kai klaion](#) (PAPMSN) [lego](#). (1SPA) [tous echthrous tou staurou tou Christou](#)

**Amplified:** For there are many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, who walk (live) as enemies of the cross of Christ (the Anointed One). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Lightfoot:** For there are many, of whom I told you often and now tell you again even in tears, who professing our doctrine walk not in our footsteps. They are foes to the cross of Christ;

**Phillips:** For there are many, of whom I have told you before and tell you again now, even with tears, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** for many are going about, concerning whom I often have been telling you, but now also tell you weeping, the enemies [they are] of the Cross of the Christ, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** for many walk of whom many times I told you -- and now also weeping tell -- the enemies of the cross of the Christ!

**FOR MANY WALK OF WHOM I OFTEN TOLD YOU: [polloi gar peripatousin](#) (3PPAI) [hous pollakis elegon](#) (1SIAI) [humin](#)**

- Isa 8:11; Da 4:37; Gal 2:14; Eph 4:17- note; 2Thes 3:11; 2Pe 2:10 - note; Jude 1:13
- [Philippians 3 Resources](#)
- [Philippians 3:15-21 The Subtlety of Error](#) - Jack Arnold
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#) - Steven Cole
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**For (gar)** or "because" (see **term of explanation**) explains why Paul is commanding the saints at Philippi to continually follow his example (which they had witnessed firsthand) and now that he was gone to keep observing the example of other saints (presumably those in their local body) who walked as Paul had walked when among them. Just as iron sharpens irons, so one godly man (or woman) sharpens another. This sharpening is needed as Paul goes on to explain, because **many** don't **walk** in a godly manner. As an aside remember that every time you encounter a verse beginning with "for" or "because", make a mental "pit stop" and ask yourself "What is it for?" or "What is the author explaining?" which will usually "force" you to re-read the previous passage(s) for the answer. As you develop this discipline or practice, you will find it facilitates or leads to meditating on the passage, "chewing the cud" in the passage (so to speak). (See Meditate or Primer on Biblical Meditation)

**Many walk** - Not a few but a large number (polus). Have people's hearts changed that much since Paul's day? This phrase surely grieved Paul and should likewise grieve believers today.

**Matthew Henry** makes an excellent practical point that we need to watch the walk and not the talk of professors because...

Their walk is a surer evidence what they are than their profession. By their fruits you shall know them, (Mt



7:20-+. ) (**Ed**: Your life will speak louder than your lips. A life that does not validate one's lips, yields a poor testimony)

**Walk** (4043) (**peripateo** from **peri** = around, about + **pateo** = tread, trample) means to live or pass one's life (most common NT use). **Present tense** indicates that this is their lifestyle, a continual choice to chose the earthly and temporal rather than the heavenly and eternal. No word is supplied describing the character of their **walk** but this is brought out by enemies of the cross of Christ, and in the details of Php 3:19.

**I often told you** is **imperfect tense** indicating repetition of Paul's warnings to them ("I told you again and again" or "over and over" is the idea, a picture that reminds one of how parents often have to deal with their children. cp Paul is a good "spiritual parent").

**Matthew Henry** unfortunately is probably correct when he says "We so little heed the warnings given us that we have need to have them repeated."

#### AND NOW TELL YOU EVEN WEEPING: nun de kai klaion (PAPMSN) lego (1SPA)

- 1Cor 6:9; Gal 5:21 - note; Eph 5:5, 6 - note; 1Thes 4:6 -note) (Php 1:4 - note; Ps 119:136; Jer 9:1; 13:17; Lk 19:41; Acts 20:19,30,31; Ro 9:1 - note; 2Cor 2:4; 11:29
- [Philippians 3 Resources](#)
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In a parallel passage in his letter to the saints at Corinth **Paul** wrote...

For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not that you should be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you. (2 Cor 2:4)

**Often told and now tell you... weeping** - Observe the time phrases (often... now) (See expressions of time). A good teacher will use repetition to make sure the teaching "takes root."

**Matthew Henry** - Paul was upon proper occasions a weeping preacher, as Jeremiah was a weeping prophet. Observe, An old sermon may be preached with new affections; what we say often we may say again, if we say it affectionately, and are ourselves under the power of it.

**Weeping** (2799) (**klaio**) ([All NT and Lxx uses of klaio below](#)) means to mourn, to weep, to lament or to wail with emphasis upon noise accompanying weeping. It expresses one's immediate and outward reaction to suffering. The picture is of one lamenting with sobs or wailing aloud and was used to describe the wailing that took place when someone died. Weeping thus was a sign of the pain and grief for the entity or person being wept over ([See all verses below](#) and note who wept and over what/who?)

**Klaio** implies not only the shedding of tears, but also external expression of grief. It was a term frequently used to describe the actions of professional mourners. Josephus reports people in his time hired flute-players to lead lamentations for public mourning. The haunting sound of the flute then became synonymous with death, tragedy and mourning. The custom of employing professional mourners (generally women) is still prevalent in the Middle East.

The idea is weep aloud, expressing uncontainable, audible grief typically accompanied by wailing and sobbing, as when one suffers a traumatic personal loss or despair (like the death of a family member).

**NIDNTT** writes that in classical Greek **klaio** is "found from Homer onwards (and ) means intransitively to cry aloud, weep; transitively to bewail. In secular Greek. **klaio** does not express remorse or sorrow, but physical or mental pain which is outwardly visible. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

In the present context these **ungodly men** with "**belly god's**" brought tears to Paul's eyes and grief to his bosom because of the damage they brought to Christ's fame, name and kingdom.

**Gary Hill** - Near-synonyms [2799](#) (**klaio**) means to "weep, cry out, expresses man's immediate and outward

reaction to suffering. [2875](#) (koptō) stresses the aspect of public grief, which can manifest itself in various customs such as smiting the breast, cutting oneself, wailing or singing set funeral dirges (cf. also [2354](#) (thrēnēō), wail, sing a lament or dirge; [3996](#) (penthēō), mourn, lament). [3076](#) (lypeō) covers the widest range from physical pain to inward grief" (DNTT, 2, 416); "lupēsthe, denotes primarily an inward grief, whereas words like pentheō, klaiō, etc, indicate the outward expression of grief" (Leon Morris, The First Epistle to the Thessalonians, 138). In sum, [2799](#) (klaīō) stresses audible, "out loud" weeping – and [1145](#) (dakrýō) the shedding of actual tears (even with "silent" mourning). [3602](#) (odyrmos) focuses on inner sorrow (pain) that drives outward grieving. [214](#) (alalazō) refers to grieving prescribed by Oriental customs (like beating the chest, etc.). [4727](#) (stenazō) involves deep inarticulate groans, i.e. that are not (or cannot) be outwardly expressed. (Discovery Bible)

**Warren Wiersbe** has an interesting note writing - How strange in a letter filled with joy to find Paul weeping! Perhaps he is weeping over himself and his difficult situation! No, he is a man with a single mind, and his circumstances do not discourage him. Is he weeping because of what some of the Roman Christians are doing to him? No, he has the submissive mind and will not permit people to rob him of his joy. These tears are not for himself at all; they are shed because of others. Because Paul has the spiritual mind, he is heartbroken over the way some professed Christians are living, people who "mind earthly things." ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

#### THAT THEY ARE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST tous echthrous tou staurou tou Christou:

- Php 1:15, 16- +; 1Cor 1:18; Gal 1:7; 2:21; 6:12
- [Philippians 3 Resources](#)
- [Philippians 3:15-21 The Subtlety of Error](#) - Jack Arnold
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#) - Steven Cole
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 Two Ways to Live](#) - J Ligon Duncan
- [Philippians 3:12-16 Reaching for the Prize](#) - John MacArthur
- [Philippians 3:17-21 Following Godly Examples](#) - John MacArthur
- [Philippians 3:18-19 Fleeing from Enemies](#) - John MacArthur
- [Philippians 3:20-21 Focusing on Expectations](#) - John MacArthur

**Enemies** ([2190](#)) (**echthros** [word study] from **échthos** = hatred, enmity; noun = **echthra** = enmity, hostility) is an adjective which pertains to manifesting hostility or being at enmity with another, where enmity is a deep seated animosity or hatred which may be open or concealed or a "deep-rooted hatred." The picture is of those who are antagonistic to the Cross; especially seeking to injure, overthrow, or confound those who would cling to the old rugged cross. It is not surprising that Scripture uses **echthros** as a noun describing "the adversary", Satan! Like father like son!

In the active sense **echthros** means to be hateful, hostile toward, at enmity with or adversary of someone. In the passive sense **echthros** pertains to being subjected to hostility, to be hated or to be regarded as an enemy.

In his letter James used **echthros** with somewhat of a similar meaning as Paul declaring...

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. (James 4:4+)

**Paul** explained to the church at Corinth that...

Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, that the **cross** of Christ should not be made void. For the word of the **cross** is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1Cor 1:17-18)

And to the Galatians **Paul** warned that...

Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. (Gal 6:12)

**Cross** ([4716](#)) (**stauros**) (Dictionary articles = [ISBE](#), [SBD](#), [EBD](#)) is literally a cross, an instrument of capital punishment, an upright pointed stake often with a crossbeam above it or intersected by a crossbeam.

**How are these men enemies of the Cross?** For one thing these ungodly men would be a hindrance to the spread of the gospel. In addition, the **cross** speaks of the self-denial which a believer must be prepared to take on to follow Christ. Jesus made it clear



that...

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it." (Mk 8:34, 35)

Self-denial was not something these men sought to practice as is clear from Phil 3:19. Their lifestyle was thus in direct opposition to the Lord's clear call for self-denial.

In his letter to the Galatians Paul emphasized the centrality of the **Cross** in the Christian life writing...

But may it never be that I should boast, except in the **cross** of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world (Paul was separated from this world system with all its attractions and separated to Christ). (Gal 6:14-+)

As **Dwight Pentecost** notes...

Paul finds his chief delight is the cross of Christ. It is the center of his life. It is the pattern of his life. It overshadows his life. It is the goal of his life. That is the place the cross of Christ should have in the life of every child of God, but it does not have its rightful place in the lives of the false teachers who have come into this assembly. ([Pentecost, J. D. The Joy of Living: A study of Philippians. Kregel Publications](#))

**Pastor Steven Cole** makes some pithy applications from Paul's warnings...

Are you a citizen of heaven right now? You can only become such through birth, the new birth. Just as you could not do anything to bring about your physical birth, so you can do nothing to effect your spiritual birth. It must come from the Lord. Just as He is powerful to raise the dead and subject all things to Himself when He comes again, so He is powerful now to raise the dead spiritually and impart new life to all who call upon Him. He can even now take your rebellious heart and bring it into submission to Him through His mighty power. Scripture promises, "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Ro 10:13-+). Cry out to Him for the new birth.

Our text is especially a warning to those who profess to be Christians, but who really are living as citizens of this earth, living for self and pleasure, with no view to the coming of our Lord. I can think of nothing more tragic than to profess to be a Christian, to be involved in serving Christ, and to stand before Him one day and say, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" only to hear the horrifying words, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness." (Mt 7:22, 24-+). Make sure your citizenship is truly in heaven. Then live as a citizen of heaven, not as a citizen of this earth.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can a professing Christian who is living in sin have assurance of salvation? Use Scripture to defend your answer.
2. Is it wrong to present the gospel by emphasizing the temporal benefits over and above the eternal?
3. How can a Christian who honestly is caught up with the things of this life gain a deeper love for the Lord's return?
4. Many confuse grace with sloppy living and obedience with legalism. Why is this wrong (see Titus 2:11, 12, 13, 14+)? ([Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#))

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**Contrasts** - A popular rap singer who died in 1995 at the age of 31 took pride in the profane language and violent imagery of his productions. If you listened to his music, you had the feeling that he was shaking his fist at God.

It's a tragic story. The singer's godless philosophy of life deprived him of hope and led him into a lifestyle that caused his death at a young age. But far worse than an early death is the fact that God's judgment awaits all who reject Him (Phil. 3:19).

The apostle Paul, though he was a very religious man, was also on a road to self-destruction until the Lord graciously sent him to his knees (Acts 9). After he put his trust in Jesus and accepted the gift of salvation, Paul had a far different view of life's purpose. Now he saw Jesus as his only hope, and his highest goal was to become like Christ (Phil 3:7-14). He could face death fearlessly because he looked forward to the conclusion of it all--perfect conformity to Christ in heaven (Php 3:20, 21).

What a contrast! Man's way produces harmful, evil conduct that ends in destruction. God's way promises inner peace, victory over enslaving sins, and eternity in heaven. The right choice is obvious! Have you made it? — Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The little choices we must make  
Will chart the course of life we take;  
We either choose the path of light  
Or wander off in darkest night. --DJD

**Man's ways lead to a hopeless end--  
God's ways lead to endless hope.**

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Here are the 34 verses with 40 uses of **klaio** in the NT (scan over these uses - it is interesting to see **who** is weeping, **why** or over **what** they are weeping. Note also the **reactions/emotions** that accompany weeping.)...

**Matthew 2:18** "A voice was heard in Ramah, **Weeping** (klauthmos) and **great mourning**, (odurmos - lamentation, wailing, mourning) Rachel **weeping** (klaio) for her children; And she refused to be comforted, Because they were no more."

**Matthew 26:75** And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, "Before a cock crows, you will deny Me three times." And he went out and **wept bitterly** (pikros)

**Mark 5:38** And they came to the house of the synagogue official; and He beheld a commotion, and people loudly **weeping and wailing**.

**Mark 5:39** And entering in, He said to them, "Why make a **commotion** (thorubeo = make an uproar, agitate, disturb, cause an emotional disturbance, actively = throw into disorder or passively = be completely upset) and **weep**? The child has not died, but is asleep."

**Mark 14:72** And immediately a cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had made the remark to him, "Before a cock crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And he began to **weep**.

**Mark 16:10** She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were **mourning** (pentheo - experience sadness or grief as result of some condition/circumstance) and **weeping**.

**Luke 6:21** "Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who **weep** now (contrasted with those who now are full and rich and self righteous, pharisaical), for you shall laugh.

**Luke 6:25** "Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall **mourn** (pentheo - experience sadness or grief as result of some condition/circumstance) and **weep**.

**Comment:** Notice here and several other passages where klaio has a future reference in the NT, it is connected with warnings of disaster especially directed to those who now are godless and scornful and who will be put to shame in the final judgment.

**Luke 7:13** And when the Lord saw her, He felt compassion for her, and said to her, "Do not **weep** (present imperative).

**Luke 7:32** They are like children who sit in the market place and call to one another; and they say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not **weep**.'

**Luke 7:38** and standing behind Him at His feet, **weeping**, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet, and anointing them with the perfume.

**Luke 8:52** Now they were all **weeping and lamenting** (kopto - beat their breasts) for her; but He said, "Stop **weeping** (present imperative), for she has not died, but is asleep."

**Luke 19:41** And when He (Jesus) approached, He saw the city (Jerusalem) and **wept** over it,

**Luke 22:62** And he went out and **wept bitterly**.

**Luke 23:28** But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop **weeping** (present imperative) for Me, but **weep** (present imperative) for yourselves and for your children.

**John 11:31** The Jews then who were with her in the house, and consoling her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to **weep** there.

**John 11:33** When Jesus therefore saw her **weeping**, and the Jews who came with her, also **weeping**, **He was deeply moved in spirit**, and was troubled,

**John 16:20** "Truly, truly, I say to you (His disciples), that you will **weep and lament**, (threneo - lament, bewail as the singers of

dirges did, mourn in ritual fashion, express oneself in sorrowful tones) but the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to joy.

**John 20:11** But Mary was standing outside the tomb **weeping**; and so, as she **wept**, she stooped and looked into the tomb;

**John 20:13** And they said to her, "Woman, why are you **weeping**?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

**John 20:15** Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you **weeping**? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away."

**Acts 9:39** And Peter arose and went with them. And when he had come, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him **weeping**, and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them.

**Acts 21:13** Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, **weeping and breaking my heart**? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

**Romans 12:15** (note) Rejoice with those who rejoice, and **weep** with those who **weep**.

**1 Corinthians 7:30** and those who **weep**, as though they did not **weep**; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess;

**Philippians 3:18** (note) For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even **weeping**, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,

**James 4:9** **Be miserable** (aorist imperative) and **mourn** (aorist imperative) and **weep** (aorist imperative) let your laughter **be turned** (aorist imperative) into mourning, and your joy to gloom.

**James 5:1** Come now, you rich, **weep** (aorist imperative) **and howl** (aorist imperative) for your miseries which are coming upon you.

**Revelation 5:4** (note) And I (**John**) began to **weep greatly**, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look into it;

**Revelation 5:5** (note) and one of the elders said to me, "Stop **weeping** (present imperative); behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

**Revelation 18:9** (note) "And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her (Babylon), will **weep and lament** (kopto - beat their breasts - What a picture!) over her when they see the smoke of her burning,

**Revelation 18:11** (note) "And the merchants of the earth **weep and mourn** (pentheo - experience sadness or grief as result of some condition/circumstance) over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more;

**Revelation 18:15** (note) "The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, **weeping and mourning** (pentheo - experience sadness or grief as result of some condition/circumstance)

**Revelation 18:19** (note) "And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, **weeping and mourning** (pentheo - experience sadness or grief as result of some condition/circumstance) saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!'

Here are the 98 uses of **klaio** in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint (LXX)** ...

Ge 21:16; 27:38; 29:11; 33:4; 37:35; 42:24; 43:30; 45:14, 15; 46:29; 50:1, 17; Ex 2:6; Lev. 10:6; Num. 11:4, 10, 13, 18, 20; 14:1; 20:29; 25:6; Deut. 1:45; 21:13; 34:8; Jdg. 2:4; 9:7; 11:37, 38; 14:16, 17; 15:18; 16:28; 20:23, 26; 21:2; Ruth 1:9, 14; 1 Sa 1:7, 8, 10; 11:4, 5; 13:16; 20:41; 24:16; 30:4; 2 Sa 1:12, 24; 3:16, 32, 34; 12:21, 22; 13:36; 15:23, 30; 18:33; 19:1; 1 Ki. 18:45; 21:27; 2 Ki. 8:11, 12; 13:14; 20:3; 22:19; 2 Chr. 34:27; Ezr. 3:12; 10:1; Neh. 1:4; 8:9; Job 2:12; 30:25; 31:38; Ps. 78:64; 95:6; 126:6; 137:1; Eccl. 3:4; Isa. 15:2, 5; 16:9; 22:4; 30:19; 33:7; 38:3; Jer. 9:1; 13:17; 22:10, 18; 34:5; 41:6; 48:5; 50:4; Lam. 1:1, 1:2, 15; Ezek. 24:16, 23; Hos. 12:4; Joel 1:5, 18; 2:17; Mic. 2:6

**NIDNTT** summarizes the meaning and uses of **klaio** in the **Septuagint (LXX)** writing that...

In the **Septuagint (LXX)** **klaio** is used mostly as the translation of **bakâh**, weep, cry aloud. It expresses profound grief (1 Sam. 1:7; Lam. 1:16), and also deep sorrow in mourning for the dead (Ge 50:1). But it may equally express supreme joy, as at the meeting of Jacob and Joseph (Ge 46:29). The whole personality is involved, as it is in the case of a crying child (Ge 21:16; Ex. 2:6). A Greek might bewail his personal fate or that

of his people, but in the OT the thought is rather that of expressing dependence on God, by addressing one's cries or complaints to him in prayer (e.g. Samson in Jdg 15:18; 16:28; cf. Isa. 30:19). A further OT feature is the cultic lamentation of the whole people before Yahweh, usually accompanied by a general fast (Jdg 20:23, 26), such occasions providing the *Sitz im Leben* for such songs of national lamentation as Ps 74, 79; 80. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#)) (Bolding added)

**Philippians 3:19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things** ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [hon to telos apoleia, hon ho theos e koilia kai e doxa en te aischune auton, hoi ta epigeia phronountes.](#) ([PAPMPN](#))

**Amplified:** They are doomed and their dfate is eternal misery (perdition); their god is their stomach (their appetites, their sensuality) and they glory in their shame, residing with earthly things and being of their party. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Lightfoot:** they are doomed to perdition; they make their appetites their god; they glory in their shame; they are absorbed in earthly things.

**Phillips:** These men are heading for utter destruction - their god is their own appetite, their pride is in what they should be ashamed of, and this world is the limit of their horizon. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** whose end is utter destruction, whose god is their stomach, and that which they esteem to be their glory is their shame, who regard the things upon the earth. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** whose end is destruction, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who the things on earth are minding.

#### WHOSE END IS DESTRUCTION: on to telos apoleia:

- Mt 25:41; Lk 12:45,46; 2Cor 11:15; 2Th 2:8,12; Hebrews 6:6, 7, 8 - note; 2Pe 2:1 - note; 2Pe 2:3 - note 2Pet 2:17 - note; Jude 1:4,13; Rev 19:20 - [note](#); Rev 20:9,10 - [note](#); Rev 21:8 - [note](#); Rev 22:15 - [note](#)
- [Philippians 3 Resources](#)
- [Philippians 3:15-21 The Subtlety of Error](#) - Jack Arnold
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#) - Steven Cole
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**End** ([5056](#)) (**telos** from **tello** =to set out for a definite point or goal) is the culmination or the outcome of a growth or development representing an attained objective. **Telos** is never used in NT as a chronological end, as if something simply stops. Instead,**telos** speaks of a consummation, a goal achieved, a result attained, or a realization. **Telos** is the result of an event or process with special focus upon the final state or condition - outcome, result. Telos speaks of the "final curtain" or the ultimate destiny for these libertines.

**Destruction** ([684](#)) (**apoleia** from **apo** = marker of separation, away from + **olethros** = ruin, death but **not** annihilation <> from **ollumi** = to destroy) means utter and hopeless loss of all that gives worth to existence. Note that contrary to popular opinion **apoleia** does not refer to extinction or annihilation or an end of existence, but to total ruin so far as the purpose of existence is concerned.

**Apoleia** in one sense means the destruction that one causes as the result of disregard for the value of that which is destroyed or "wasted" (see Matthew 26:8, Mark 14:4).

The more common sense of **apoleia** is as a description of the destruction which one experiences, when man instead of becoming what he might have become by redemption through the blood of Christ (new creature/creation in Christ - 2 Cor 5:17), is ruined ("spiritually bankrupt", in a state of "eternal disrepair") suffering loss of value or usefulness (ultimately usefulness to God - this is sad beyond words and even as I write this note tears well up in my eyes for the plight of these men and women, created in the image of

God.) Think of the picture of a once beautiful edifice which has suffered the ravages of time and circumstances and all that one sees is the useless, collapsed, disintegrated remains.

In short, **apoleia** speaks of the loss of everything that makes human existence worthwhile. The idea not loss of being, but loss of well-being.

And so in this sense **apoleia** describes utter ruin, complete loss and is used especially of the eternal "**destruction**" (the second death - [see chart below](#)) visited on the ungodly. It is the wasteful end of earthly existence with no chance for a fulfilling future existence. Note however that there is a sense that the ungodly have "wasted" their one life on earth. What a tragic picture irregardless of how much wealth, pleasure or power they might have experienced while they were alive.

There are 13 uses of **apoleia** in the NT...

**Matthew 7:13** (note) **Enter** (aorist imperative - urgent need - do this now and do it effectively! Don't put off your decision to believe in Christ one more second!) by the narrow gate (the way, the truth, the life - [Jn 14:6] Christ Jesus, the only Door [Jn 10:9] through which one can enter into the Kingdom of God); (Why is one's entrance through this narrow, exacting, strait gate, which has such strict requirements related to entrance?) for (Here is Jesus' answer) the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to **destruction**, and many are those who enter by it.

**Matthew 26:8** But the disciples were indignant when they saw this, and said, "Why this **waste**? (What did they think was a **waste**? A woman pouring very costly perfume upon Jesus' head, anointing the King of kings!)"

**Mark 14:4** But some were indignantly remarking to one another, "Why has this perfume been **wasted**?"

**John 17:12** "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished (apollumi = verb related to apoleia) but the son of **perdition** (Judas Iscariot) that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

**Acts 8:20** But Peter said to him (Simon who "believed" - an intellectual, head belief, not a genuine, heart belief productive of true salvation as shown by Peter's declaration!), "May your silver **perish** with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!

**Romans 9:22** (note) What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

**Philippians 1:28** (note) in no way alarmed by your opponents-- which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.

[Philippians 3:19](#) (note) whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

**2 Thessalonians 2:3** Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of **destruction**, (referring to the Antichrist)

**1 Timothy 6:9** But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin (olethros) and **destruction** (apoleia).

**Hebrews 10:39** (note) But we are not of those who shrink back to **destruction**, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

**Comment:** Kenneth Wuest writes that in this verse **apoleia** means "'utter destruction,'" and in this context means "the destruction which consists in the loss of eternal life; eternal misery, perdition," which is the lot of those who would renounce their professed faith in Messiah as High Priest and return to a dependence upon the abrogated sacrifices for salvation. The Word of God is very clear in its statements to the effect that a person once saved can never be lost. Therefore, this person who draws back to perdition must be an unsaved person ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**2 Peter 2:1** (note) But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

**2 Peter 2:3** (note) and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

**2 Peter 3:7** (note) But the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and **destruction** of ungodly men.

**2 Peter 3:16** (note) as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own **destruction**.

**Revelation 17:8** (note) "The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to **destruction**. (apoleia - eternal destruction, the Lake of fire - see notes [Revelation 19:20](#)) And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

**Revelation 17:11** (note) "And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to **destruction**.

The following chart is taken from **Tony Garland's** excellent treatise on the Revelation (See [Births, Deaths, and Resurrections](#)). He writes that...

Scripture knows of two births, two deaths, and two resurrections. Everyone is physically born once. Those who do not undergo the second birth, the spiritual birth, also undergo the second death which is the permanent separation from God with eternal torment.

## Participation in Births, Deaths, and Resurrections

When a person is *born again* (John 3:3-7; 1Pe. 1:23; 1Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 5:1, 18), he will only undergo the first death, but the second death has no power over him: "though he may die [the first death], he shall live [be resurrected never to face the second death]" (John 11:25b).

Event	Unbeliever	Believer	Description
<b>Born Again</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	The first birth is physical birth. The second birth is spiritual and occurs when a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ. ( <a href="#">note 1</a> ) Only believers are "born twice."
<b>First Death</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	The first death occurs at the end of one's physical life.
<b>First Resurrection</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	The first resurrection is a category and occurs in stages, beginning with the resurrection of Christ (1Cor. 15:20) and ending with the resurrection just prior to the Millennium ( <a href="#">Rev 20:5; 6</a> ). Only believers participate in the first resurrection. ( <a href="#">note 2</a> ) See <a href="#">Order of Resurrection</a> .
<b>Second Resurrection</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	The second resurrection occurs at the end of the at the Great White Throne Judgment ( <a href="#">Rev 20:11; 12; 13</a> ). Only unbelievers participate in the second resurrection. See The Two Resurrections - "First" and "Second" - on a timeline and Seven Resurrections in Scripture
<b>Second Death</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	The second death is after the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment ( <a href="#">Revelation 20:14; 15</a> ). As there is eternal life beyond this present life for the faithful, so there is eternal death beyond the death of the wicked. ( <a href="#">note 3</a> ) The second death is commonly known as hell. ( <a href="#">note 4</a> )

### Explanatory Notes for the foregoing chart...

**1** Luke 15:24, 32; John 3:3, 7; Gal. 6:15; 1Pe. 1:3, 23; 1Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 5:1, 18.

**2** "The order of events in the resurrection program would be:

(1) the resurrection of Christ as the beginning of the resurrection program (1Cor. 15:23);



(2) the resurrection of the church age saints at the rapture (1Th. 4:16);

(3) the resurrection of the tribulation period saints (Rev. 20:3-5), together with

(4) the resurrection of Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19) at the second advent of Christ to the earth; and finally

(5) the final resurrection of the unsaved dead [the second resurrection] (Rev. 20:5, 11-14) at the end of the millennial age.

The first four stages would all be included in the **first resurrection**.”—J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 411. (See also *The Two Resurrections - First and Second*)

**3** “As there is a life beyond this present life for the faithful, so a death beyond the death which falls under our eye for the wicked.”—Richard Chenevix Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1861), 111.

**4** The King James Version translates both Hades and Gehenna—the Lake of Fire—as **hell**. They are actually two different places. The final destiny of the unsaved is the latter, an existence of eternal punishment: “ ‘*Vita damnatorum mors est*,’ [death is a life of punishment] is the fearful gloss of Augustine.”—Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 111.

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**Dwight Pentecost** emphasizes that...

**Destruction** in Scripture does not refer to annihilation. The godless man who passes out of this life does not slip into eternal unconsciousness. Scripture knows nothing of a doctrine of annihilation, where after death a godless man simply ceases to exist. When God created man, God gave to man a living soul, and the life given to the creature was permanent life. That life does not terminate at physical death. It continues. **Destruction**, then, does not have to do with annihilation, forgetfulness, a state of nonexistence. **Destruction** has to do with separation from God. This word conveys the idea of a continued existence in a state of separation from the Creator. Those who deny the centrality of the cross of Christ and who do not submit to the Christ of the cross are without a bridge between the sinner and God. They are separated from God, under condemnation, under divine judgment. They are destined to a state of perpetual and eternal separation from God. The apostle says that these false teachers who have come into this assembly are propagating a devilish doctrine that comes out of the pit; those who give themselves to this doctrine reveal that they are fitted for separation from God in the pit. ([Pentecost, J. D. \*The Joy of Living: A Study of Philippians\*. Kregel Publications](#)) (Bolding added)

#### WHOSE GOD IS THEIR APPETITE: on o theos e koilia

- Php 2:21- +; 1Sa 2:11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16,29; Isa 56:10, 11, 12; Ezek 13:19; 34:3; Mic 3:5,11; Mal 1:12; Lk 12:19; 16:19; Ro 16:18 - +; 1Ti 6:5; 2Ti 3:4- +; Titus 1:11,12-notes; 2Pe 2:13-+; Jude 1:12
- [Philippians 3 Resources](#)
- [Philippians 3:15-21 The Subtlety of Error](#) - Jack Arnold
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#) - Steven Cole
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 Two Ways to Live](#) - J Ligon Duncan
- [Philippians 3:12-16 Reaching for the Prize](#) - John MacArthur
- [Philippians 3:17-21 Following Godly Examples](#) - John MacArthur
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- [Philippians 3:20-21 Focusing on Expectations](#) - John MacArthur

**Appetite** (2836) (**koilia** from **koilos** = hollow) means the belly of man, the bowels, as the receptacle of food, and so a reference to the stomach. Figuratively it speaks of appetite. **Their "god" is their stomach or belly!** In other words, their God does not reside in the heavens but in their body. They live only for the temporal pleasures of and their lives are enslaved to the gratification of the lusts of their flesh.

**Koilia** -22x in 21v - Matt 12:40; 15:17; 19:12; Mark 7:19; Luke 1:15, 41f, 44; 2:21; 11:27; 23:29; John 3:4; 7:38; Acts 3:2; 14:8; Rom 16:18; 1 Cor 6:13; Gal 1:15; Phil 3:19; Rev 10:9f. **NAS** = appetite(1), appetites(1), belly(1), innermost being(1), stomach(7), womb(11), wombs(1).

**Robertson** rightly says that "Sensuality in food, drink, sex then as now mastered some men. These men posed as Christians and gloried in their shame."

The highest good in life to these men is to satisfy self, to do what pleases self, in direct rebellion to the Word of God, the holiness of God and even the inner conviction of their own consciences. They are is guided only by that which satisfies and pleases self.

**Steven Cole** writes that "they live for selfish and sensual pleasures, rather than denying self in order to live for Christ. The Bible does not promote asceticism, the self-imposed denial of all pleasure as a means of purifying oneself and getting right with God. Rather, it teaches that God has richly supplied us with all things to enjoy (1Ti 6:17). But if we remove God from the center as the chief object of our joy and replace it with some earthly pleasure, we are guilty of idolatry. ([Philippians 3:17-4:1](#))

As Paul explains, a man's god is that to which he gives himself and which thereby becomes the determining factor in his life. What we tend to think about predominantly and what we get excited about when talking tells us what or who is our "god". When a man gives himself to satisfy his own appetites apart from any restraint, he has made a god out of those appetites. In short, these men Paul is describing are primarily concerned about eating, drinking, sex, and fulfilling bodily appetites, rather than knowing Christ and making Him known.

In Romans Paul refuted Paul the philosophy which says that highest good in a man's life is to satisfy himself explaining that "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Ro 14:17-+)

Although some commentators feel these wicked men are "Judaizers", **Kenneth Wuest** sums up this section writing that "The individuals spoken of in these verses are not Judaizers but professed Christian Greeks of Epicurean tendencies ([See article on Epicureans](#)). The Epicureans represented a Greek school of philosophy which taught that the satisfaction of the physical appetites was the highest aim of man. They had allowed their Christian liberty to degenerate into license (Gal. 5:13 = "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."). They did not understand God's grace and thus thought lightly of continuing in sin (Ro 6:1-+, Ro 6:15-+). They were engrossed only in self-indulgence (Ro 16:18-+). A swing away from legalism would land such a person into anti-nomianism, namely, lawlessness. Paul, acquainted with the Greek classics, writing to Greeks who knew their own literature speaks of these as having their belly as their God. He probably was thinking of the Cyclops in Euripides who says, "My flocks which I sacrifice to no one but myself, and not to the gods, and to this my belly, the greatest of the gods: for to eat and drink each day, and to give one's self no trouble, this is the god of wise men." ([Philippians Commentary - Verse by Verse Comments](#))

**A T Robertson** - The comic poet Eupolis uses the rare word Koilodaimōn for one who makes a god of his belly and Seneca speaks of one who abdomini servit. Sensuality in food, drink, sex then as now mastered some men. These men posed as Christians and gloried in their shame.

#### AND WHOSE GLORY IS IN THEIR SHAME: kai e doxa en te aischune auton:

- Ps 52:1; Hos 4:7; Hab 2:15,16; Lk 18:4; 1Cor 5:2,6; 2Cor 11:12; Gal 6:13; Jas 4:16; 2Pe 2:18,19 note; Jude 1:13,16; Rev 18:7 - [note](#)
- [Philippians 3 Resources](#)
- [Philippians 3:15-21 The Subtlety of Error](#) - Jack Arnold
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#) - Steven Cole
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 Two Ways to Live](#) - J Ligon Duncan
- [Philippians 3:12-16 Reaching for the Prize](#) - John MacArthur
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The Phillips paraphrase picks up the meaning...

their pride is in what they should be ashamed of

These men actually find great glory in what should cause them great shame!

**Pastor Steven Cole** - They boasted in their supposed "freedom," when in reality they were slaves to their lusts. Many well-known Christians today glory in things they should be ashamed of, writing books and appearing on TV talk shows to tell titillating stories about their sinful "addictions." ([Philippians 3:17-4:1](#))

**John Newton** the once notorious slave trader wrote a poem that alluded to **glorying in shame**...

In evil long I took delight,  
**Unawed by shame or fear,**  
Till a new object struck my sight,  
And stopp'd my wild career:

I saw One hanging on a Tree  
In agonies and blood,  
Who fix'd His languid eyes on me.  
As near His Cross I stood.

To a great degree **glorying in shame** is an apt description of post-Christian America, **James Dobson** writing that...

In 1960, out-of-wedlock pregnancy was **a matter of shame**. When it happened, couples often did a quaint thing—they got married, so that the child would have a name and the influence of a father. Girls who “slept around” were often ostracized by their fellow students. A pregnant teenage was sent away to have the child rather than risk the censure of the community.

In 1990, one out of five babies born in America was conceived out of wedlock. In Washington, D.C., illegitimacy was an alarming 55 percent! In many schools, the virtuous girl was considered odd, and was subjected to the same scorn and ridicule once reserved for the “easy” date 30 years earlier. Surveys revealed that many of our sons and daughters were embarrassed to admit their virginity.

We see a picture that parallels **glorying in shame** in Ephesians where Paul described the pagan culture writing...

and they (Gentiles), having become **callous** (past feeling, insensitive to pain and in context figuratively meaning insensitive to shame), have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. (see + Ephesians 4:19)

**Comment:** The Greek word for **callous** is *apalgeo* which gives us our English word “analgesic” meaning that which takes away pain, which can sometimes be a protective mechanism causing the body to retract from danger, such as a scalding stove. These men in Philippians had become numb to the value of shame. The following illustration shows the “power of shame”...

Steve Brown relates the story of a soldier in World War I who was so distraught with the war that he deserted. He tried to find his way to the coast so he could catch a boat and make his way back incognito to his homeland in England.

In the darkness of the night he stumbled on a road sign. It was so pitch black and he was so lost. He had no idea where he was or what the sign said. He decided to climb the pole. When he got to the crossbeam, he held on to read the sign. Taking out a match, he lit it, and looked directly in the face of Jesus Christ. He had climbed an outdoor crucifix!

Stunned by what he saw, he realized the shame of his life. He was looking into the face of the One who had endured it all and had never turned back (and Who Hebrews says endured “*despising the shame*” because He was sinless unlike fallen men - He 12:2-+). The next morning the soldier was back in the trenches. (Swindoll, C. R. The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart and 1501 other stories)

### **None Other Lamb**

None other Lamb, none other Name,  
None other Hope in heaven or earth or sea,  
None other Hiding-place from guilt and shame,  
None beside Thee.

My faith burns low, my hope burns low  
Only my heart's desire cries out in me  
By the deep thunder of its want and woe  
Cries out to Thee.

Lord, Thou art Life tho' I be dead,  
Love's Fire Thou art, however cold I be:  
Nor heaven have I, nor place to lay my head,  
No home, but Thee.

-- **Christina Rossetti**

**Shame** (152) (**aischune** from **aischos** = shame) means disgrace (loss of reputation as the result of a dishonorable action) or ignominy (a deep personal humiliation). **Aischune** describes **shame** resulting from exposure of one's weaknesses or sins. It is not a feeling one has but an experience which comes to someone.

Since **shame** describes a sensitivity respecting possibility of dishonor, it is clear these men have advanced to a deep state of depravity.

In the Bible shame most frequently, it denotes the guilt a person feels or should feel for having sinned against God.

**NIDNTT** notes that in classic Greek (**aischuno** is the related verb form) - The root **aisch-** refers originally to that which is ugly and disgraceful. **Aischuno** (Homer onwards) thus meant originally to disfigure, make ugly. It is found in Greek literature almost exclusively in the mid. or pass. with the meaning to feel shame, be ashamed, or to be confounded, be disconcerted. **epaischunomai** (Aesch. onwards) is a strengthened form of the mid., and **kataischuno** (Homer onwards) of the act. and pass. meanings of **aischuno**. The noun **aischune** (Aesch.) is derived from **aischunesthai**, and originally carried the meaning of to **aischunesthai**, the fact of being ashamed, or of being confounded. **aischune** has the subjective sense of modesty, understood as fear of what is **aischron**, ugly (Aristoxenos, Fragment 42a); and the objective sense of shame, that which results from an **aischron**, shameful deed (Diod. Sic. 2, 23, 2). In contrast to **aidos** with its religious reference to the gods, **aischune** is primarily a sociological concept: shame exposes one to the ridicule of society, which one tries to escape by being ashamed.

**TDNT** - The main point of **aischune** is not "feeling of shame" but "disgrace," i.e., the shame brought by divine judgment, though sometimes with a stress on "being ashamed." Accordingly, the substantive **aischune** is very seldom used for the "feeling of shame." It mostly denotes "disgrace," though sometimes with an emphasis on the fact that this also means being ashamed. Its primary reference is to the shame brought by the divine judgment. ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

**Shame** is a painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety or an awareness of having done something dishonorable, unworthy, degrading, etc. **Shame** is a feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behaviour.

What Paul is saying in essence is that the consciences of these men are so dull and insensitive that they actually find delight in their sins. When a sinner's wretched conduct before God is the basis for his self exultation, he has fallen to the most extreme level of wickedness! These men delighted in their liberty and permitted no restraint to hinder their evil appetites.

**MacArthur** puts it this way - This is the most extreme form of wickedness—when the sinner's most wretched conduct before God is his highest point of self-exaltation. ([MacArthur, J. Philipians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**Spurgeon** says

Remember the shame of sin when tempted by the sweet of sin.

Sin and **shame** came in both together. - Christopher Nesse

Sin has the devil for its father, **shame** for its companion and death for its wages. - Thomas Watson

In terms of sheer numbers, using the King James Version, the words **shame**, **ashamed**, and their derivatives far outdo **guilt** and **guilty**. The former are mentioned 224 times in the Bible, and the latter 23 times.

Goods are not good unless we do good with them

"To have, and not to use the same,

Is not our glory, but our shame." (Spurgeon)

**Spurgeon** notes that...

It's a silly pig that's proud of its ring. That ring in the nose, which proves him to be a doer of mischief, the foolish pig is supposed to prize as an ornament. There are men who glory in their shame.

**Thomas Boston** rightly said that...

The natural man's heart is where his feet should be, fixed upon earth; his heels are lifted up against heaven, which his heart should be set on.

His face is towards hell; his back towards heaven.

He loves what he should hate, and hates what he should love; joys in what he ought to mourn for, and mourns for what he ought to rejoice in; glories in his shame, and is ashamed of his glory; abhors what he should desire, and desires what he should abhor.

Here are the 6 NT uses of **aischune**...

**Luke 14:9** and he who invited you both shall come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then **indisgrace** you proceed to occupy the last place.

**2 Corinthians 4:2** but we have renounced the things hidden because of **shame**, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

**Philippians 3:19** [\(note\)](#) whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their **shame**, who set their minds on earthly things.

**Hebrews 12:2** [\(note\)](#) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the **shame**, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Jude 1:13** wild waves of the sea, casting up their own **shame** like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

**Revelation 3:18** [\(note\)](#) I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the **shame** of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see.

There are 52 uses of **aischune** in the non-apocryphal Septuagint (LXX) -

1 Sa 20:30; 2 Sa 23:7; 1 Ki. 18:19, 25; 2 Ki. 8:11; 2 Chr. 32:21; Ezr. 9:7; Job 6:20; 8:22; Ps. 35:26; 40:15; 44:15; 69:19; 71:13; 89:45; 109:29; 132:18; Prov. 9:13; 19:13; 26:11; Isa. 3:9; 19:9; 20:4; 30:3, 5f; 42:17; 45:16; 47:3, 10; 50:6; 54:4; Jer. 2:26; 3:24f; 20:18; 31:19; Ezek. 7:18; 16:36f; 22:10; 23:10, 18, 29; Dan. 9:7f; 12:2; Hos. 9:10; Obad 1:10; Mic. 7:10; Nah. 3:5; Hab. 2:10

**Psalms 40:15** Let those be appalled because of their shame Who say to me, "Aha, aha!" **(Comment:** This is the reaction that shame should bring, but not so in the hearts of these men given over to their belly gods.)

**NIDNTT** comments that in **Genesis 2:25** "**shame** in the body is the most primitive expression of the feeling of guilt... This disturbance results from an act of disobedience against Yahweh, and man reacts to the objective loss of innocence, and the innermost disturbance of his relationship with God, by the feeling of shame. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

#### WHO SET THEIR MINDS ON EARTHLY THINGS: hoi ta epigeia phronountes (PAPMPN):

- Ps 4:6,7; 17:14; Mt 16:23; Ro 8:5, 6, 7-note; [1Co 3:3](#); 2 Pet 2:3-note
- [Philippians 3 Resources](#)
- [Philippians 3:15-21 The Subtlety of Error](#) - Jack Arnold
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#) - Steven Cole
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Men whose whole minds are earthbound! (Barclay)

this world is the limit of their horizon. (Phillips)

**A DISTRACTING,  
DESTRUCTIVE MINDSET!**

Steven Cole writes that...

One form this takes in our day is our emphasis on how Christ can make you happy in the here and now. He

can give you peace, joy, and a happy marriage. He can solve all your problems. So people come to Jesus and find out that they have trials and persecutions, as the Bible clearly promises, so they bail out. Obviously, we all have earthly things that consume our time and energy: jobs, bills to pay, houses to maintain, family problems, health problems, etc. But the point is, the true Christian does not put earthly comfort and happiness at the center of his life. We should put Christ and our hope of being with Him in heaven at the center, and that enables us to deal properly with the earthly problems we all encounter. Setting our minds on Christ and the things above is the key to dealing with sin and relational problems (Col 3:1-17).

So, Paul's point is that as citizens of heaven, Christians are not to live as citizens of this earth, who are enemies of the cross of Christ, who are headed for eternal destruction, who live for the things of this earth. Remember, these people were in the church, making a profession of knowing Christ, but they were not truly converted to Christ.

Two practical applications before we move on:

(1) Don't be turned from the truth of the gospel because of the presence of hypocrites in the church. Just because there are counterfeit dollar bills doesn't mean that you give up earning and spending money. There are counterfeits because the real thing is worth imitating. Satan has always made sure that there are counterfeit Christians who talk as if they're true believers, but whose lives belie that fact. But the existence of hypocrites does not deny the reality of the truth. Even true Christians will disappoint you, because as we saw last week, they're all in process, which means, they still sin. But Christianity centers on the person of Jesus Christ, not on Christians.

(2) Deeds are a more certain evidence of what people truly are than their words. Jesus said that we can spot false prophets, wolves in sheep's clothing, by their fruit or deeds (Matt. 7:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20-see notes). Paul warned of those who "profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed" (Titus 1:16-+). Again, this does not mean that believers are sinless. But, if a true believer sins, he will make it right by confessing that sin, asking forgiveness, and seeking to rectify the problem. Look at the walk, not the words. ([Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#))

**Set their mind** (5426) (**phroneo** from **phren** = mind) means to set one's mind or heart upon something -- it denotes the whole action of the affections and will as well as the reason. **Phroneo** refers to the basic orientation, bent, and thought patterns of the mind, rather than to the mind or intellect itself. The activity represented by this word involves the will, affections, and conscience. mentally disposed more or less earnestly in a certain direction.

**Present tense** indicates as their lifestyle they continually make the choice to chose the earthly and temporal rather than the heavenly and eternal (see the diametrically opposite attitude called for in the godly - see **notes** Colossians 3:1; 3:2). When you see those with this mindset, you need to be very wary of associating with them!

And so Paul summarizes the root problem of the "Cross haters", explaining that their minds are fully set on the things of this earth and their entire lives are oriented towards the things of earth to fulfill their needs (self focused rather than Savior focused!) Among their least favorite verses are those like Jesus' charge in Mark (et al)...

And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him **deny** (aorist imperative - urgent need - do this now and do it effectively!) himself ("let him disown himself" - Young's Literal), and **take up** (aorist imperative - urgent need - do this now and do it effectively!) his cross, and **follow** (present imperative = this is the lifestyle of a "Jesus follower") Me. (Mark 8:34)

Paul has a parallel description in Romans 8 regarding individuals who habitually **walk according to the flesh** (see + Romans 8:4) explaining that...

those who are according to the flesh set their minds (same verb **phroneo** in the present tense = continually) on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject (present tense = continually refuses "line up under") itself to the law of God, for it is not even able (does not have the inherent power or ability) to do so (see + Romans 8:5, 8:6-8)

**Dwight Pentecost** explains that "By this the apostle means they have accepted the standards of a godless world and make those standards their standards. As long as society approves, they conclude that a holy God will approve. Instead of setting their course according to the revelation of the holiness of God given in His Word, they do as the Romans do. Paul often refers to unsaved men as dogs. He does so to show that those outside of Jesus Christ have the ethics and morals of animals. They basically live as animals. When a man accepts the moral standards of an animal, he can never conform to the holiness and righteousness of God.



This tendency is pervading the Philippian church. With no difficulty at all, they conform to the standards of the world around them, and they are at ease because the world approves. ([Pentecost, J. D. The Joy of Living: A study of Philippians. Kregel Publications](#))

## Pressing On When the Pressure's On

### Philippians 3:12-4:1

Brian Bill

6/12/05

John Ortberg recounts a true story from a Tacoma, Washington newspaper about a basset hound named Tattoo. Tattoo didn't intend to go for an evening run, but when his owner shut the dog's leash in the car door and took off for a drive, he had no choice. Noticing what was going on, a police officer finally pulled the driver over. The officer commented: "The basset hound was picking up his feet and putting them down as fast as he could." Amazingly, this short-legged canine reached a speed of 25 miles per hour, rolling over several times in the process. Ortberg notes, "Too many of us end up living like Tattoo, our days marked by picking them up and putting them down as fast as we can" (LeadershipJournal.net, 7-11-02).

Do you feel like you've been "tattooed"? That poor dog probably had a number of things going through his head:

- Someone or something is holding my leash and I can't break free.
- Life feels out of control.
- I'm just one small dog.
- The car is too big and too strong to stop on my own.
- I need to run or I'll be run over.
- I feel like I don't have a choice.
- Surviving, not thriving is my only goal right now.

Last week we were reminded that we are declared righteous not because of religious activities, but as a result of a relationship with the Redeemer. Paul made it very clear that the seven items on his spiritual resume, though pretty impressive, were really rubbish compared with knowing Christ:

1. Ritual
2. Relationship
3. Respectability
4. Race
5. Religion
6. Reputation
7. Righteousness

As we look at the second half of Philippians 3, we will see that Paul balances these seven items with seven essentials for running and winning the Christian race. Several times in Scripture the Christian life is referred to as a race (1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Timothy 4:7; Hebrews 12:1). These basic principles will help us get into spiritual shape so we can run the race set before us. I've adapted Warren Wiersbe's outline for this passage, and have added a few points to it.

**1. Dissatisfaction** (Phil 3:12a). The first essential to a solid spiritual life may surprise you. In order to run the race and keep moving forward, we must be dissatisfied with where we are right now. Paul had some incredible experiences – he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, he was caught up into the third heaven and heard "inexpressible things" (2 Corinthians 12:4), he wrote a number of letters, preached incredible sermons, and yet, after walking with Christ for about 25 years, he was not satisfied with the status of his spiritual life. Look at the first part of Phil 3:12: "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect..."

Paul had just stated in Phil 3:10-11 that he wanted to know Christ experientially, practice the power of His resurrection, share in His sufferings, and eventually be raised to new life after he dies. That's his resolve, though in reality he has a long way to go. He has not "obtained," which means that he has not fully appropriated or applied God's promises to his person. And he certainly knows that he is far from "perfect" as he states in 1 Timothy 1:15: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners-of whom I am the worst."

Many years ago a promising Greek artist named Timanthes worked under the instruction of a well-known tutor. After working for several years, the young painter created an exquisite portrait. He was so thrilled with what he had painted that he sat day after day gazing at his work. One morning, however, he was horrified to discover that his teacher had deliberately defaced his painting. Angry and in tears, Timanthes asked why his mentor had destroyed his treasured possession. The wise man replied, "I did it for your own good because that painting was retarding your progress. It was an excellent piece of work but it wasn't perfect. Start again and see if you can do better." The student took his advice and produced a masterpiece regarded by some as one of the finest paintings of antiquity.

Friend, if you want to really grow, the first step is to admit how far you still have to go. I've been a Christian for 25 years and I wish I was a lot further along than I am. We could say it this way: If you think you've arrived, think again because the room for improvement is the largest room in the world. Will you admit what God and everyone around you already knows? You're not perfect. Don't be self-satisfied like the believers in the church at Laodicea in Revelation 3:17: "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked." Some of us have stopped growing because frankly we think we've arrived, or at least that we're doing better than others. The truth of the matter is that we are pitiful, not perfect. Use this sense of dissatisfaction to spur you on to the next step. By the way, some believers struggle with prayer for the simple fact that they are too satisfied with their spiritual life. Dissatisfaction can lead to more intercession.

**2. Devotion** (Phil 3:12b). The tendency for some of us is to just give up when we realize how far we have tripped up. Paul didn't do that. His dissatisfaction led him to become more devoted: "But I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." To "press on" means to "pursue as a hunter." It's actually the same word that is used in verse 6 when Paul says that he zealously "persecuted" the church. Used also of a sprinter in the Greek games, it has the idea of moving quickly and energetically toward an objective, straining every spiritual muscle in order to win the prize.

My sister called me on Thursday night and asked me a couple questions. Her first question was this: "Can a person be too spiritual?" My answer was this: "No, because we can all become more devoted than we are." Hosea 6:3 captures this: "Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him." Paul not only chased after Christ, he also wanted to catch Him, if you will. He wanted to "take hold," which means to "take eagerly" or possess. Jesus had taken hold of him, slamming him to the ground in Acts 9, and now he wanted to make sure that he was holding on to Christ. One of Charles Spurgeon's mottos was this: "I hold and am held." The Lord had seized Paul and now Paul was determined to serve His Savior for the rest of his life. Are you giving maximum effort in your spiritual life, or are you a Christian on cruise control? Turn your dissatisfaction into devotion.

**3. Direction** (Phil 3:13). In the spiritual life, direction makes all the difference. In verse 13, Paul again states that he still falls short in fully appropriating all that is his. He has not fully "taken hold" but he is determined to go in the right direction: "But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead." Paul had a single-minded focus like David who prayed in Psalm 86:11: "Give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name."

Friend, what "one thing" do you do? Too many of us are too involved in too many things. This phrase, "one thing" is used several times in Scripture to help us see that we must be focused in our faith:

Psalm 27:4 – "One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple."

Mark 10:21 – "Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'"

Luke 10:42 – "But only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

John 9:25 – "One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

**John MacArthur** reports what his grandfather said to him on many occasions: "Just do one thing right in your life and you'll be way ahead of most people." Paul knew that if he was going to move forward he had to be unleashed from his past. There are at least two areas that I think Paul had in mind when it comes to forgetting what is "behind."

- The garbage of good stuff. We spent plenty of time on this last week, but Paul is saying that he is going to forget even the good things on his religious resume because none of this will get him any closer to God anyway.
- The garbage of guilty stuff. Paul had plenty of reasons to feel guilty. After all, he had slaughtered saints and persecuted Christians. Some of you are so tied to the troubles of your past that you're not moving anywhere in the present.

To “**forget**” in the Bible means “to no longer be influenced by or affected by.” It’s when we don’t allow the past to control our present. While we can’t wipe stuff out of our memory banks, we can break the power of the past by allowing the Lord to unleash us from its influence. Let me demonstrate with these two bags of garbage that are tied to my neck. The white one represents good garbage and the black bag is the guilty garbage. Both of these bags are filled with garbage that needs to be forgotten. We need to allow the Lord to unleash us from the past (throw the two bags in the garbage can).

Let’s be careful about looking back, remembering what happened to Lot’s wife in Genesis 19:26: “But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.” As a sprinter straining toward the finish line, don’t look behind you. The picture here is of an athlete stretching out his neck, mobilizing every muscle, giving all that he has to win the race. You can’t run forward by looking backward. One pastor used a creative title for his sermon on this passage that says it all, “Yesterday ended last night.” If you want to move forward, you have to let go of what’s behind because your past can be a prison.

Look not back on yesterday  
So full of failure and regret;  
Look ahead and seek God’s way –  
All sins confessed you must forget.

In a Daily Bread devotional called “Seeing or Remembering,” there’s a story about a man who was slowly losing his memory. The doctor told him that surgery might reverse this condition and restore his memory but a nerve might be severed in the process, causing total blindness. The surgeon asked the patient: “What would you rather have, your sight or your memory?” The man pondered the question for a few minutes and then replied, “My sight, because I would rather see where I’m going than remember where I’ve been.” Do you see where you’re going or are you tripped up by the trash of your past?

4. **Determination** (3:14). Paul not only turns his dissatisfaction into devotion and is headed in the right direction; he also demonstrates determination in verse 14: “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” To “press on” has the idea of intensely pursuing the prize, of bearing down in order to win. There are two extremes that we need to avoid when it comes to determination. This is best demonstrated by thinking of boats and water.

- A raft just sits in the water and doesn’t do anything. Some believers are saved but they’re just sitting, waiting for God to do something. Are you drifting?
- A rowboat depends totally on the strength of the person doing the rowing. Some believers think that everything’s up to them.
- A sailboat is the right picture, for God moves us as His Spirit fills our sails, and yet we have a responsibility to steer and stay in balance. A good sailor must be determined in order to cruise across the water.

**David Livingstone**, a pioneer missionary to Africa, returned to Great Britain and was asked, “What do you want to do now?” I love his response: “I am ready to go anywhere provided it be forward.” We must put the past out of our minds and never forget the future. We are called heavenward. Focusing on the future will have a purifying affect on the present as taught in 1 John 3:2-3: “But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.” As we look up and look ahead, we’ll be less prone to be paralyzed by our past. We must live in light of eternity, expecting either the Rapture or our departure at death to the shores of heaven.

Apparently there’s a tombstone at the foot of one of those majestic mountains in the Alps to honor the memory of a man who fell to his death while attempting to climb to the top. Underneath the individual’s name the epitaph reads, “He died climbing.” That’s what should be said of each of us. We’re to pursue the prize with dogged determination, so that when we die, we’re already on the way up.

5. **Discipline** (Phil 3:15-16). In order to keep moving forward, we must exhibit discipline. Look at Phil 3:15-16: “All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained.” Paul is really telling us to take a “chill pill” when it comes to trying to control other people. We must remember that our response is our responsibility. He challenges us to view our Christian lives the way he has laid them out but if we think differently, God will make it clear. Leave it in his hands. Some of us need to heed these words because we’ve taken on too much responsibility for the response of others.

Pastor Dale Burke, who has the dubious distinction of following Chuck Swindoll as pastor of the Evangelical Free Church in Fullerton, California, spoke at the recent Pastor’s Conference I attended. He made the point that while God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, we are “omni-nothing.” We control very little but often think we can control a lot. We must take our focus off of what others are thinking and doing and “live up to what we have already attained.” This means that we are to keep on living by staying in the race, running in our lane as we move forward.

6. **Discipleship** (Phil 3:17-19). In order to stay in the race, we must deepen our discipleship. We do that in two ways. First, Phil 3:19 says that we are to follow the good examples of others: "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you." That doesn't mean Paul is perfect but it does mean that he is on the right path. In 1 Corinthians 11:1+, Paul declares, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." The word "pattern" is from a mold into which clay or wax was pressed. It's healthy for us to have people to look up to, people who can mentor us as they model Christ. To "take note" means to "fix your gaze on, to observe, or pay attention to."

As Pastor Jeff noted a couple weeks ago, Timothy and Epaphroditus are good examples to follow. I love watching how God is using Apples of Gold, the mentoring ministry for women and now the men are moving forward in this regard as well. I was struck at our last Elder meeting when Ken Fulkerson asked how many of the Elders were mentoring someone, and almost every hand went up. One of Pastor Dick's main responsibilities will be in the area of discipleship, as we trust God to take our small group ministry to the next level.

I've mentioned this before but it's so helpful that I want to share it again. When it comes to spending our time wisely and growing in our walk with Christ, it's very important that we surround ourselves with people who can impact our lives, and to also be in relationships with others we are mentoring. In his book called, "Restoring Your Spiritual Passion," Gordon MacDonald describes five types of people that we come in contact with (pages 73-91):

- VRPs Very Resourceful People Ignite Our Passion
- VIPs Very Important People Share Our Passion
- VTPs Very Trainable People Catch Our Passion
- VNPs Very Nice People Enjoy Our Passion
- VDPs Very Draining People Sap Our Passion

In order to have balance in our lives, we need to make sure we're not overloaded with one or two of these types of people. I would add that we need friends who are resourceful and important because they sharpen us. The trainable, and to a lesser extent, the nice and the draining, are people whom we can sharpen. In other words, we should have friends who rub off on us in a good way and we should be rubbing off on others, without letting them rub us the wrong way!

And so, the first way to grow in discipleship is to follow the good examples of other people. The second way is to reject the bad examples and don't follow them. Notice verses 18-19: "For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things." I'm struck by how tender Paul is even towards those he refers to as enemies. When he considers their destiny which is destruction, when he states that their appetites control everything they do and how they take pride in shameful things, he breaks down and cries. This word means "to wail aloud."

Paul has "great sorrow and unceasing anguish in his heart" in Romans 9:2 about the lostness of Israel and in Acts 20:32, he warns the church and then he weeps. And here he sobs for sinners. We would do well to be broken up, not just about the things that non-Christians do and say, but about their eternal destiny. When Jesus looked out over the unbelief that had taken up residence in Jerusalem, Luke 19:41 says that "he wept over it." When's the last time you cried over the condition of someone?

Notice that Paul says "many" live as enemies of the cross. They're everywhere. It's always been that way. True believers are always in the minority as Jesus stated in Matthew 7:13: "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it." This should cause us to cry because the reason they live the way they live is quite simple: "Their mind is on earthly things." We need to have discernment in order to grow in our discipleship because these "enemies" may even be in church circles, writing Christian books, speaking at Christian conferences, and sitting next to you on Sunday mornings.

7. **Delight** (Phil 3:20-4:1). Paul doesn't want to end on a bumner so he brings it all together by focusing on our delight in Phil 3:20-21 and Phil 4:1: "But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!" Our perspective will determine our priorities. As we live in the future tense, we will have freedom from the past and find delight in the present. These closing verses establish several truths to delight in that will change our perspective so that we can "stand firm in the Lord."

- Our home is in heaven. We are citizens of another place.
- Jesus is coming again. We need to eagerly wait for Him.
- Everything will be made right. All things will be brought under His order.

- We will be transformed. The best is yet to come.
- Believers should give us joy. We need to love and long for others.

If we want to press on when the pressure's on, and get in spiritual shape, we must implement these essentials:

- 1. Dissatisfaction**
- 2. Devotion**
- 3. Direction**
- 4. Determination**
- 5. Discipline**
- 6. Discipleship**
- 7. Delight**

What's dragging you down today? What is it that you are leashed to? It's time to let it go so you can really grow. Isaiah 43:25: "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more."

I want to close with some words to the song called, "What Sin?" by Morgan Cryar.

It happened so long ago  
 I cried out for mercy back then  
 I pled the blood of Jesus  
 Begged Him to forgive my sin  
 But I still can't forget it  
 It just won't go away  
 So I wept again, Lord wash my sin  
 But this is all He'd say:  
 What sin, what sin?  
 Well that's as far away as the east is from the west  
 What sin, what sin?  
 It was gone the very minute you confessed  
 Buried in the sea of forgetfulness.  
 The heaviest thing you'll carry  
 Is a load of guilt and shame  
 You were never meant to bear them  
 So let them go in Jesus name  
 Our God is slow to anger  
 Quick to forgive our sin:  
 So let Him put them under the blood  
 Don't bring them up again  
 'Cause he'll just say:  
 What sin, what sin?  
 Well that's as far away as the east is from the west  
 What sin, what sin?  
 It was gone the very minute you confessed

Buried in the sea of forgetfulness.

1st Service Closing Song – “Take My Life”