

Philippians, Chapter Three, Lesson Four

REPEATING THE PATTERN Philippians 3:17-21

STIMULATE

** In our study together last week we saw God's two step plan for giving us the victory each day in our walk with Jesus Christ. What were the two steps to help us maintain a balanced view of ourselves, while we are "**Reaching for the Goal**" of Christlikeness?

1) Forget all that lies behind.

- a. Possessions and position
- b. Our sinful past

2) Reach forward to follow Christ in our "holy calling" of serving God in His name.

** Have you been successful in remembering to filter all of the events in your life through these two Divinely inspired steps?

As easy as it might seem, these two steps become very difficult in the face of Satan's relentless onslaught against our souls. For every good thing we attempt to do for the glory of Christ, the demonic world around us will be aggressively trying to invalidate it. We must be prepared and strong! cf. 1Timothy 4:1 and 2Timothy 3:1-4

MOTIVATE

** When you stop to consider all of the different methods of teaching, which one do you think has the greatest impact and is longest lasting?

Teaching by example!

** As we close out our study of chapter three, here in Paul's letter to the Philippians, we have the privilege of "**Repeating the Pattern**" that we see in the life of the apostle. Let's read through this brief passage together as we tune our hearts toward the Word of God and see what we can learn from the example set by Paul.

Read Passage (V.17-21)

Opening Prayer

Repeating the Pattern

INVESTIGATE

V.17 ** How does Paul begin his loving exhortation for this study?

"Brethren, join in following my example..."

** What word does he use to imply action on the part of the Philippians (and us)?

"...join..." summimetes lit. "a fellow imitator" **and** ginomai lit. "to become". This compound verb is used only here in the New Testament and is calling for us to be "**Repeating the Pattern**" which we see in the apostle's life. cf. 1Corinthians 11:1 and 1Thessalonians 1:6-7

** Is Paul rather puffed up thinking that he is the only one to be patterned after?

No - he is quick to add "...observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us." The shift in personal pronouns from "me" to "us" indicates that Paul knows others in Christ are worthy of our emulation.

** Who do you think would comprise this group called "us"?

Paul - Philippians 4:9

Timothy - Philippians 2:19-24

Epaphroditus - Philippians 2:25-30

V.18 ** While Paul has stated the importance of following a godly pattern, are there people whose example we should not follow?

Absolutely - "...many walk..." cf. Matthew 7:13-14

** What are the "many" doing?

They are "walking" or living an external religious life without any inward reality. They do not walk by the Spirit! cf. Galatians 5:16 and 25, Romans 8:3-4, 2Corinthians 11:13, Matthew 7:22-23

** Had Paul ever warned the Philippians about these false walkers before?

Yes! - "...of whom I often told you..." We must not grow weary of admonishing one another, even if it begins to sound like a broken record. If we love one another, we will warn one another every time that danger is near.

** Is he any less impassioned now?

No - He now tells them "even weeping".

** Why would this issue bring the apostle to tears?

1. The false walkers are deceived and Paul cries over their lost condition. cf. Titus 3:3 and 2Timothy 3:13

2. His love for the Philippians leaves him very concerned for their spiritual stability in the face of these bad examples. cf. Acts 20:28-30

** How does Paul describe this group, are they just harmless little folks who have a few facts wrong?

No! They are "enemies of the cross of Christ"!

cf. Matthew 12:30 "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters".

V.19 ** Paul goes on to give us four clear distinctives that make this group easily identifiable and therefore easy to not follow their sinful pattern. Let's look at these one at a time. What is the first one?

1) "...whose end is destruction..." The things that they do will not end up with the rewards from God to His children, but rather destruction. cf. 2Corinthians 11:14-15 and 2Thess.1:9

2) "...whose god is their appetite..." koilia - lit. "belly" This is referring to their basic lustful desires. Feeding their own needs and desires becomes an idol in and of itself and replaces their relationship with God Almighty. cf. 1John 2:15-16 with James 1:14

3) "...whose glory is their shame..." Their pride was in that of which they should have been ashamed. Instead they boasted of their evil. cf. Romans 8:5 and 1:32

4) "...who set their minds on earthly things." These individuals may claim to be Christians, but their mental focus is in direct opposition to the mind of Christ. (Colossians 3:5-7)
cf. 1Corinthians 2:16 with Luke 24:45

The word used by Luke for "mind" was **nous** and means "understanding". Christians gain illumination of the Scriptures as the Holy Spirit grants us understanding or the mind of Christ, through God's word. These individuals had none of this, but were earthbound in their thinking.

V.20 ** Of what does Paul now remind the true child of God, so that we do not follow these bad patterns.

"...our citizenship is in heaven..." cf. Ephesians 2:19, John 14:1-3, Hebrews 11:15-16

** Knowing that our home coming to that great city will be unbelievably joyous, what is to be the preoccupation of a Christian according to Paul?

We should be waiting for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ!

** How should we be doing that - passively?

No - ours should like the hearts of the saints for all time. We should eagerly be anticipating His return for us. "Even so, come Lord Jesus" Revelation 22:20

** If we are, what impact will that have upon us "**Repeating the Pattern**" of Paul's godly life?

It will actually purify us! cf. 1John 3:2-3

** Before we leave this verse, what is the significance of Paul identifying the Savior as "the Lord Jesus Christ"?

People cannot choose the part of Jesus they like best, He must be both Lord and Savior or there is no relationship with Him. cf. John 15:14, Matthew 12:50

V.21 ** If we prove to be genuine by "**Repeating the Pattern**" of godly lives which have been portrayed in Scripture for us, what is going to happen when Christ comes from heaven to get us?

We will be transformed and conformed to the body of His glory. cf. 1Corinthians 15:48-54

** How does this wonderful knowledge equip you to live more for Christ today? How does it compel you to live a more godly life?

Knowing that God has prepared so much for us who, by His grace, have come to know Him; we should spend our life "**Repeating the Pattern**" just out of sheer gratitude. cf. 1Corinthians 2:9

** How is this marvelous transformation going to be accomplished?

"...by the exertion of the power that He has..."

There is no limit to the power which has been given over to the Lord Jesus Christ.

** How will Jesus demonstrate His limitless power?

By subjecting "...all things to Himself." He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, all will bow to Him in homage. cf. Philippians 2:9-11

** Even though we exist in a perishable, mortal, humble state; we can exalt Christ through godly living by "**Repeating the Pattern**" set before us in Scripture. How difficult is that to do?

It is impossible! We cannot be genuinely holy, we cannot obtain salvation and we cannot be Christlike in our own strength.

With men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible!
cf. Matthew 19:23-26 (All see)

EXTRICATE

** From where does Paul get his example, in order to be a pattern for us to follow?

From Jesus Christ, Himself. Remember 1Corinthians 11:1

** Who were some others, given to us in chapter two, that proved to have lives which we could pattern ourselves after?

Timothy and Epaphroditus

** We might even be able to think of a brother or sister in Christ today that displays the godly mindset of Christ. What should we do when we encounter these kind of godly patterns?

We should be diligent to be "**Repeating the Pattern**" God has set before us in the life of His children.

DELINEATE

** What were the four bad examples that we should avoid?

- 1) Actions which lead to destruction!
- 2) Feeding our lust - worshipping it!
- 3) Boasting and/or approving of sin!
- 4) Setting our minds on earthly behavior patterns!

EVALUATE

** Who are some of the godly people I know?

** How do they respond to any given situation or test?

** What can I do to become more like them; and thus more like Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior?

ACTIVATE

** Father, help me to become a good example for others to follow for the sake of Your glory.

Closing Prayer