

Ln 11 Becoming More and More Like Jesus

[Philippians 3:15-4:1](#)

As Christians we should be continually growing and becoming more like Jesus Christ. Christians should be like green fruit on a tree, **always maturing**. When a piece of fruit reaches maturity and becomes ripe, what happens? It begins to rot. When you think you are all you need to be as a Christian and are completely mature, you will begin to rot spiritually. We find **four** things in this passage we must do to become more and more like Jesus and to keep from rotting spiritually.

1. Live biblically [3:15-16](#)

Paul writes: *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded* ([3:15a](#)). Like Paul, we should all be focused on the *mark* and *prize* ([3:14](#)) of becoming more and more like Christ, so when we stand before God He will say, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant* ([Mt 25:21a](#)).

Paul was an experienced Bible teacher and knew not all believers would agree with Him, so he writes: *and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you* ([3:15b](#)). Some Christians think they do not need to grow and mature continually, but Paul says God will reveal to them they do. The primary way God reveals things to us is through His Word.

For example, what command does God give us in [2 Peter 3:18a](#)?

Is that a command or a suggestion? It is a command! Therefore, it is a sin not to be growing in Christ. Sometimes God also reveals things to us through problems. As Christians we don't stand still; we are either growing and getting closer to God or we are moving away. As we move away from God, at some point we move into sin. When we do, God disciplines us.

How does [Psalm 119:67](#) describe this truth?

Paul writes: *Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing* ([3:16](#)). The word translated **walk** (**stoicheō**, **stoy-keh'-oh**) is a military term that means "to march in rank" or march in line. It means we stay in line with what we have already attained or already know about God's Word.

The problem with most Christians is not that they don't know enough Bible; the problem is they don't live the Bible they already know. Do you already know enough Bible to be a much better Christian? Of course! Then live what you *have already attained* in biblical knowledge.

To become more and more like Jesus, **live biblically** and...

2. Live cautiously [3:17-19](#)

Now Paul urges the Philippians to follow his example of having as his goal a desire to become more and more like Jesus Christ ([3:17a](#)). Then, he writes: *and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample* ([3:17b](#)).

The key word in [verse 17](#) is **ensample**, which means "**pattern**." Let me ask you a very personal question: what kind of Christian will new believers in your church become if they use you as a pattern?

All of us need to remember what words of Jesus in [John 13:15](#)?

Becoming more and more like Christ means living as He lived and never forgetting we are examples to others at home, at school, and at work.

Next, Paul warns of examples to avoid. He writes: *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* ([3:18](#)). Here Paul is referring to people who call themselves Christians but pervert the principles of God's Word. They are not openly hostile to the faith; they just want to change it. They are often church members who seek acceptance so they can gain places of influence or leadership.

In [Matthew 7:15b](#), how does Jesus warn us about such *enemies*, whom He calls *false prophets*?

Paul tells us about such people in [verse 19](#): *Whose end is destruction*, which means eternal separation from God. Also, he writes their *God is their belly*. This means the most important thing in their lives is satisfying their physical appetites. Then, Paul writes that their *glory is in their shame*, which means they take pride in justifying behavior the Bible condemns as sin.

How does [Isaiah 5:20a](#) describe such people?

Paul's final description of *enemies of the cross* is they *mind earthly things* ([3:19d](#)). They judge everything by culture rather than by Christ. They choose to live by the standards of the world rather than the Word. To such people, what does [James 4:4a](#) declare?

These *adulterers and adulteresses* claim to be Christians but want the church to accept the ways of the *world*. The word **world** refers to the values of sinful culture. If you claim to be a Christian but believe like the world, the Bible says you are an enemy of God. Therefore, if you claim to be a Christian, you are either an example or an enemy of the cross.

To become more and more like Jesus, we must **live biblically, live cautiously**, and...

3. Live expectantly [3:20-21](#)

As we discovered in our last lesson, we must let go of the past and look to the future. Paul reminds us *our conversation is in heaven* ([3:20a](#)). The word translated **conversation** literally means "**citizenship**." As Christians, we are "resident aliens" living temporarily in a foreign country. Therefore, *from whence* (heaven) *also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ* ([3:20b](#)). The word translated **look** denotes watching for something expectantly. Therefore, we are not to wait for Christ's return with resignation or disinterest, but expectantly. To eagerly wait for Christ gives us the motivation to become more like Him. Do you really believe Jesus could return at any time? Jesus said He will come unexpectedly, and even believers will be going about their daily routines. He said *then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left* ([Mt 24:40-41](#)).

Then, what does Jesus say in [verse 42](#)?

When Jesus comes, He will *change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself* ([3:21](#)). When Christ returns we will get what is called our redeemed or glorified bodies. They will be like Christ's resurrected body—they will be perfect, they will not age, and they will not be susceptible to disease or decay. We will be able to eat, drink, talk, walk, and do all the things we want to do to enjoy life, but will not have the physical limitations of our present bodies. In heaven we'll be able to eat all the Blue Bell Ice cream we want without worrying about gaining weight.

To become more and more like Jesus, we must **live biblically, live cautiously, live expectantly**, and...

4. Live lovingly [4:1](#)

Paul concludes this section: *Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved* ([4:1](#)). When we see the word **therefore** in the Bible, we should always ask, "What is it there for?" It refers to what Paul has said in the previous chapter about striving *toward the mark* or *prize* of **becoming more and more like Jesus**.

We know Paul lived lovingly by seeing how he refers to the Philippian believers. He refers to them as *my brethren dearly beloved and longed for*, his *joy*, and his *crown*. These are all terms of endearment.

Paul passes what test Jesus said the world could use to determine who are His real disciples ([John 13:35](#))?

The **crown** (**stephanos, stef'-ahn-os**) in [Philippians 4:1](#) doesn't refer to a royal crown but a **victor's crown**. It was a woven garland or wreath of oak or olive branches or a replica of these in gold.

The crown was a symbol of victory and celebration. One of Paul's greatest rewards in heaven would be knowing the Philippians were there because of his ministry. What could make us more like Jesus than loving people into heaven, as Paul did!

We can do this because of what truth found in [2 Corinthians 5:14a](#)?

This means whatever we do we do because Christ's love controls us. Because Christ in love died for others, in love we should live for others.

To become more and more like Jesus:

LIVE BIBLICALLY,

LIVE CAUTIOUSLY,

LIVE EXPECTANTLY,

LIVE LOVINGLY.