

Following Paul's Example

Philippians 3:17- 4:1

Phil 3:17-21 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame — who set their mind on earthly things. 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. NKJV

Examples to Avoid

- These were the same people he was referring to in verse 2. They were the Judaizing teachers. They would have been adept at fooling people into following them. The Pharisees were like this. They were all hypocrites.
- Remember, Paul is writing to a good church filled with good and generous people. At the same time, there were many members of the church in Philippi whose examples they should _____ follow.
- Paul described them as _____ in a way that made them _____ of the cross of Christ (18).
- This _____ Paul. He knew they were walking their way straight to their own **destruction** (19). He also knew that some would imitate their walk and would also end up destroying their lives.
- Their main downfall was that they **set** their mind on _____ things.

Matt 13:22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. NKJV

2 Tim 2:1-10 You therefore, my son, be strong in the **grace that is in Christ Jesus**. 2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 3 You therefore must endure hardship as **a good soldier of Jesus Christ**. 4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please **him who enlisted him** as a soldier. 5 And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 6 The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. 7 Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things. 8 Remember that **Jesus Christ**, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, 9 for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. 10 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, **that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory**. NKJV

As Christians we must _____ on Jesus and not on the affairs of this life, the cares of this world, or the deceitfulness of riches.

Gal 2:11-13 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. NKJV

Even Peter was the wrong person to follow on at least one occasion.

1 Cor 10:6-11 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. NKJV

Examples to Follow

Paul encouraged the Philippians to follow _____ example.

Those who follow Paul's example become a _____ for others to follow.

- Paul was willing to _____ for Christ (1:7; 1:28; 3:10).
- Paul believed that living was _____ and dying was gain (1:21).
- Paul followed Christ's example in humility and service (2:1-16).
- Paul did not put confidence in the flesh but trusted _____ in God's righteousness which is through faith in Christ.
- Paul forgot the things in the past and pressed _____ toward the goal of attaining to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 4:14-17 *I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. 15 For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16 Therefore I urge you, imitate me. 17 For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church. NKJV*

1 Cor 11:1 *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. NKJV*

Paul could instruct the Corinthians to follow his example because he followed the example of **Christ**. He sent Timothy to Corinth to remind them of his "ways in Christ."

1 Cor 1:10-13 *Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? NKJV*

Paul wasn't asking people to follow him. He was telling them to follow his _____.

Paul knew that his true _____ was in heaven (20).

Phil 3:21 *who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

Paul refers to our current body as _____ or humble. The bodies we have now are not the bodies Adam and Eve had in the garden. Those bodies were created to last forever. The bodies we have now are nothing compared to the spiritual bodies we will have in heaven.

1 Cor 15:42-58 *So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. NKJV*

We will spend our entire lives allowing God to change our hearts and minds to _____ to Christ.
It will take Jesus a split second to change our bodies to match His _____ body.
I can't wait!

Phil 4:1 *Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.* NKJV

Paul gives us the practical application for this section: _____ fast in the Lord.

Practical Application

1. **Do a self-inventory.** Make a list of things that tether you to this world. Here are some possible distractions to start the process: money, the news, tv, movies, music, reading, writing, social media, food, clothing, water, basic physical needs, your good looks, your youth, your spouse, your children, your house, your grandchildren, your friends, vacations, hobbies, sports, fantasy sports, school, work, politics, government, your schedule, video games, drugs, alcohol, sex, busy work, debt, your retirement account, the stock market, your car, cooking, the holidays, your physical looks, patriotism, our past successes, our past failures, our past sins, our current sins, and etc.
2. **Eliminate one thing from the list.** Just stop or drastically reduce one thing that is preventing you from daily placing your citizenship in heaven.
3. **Change your thinking.** Take one thing from your list of things hindering your journey to heaven and change the way you think about it. For example, if work is your hangup, change the way you think about work. We work so that we can fulfill God's plan to take care of our families and to give to those who struggle financially.
4. **Reminders:** 1. Don't forget to memorize Colossians 3:4 which says, "When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory." Make it personal. When you are in a stressful situation remind yourself, "When Christ who is **MY** life appears, then **I** will also appear with Him in glory." 2. Read the bulletin article for another practical suggestion. 3. The model prayer starts out, "Our Father in heaven." Start your prayers connecting God with heaven.

H2H Discussion Starters

1. After doing your self-inventory, what tethers you to this world?
2. What has worked or didn't work for you when you tried to untether yourself from the world in the past?
3. Share one thing you plan on doing to focus your mind on heaven.
4. What else do you find helpful from Phil 3:17-4:1