

The Joy of Living
Philippians 3:12-21
Joy in Growing

- I. Growth in following Jesus comes from straining forward. (v. 12-16)
 - a. What Paul is talking about pursuing is knowing Jesus. (see v. 8-11)
 - b. None of us will reach a point of completed perfection (know Him perfectly) in this life, but we are called to continue to pursue it.
 - c. There are two ways we pursue the goal of knowing Christ:
 - i. We must forget what has already happened.
 - ii. We must strain ahead toward what will happen.
 - d. We practice this double movement of forgetting and straining in the present (“I press on”).
 - e. This pursue of knowing Jesus leads to spiritual maturity.
 - f. This spiritual maturity must be held on to tightly.

- II. Growth in following Jesus comes from finding and following faithful followers of Jesus. (v. 17-19)
 - a. Paul puts himself and those with him forward as an example to follow.
 - b. This isn’t boasting on Paul’s part, but it is a comment on the fact that we need examples to follow. (see Titus 2:2-8)
 - c. This is a call to those who have known Jesus for a long time to disciple those who are just getting to know Him.
 - d. A failure to disciple young believers (spiritual infants) can and often does have disastrous consequences.
 - i. These consequences affect individual believers.
 - ii. These consequences affect the Body of Christ.

- e. Paul is clear that failure to teach and walk faithfully with those who are getting to Jesus leads to destruction, selfishness, and foolishness.

III. Growth in following Jesus comes from knowing that there is a present home and final destination Jesus is leading us toward. (v. 20-21)

- a. Paul is challenging the Philippian church to evaluate their allegiance.
- b. As a Roman colony, citizens of Philippi had special privileges within the Roman Empire.
- c. However, Paul is bluntly confronting the meaning of that citizenship by saying “our citizenship is in heaven.”
- d. Paul is putting forward the idea that Jesus is King and Caesar is not.
- e. The only way to avoid the mindset that leads to destruction, selfishness, and foolishness is to set our minds on the fact that our citizenship is in heaven and Jesus is our King.