

MADE FOR MORE
Made for God's Glory
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A Quick Summary of False Philosophies

False philosophies produce false forms of Christianity. The two classic false philosophies are:

A) Platonic "Gnosticism" that denigrates the material world and elevates the "spiritual" beyond God's intention for mankind.

B) Philosophic materialism that asserts that the only thing that exists is the material universe.

Both of these philosophies are unbiblical. God created the material universe and deemed it "good" and then created man as a composite being with both material (a body) and spiritual components (an immoral soul). Humans are designed to be a unified whole.

The Text

Philippians 3:15-21 *All of us, then, 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. 16 Only let us live up to what we have already attained. 17 Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. 18 For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. 20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 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.*

All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things...live up to what we have already attained (v. 15): Paul's point is that mature Christians know that we are not perfect in this life. We all have our own hurts, habits and hangups.

The notion of moral perfectionism in the church leads to either A) harsh judgmentalism; or B) hypocrisy—usually both.

Live up to what we have already attained (v. 16): The flip side of the issue is that Paul does not teach moral laxity (antinomianism). He was very concerned that converts (particularly Gentile-Christians) lived "upright and godly lives."

Titus 2:11-13 *For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,*

The point is that a true understanding of biblical grace goes beyond salvation to sanctification.

Following my example (v.17): Paul was not afraid to use his own life as a model for Christian teaching and living. He understood that people often emulate their leaders.

Keep your eyes on those who live as we do (v. 17): Here Paul admonished the Philippians to model their lives after those in the congregation that lived as he did. He is using this as a tonic for false teachers. This is based on Jesus' teaching that you will "know them by their fruits."

Matthew 7:15-17 *"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.*

Many live as enemies of the cross of Christ...god is their stomach...Their mind is set on earthly things (vv. 18-19): Paul is referring to those that use God's grace as an opportunity to sin.

Romans 6:1-4 *What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

In Paul's mind, giving license to sin because of God's grace is to be an "enemy of the cross." In other words, such an understanding of grace fails to understand that believers die with Christ through faith as demonstrated in baptism.

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there (v. 20): Every believer should understand that our true life is now "hidden with Christ" (Col. 3) in heaven and we eagerly await it coming upon us at Christ's return. This is the "blessed hope." The biblical emphasis is not on us dying and "going to heaven" but, rather, of Christ—the first fruits of the resurrection—returning to establish his everlasting kingdom.

1Thessalonians 4:13-17 *Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*

Will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body (v. 21) The great (and unique) hope of Christianity is not immortal life. The great hope is the resurrection of our bodies.

Take Away: There is a great battle raging in the Western world pitting Materialism (aligned with Islam) against biblical Christianity. Now more than ever, Christians need to be clear on what they believe and able to discern false doctrine.