

Philippians 3:15-21

5 Challenges for Christian Maturity

Image Church // Philippians Week 10

MPS: Paul motivates us to maturity by reminding us who we are and what we're called to.

Introduction

Well good morning image family and friends that are joining us this morning!

I want to say **Happy Father's Day to all of our dad's here today!** *Can we put our hands together for all of the Dad's?!*

Here's the deal Dad's, a quick challenge to you: today's not about celebrating you for what you **do** outside the home... Today's about celebrating who **you are** within the home...

A friend of mine wrote an article for **Christianity Today** where he said that *men are too busy trying to build an identity outside the home rather than embracing the work of the home...*

Dad's, you have to remember this: you're always **replaceable** when it comes to your job, but you are **irreplaceable** within your home... No one else can be dad, or husband, only you can do that...¹

Who you are *inside* the home is far more important than who you are *outside* of the home, so don't sacrifice your family on the altar of your career... Cherish today as a reminder of your primary calling- to be a present reflection of Christ in your home!

One of the biggest problems in our culture today is men not stepping up and being fathers modeling Christ and pointing their families to Christ! Men we must step up and step into the call God's given us.

¹ Chris Pappalardo: The best gift for Dad this Father's Day? Diaper Duty
<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/june-web-only/fathers-day-diaper-duty-domestic-life.html>

And, listen, I also know that there are some of you here, and today is tough because you didn't have a dad growing up, or maybe your dad has passed away, or maybe you had a dad, but he was abusive, or maybe he walked out on your family...

Today, I want to point you to a **Heavenly Father** one who will never leave you, and never forsake you, one who loves you unconditionally, one who's approval you will always have...

- One who allowed His own Son to die, so that He could adopt you as His... that's the Father you need to look to today!

I want to take just a min. and pray for our dad's and for those who today, are reminded of the scars or wounds surrounding their dads...

OK grab you bibles and turn to Philippians 3... We're going to be picking up in verse 15...

And Paul's going to start **verse 15** with a **therefore**... What's this refereeing to? It's referring to what Paul just laid out about what it means to know Christ and run after Christ... *Alright, let's pick back up in verse 15...*

*Here's what I am going to do I am going to give you **5 challenges** along the way as it relates to this passage and what Paul is teaching us...*

Philippians 3:15-4:1

15 Therefore, let all of us who are mature think this way. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this also to you.

Paul says think this way, what's he talking about: Having the mind of Christ... This is where Paul gets his way of thinking, this is where Timothy and Epaphroditus get their way of thinking...

And then he says, if you think differently, about anything, **IOW:** If you're not there yet, is your mind isn't sync'd up with what Paul's to where you're #1 goal isn't to know Christ and fellowship in His sufferings... God will reveal it to you...

This is actually encouraging- there are some of you who are Christians but you're just not there yet, you're not willing to suffer for Christ, you haven't considered all things a loss compared to Christ...

God will reveal that to you...

- **Phil. 1:6...**

Here's the thing though:

- This doesn't **abdicate** your forward progress in the gospel...
- **This is not a license for complicity, it is a powerful reminder that God is at work in your life!**
 - **Phil. 2:13** *For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose.*

Evidence of you being a Christian is forward progress in the gospel, it is God revealing to you places where you need to grow in faith or obedience and you being intentional to grow in those areas...

So, if you don't see a track record of God's revelation in areas where you need to grow in your life you, have to ask the question **have you really surrendered to Christ?**

Here's the 1. challenge: *have you seen a track record of God showing you where you need to grow?*

If not, then you need to reorient your priorities, because they have shifted from Christ to something else...

Then look at what Paul says next in **verse 16** as further evidence against being complacent...

16 In any case, we should live up to whatever truth we have attained. **What does this mean?** It means live out what you already know to be true! Hold onto the truths that you know and walk in them, continue to press on...

There is no such thing as stagnant Christianity... Regardless of where you are on the Spiritual Maturity spectrum- you are to live out that which you know to be true...

Here's the 2. challenge, stop looking for new information at the expense of disregarding what you already know...

Are you putting into practice that which you know to be true, or are you disregarding that which you know to be true as you search for more??

- Not being generous?
- Not in community?
- Not part of a church, or maybe haven't committed to a church?
- Not living on mission and sharing the gospel?

Some of you need to start living out the basic principles that you know, and do that well for the glory of God and then watch as God uses that to reveal even more to you...

What if God's means for spiritual maturity was you walking in faithful obedience with what you already know to be true?

Let's keep reading, **Verse 17:**

17 Join in imitating me, brothers and sisters, and pay careful attention to those who live according to the example you have in us.

IOW: Not only is Paul a model for us, but anyone else who's living according to the example of **Paul** and **Timothy** and **Epaphroditus**...

What does this mean for you- find people who are running after Jesus like Paul!

Who is it at Image Church that's modeling running after Jesus like Paul, are you paying careful attention to them?

- This means that you need be in a relationship with them...
- Community Group is a good place to start...

Here's the **3. challenge**: We've said this before, but Paul's bring it up again, so we're bringing it up again... **Are you living according to the example that we have in Paul who's shows us what it looks like to follow Christ?**

- Appeal to the businessman-
- Appeal to the business woman-
- Appeal to the stay at home mom's
- Appeal to the college Student-
- Appeal to individuals and families-

Some of you need to step up- we have a lot of new Christians and young Christians in our church who need examples...

- Said this before: sure, they can read a book, but a book doesn't know them- books give you information but people show you have to put it into practice... Things are better caught than taught...

We cannot expect to see spiritual growth in our church if some of you are not leading the charge- if some of you are not stepping up and stepping in...

- Most of the time the reason why churches struggle is because the people that should be mature, the people that should be leading the charge end up becoming complacent leaving those younger in the faith to fend for themselves...

May this never be true for us!

Here's why this is so important...

18 For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as **enemies of the cross of Christ**. **19** Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame. They are **focused on earthly things,**

You have a group of people that *most likely* are the same people Paul talked about earlier in **chapter 3**, the people he referred to as the "**dogs**"- they were *Jewish religious leaders*...

Let's look at what Paul says about them:

- **Their end is destruction...**

- **Their god is their stomach** – an appetite for un-godly things...
- **Their glory is in their shame** – Praising and holding up things that they know to be disgraceful...
- **Focused on earthly things** – this is a non-God perspective- the world captivates their minds...

They check a lot of boxes, but the reality is that **they negated the work of Jesus in what it accomplished and what it called them to...**

Their lives show that to be true, which inevitably makes them an enemy of the cross...

4. Challenge: Are you living counter to Paul by being ruled by your desires instead of Christ?

Do not be captivated by your desires and try to cover it all up under the label of Christianity...

There are so many people that fall into this category which is why we have to pay careful attention to those following Paul's example, so we don't get sucked into this way of thinking and living...

There are people that will rival Christ-centered living...

Which is why Paul is going to transition to this reminder as we refute those who seek to pull us away and rival our way of gospel centered thinking, and even as we wage war on our own desires...

Verse 20:

20 but our **citizenship is in heaven**, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. **21** He will transform the body of our **humble** condition into the likeness of his glorious body, **by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself.**

Our citizenship is in heaven- second time Paul's said this... He's reminding us that, **Heaven is our homeland- heaven is where our King is!** Where our King governs perfectly, where there be restoration from all of the brokenness we experience here on earth!

Because of that we wait for our Savior, Jesus- What is he going to save us from? **Destruction**- which is what the other folk have coming to them because they have not turned to Jesus!

How are we saved from destruction?

- **GOSPEL**
- Tie in the resurrection

So, we wait for the day when Our Savior Jesus returns! And notice this, Jesus not only saves us from his wrath,² but he saves us for something- for **a brand-new glorious body.**

I want to key in on verse 21 as we close:

21 He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself.

Your body now- Humble condition, lowly condition...

- Breaks down, gets sick, gets afflicted
- We can embrace all of that, we can lay our lives down, we can give up, we can endure suffering... All the things that Paul's held up and modeled for us... We can do that because of what awaits us!

Appeal here to everything that Paul has called us to:

- To live is Christ
- Everything is a loss
- I consider everything dung
- My goals is to know Christ and suffer with Christ
- I make every effort to take hold of Christ
- reaching forward toward Christ

- I pursue as my goal which is Christ

It is a waste of time to do otherwise in pursuit of comfort and convince...

5. Challenge: *do you really believe that Jesus transform your body into the likeness of His glorious body and the hope that comes with that?*

It changes everything!

Conclusion [VAMP]

Make no mistake, you will be subjected under Christ- and the result will either be with him in a glorious new body or apart from him as loss and destruction...

One commentator says it like this: *This passage reminds us that, despite appearances often to the contrary, God is in control, that our salvation is not just for today but forever, that Christ is coming again, and that at his coming we inherit the final glory that belongs to Christ alone—and to those who are his. It means the final subjugation of all the “powers” to him as well, especially those responsible for the present affliction of God’s people. With Paul we would do well not merely to “await” the end, but eagerly to press on toward the goal, since the final prize is but the consummation of what God has already*

² John Piper

accomplished through the death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord.³

³ Fee, G. D. (1995). [*Paul's Letter to the Philippians*](#) (p. 384). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.