

Exegetical Notes – Philippians 3:15-21

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Philippians 3:15-21

Verses 15-16

¹⁵ 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.

- In Philippians 3:13-14, Paul says that his goal is to become more and more like Christ in all things. Here, he says that this should be the goal of every Christian. Our goal as we make our way through life should be to become more and more like Jesus.
- A mature or maturing Christian is one who is growing more and more like Jesus. All who are doing so know that this is what all Christians should seek to do. If it is not your goal to become more and more like Christ, that is because you lack maturity in your walk with Christ. If you think that becoming more and more like Jesus is not what you should be doing, God will show you your error in time as you grow to become more and more like Christ.
- Christians are predestined to be sanctified. The natural order is for Christians to grow to become more Christlike. If Christians do not give up their faith, but seek to grow in faith, they will come to agree with what Paul is saying here and will strive to become more like Christ. If we do not fall back in our faith, we will become more and more like Him.

Verse 17

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.

- Paul is not claiming to be a perfect model of Christian behavior (see Philippians 3:12). But God, in His wisdom, has placed around us models of Christian behavior. We are to follow the example set by those God has given us as examples. We are to live as the “mature ones” around us live, constantly seeking to become more fully conformed to Jesus.

Verses 18-19

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.

- Many people, even some who seem to be Christians and are part of the Church, are really enemies of the cross. This fact brings Paul grief, but it is true, and he warned the Philippians about it.
- These people are not seeking to be conformed to the image of Christ. They serve themselves. They take pleasure in shameful practices. Since they have not surrendered to Jesus Christ and do not seek to become like Him, they will die.

Verses 20-21

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.

- Those who belong to Jesus are not like the people described above. Christians are awaiting the coming of Jesus. He will bring all things under His control. He will transform Christians so that we become more and more like Him. Even our physical bodies will be transformed as we become more and more like Christ.

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