

Philippians

Lesson #4

1. Review of Lesson #1 (background), Lesson #2 (Chapter 1), and Lesson #3 (Chapter 2)
2. Read Chapter 3 and take note of the following points:
 - A. Who wrote the text? _____
 - B. Who were the recipients/readers? _____
 - C. When was the text written? _____
 - D. Where was the text written? _____
 - E. Why was the text written? _____

 - F. Key Verse(s): _____

 - G. Application/Insights:
 1. What does the text mean to you? _____

 2. How will you apply it to your life? _____

3. Chapter 3 Outline
 - A. Encouragement to Rejoice (3:1). This encouragement to rejoice suddenly and unexpectedly becomes a stern warning. A problem was threatening the church at Philippi that had the potential of destroying the foundation of unity and the basis of joy. The exact nature of the problem was unclear, but Paul mentions three possible areas of concern as shown in the rest of the chapter:
 - B. Jewish Legalism/Circumcision (3:2-11). Paul's response was that Jesus is the only avenue to righteousness, emphasizing that we are saved by faith, not by keeping the law. (See Ephesians 2:8-9). As Paul tallies up the ledger of his former life, he admits that what he once considered his assets have move to the liability column and now add up to a gigantic zero. He considered all of those past accomplishments to be refuse or garbage. The old King James Version uses the word "dung." The Greek word means either "bodily excrement" or "food fit only for dogs." If Paul had failed to achieve acceptance with God through all of his inherited and earned virtues, then he reasoned that no one could climb up to God on his own merits. In fact, all that Paul had accomplished proved to be stumbling blocks to his acceptance with God. This is often the case for those who are bound up in legalism.
 - C. Christian or Gnostic Perfectionism (3:12-16). Paul's response was that the goal of Christian maturity is striving to be like Christ – like an athlete striving to win a race. Paul is not satisfied to rest on his laurels. He must press on toward God's plan, purpose, and prize. Paul has yet to grasp, to take hold of the prize. Dr. David Jeremiah shares the following illustration: "In contemporary terms, picture a football player who runs someone down from behind and tackles him. This is how Christians should pursue righteousness."

Christians who long to finish well will cultivate:

1. The discipline of focus – striving for the single goal (the one thing) until its completion, undeterred by obstacles or the taunts of the crowd.
 2. The discipline of forgetting – refusing to be paralyzed or rendered complacent by the past.
 3. The discipline of following – intensely pursuing the calling of the Christian life until victory has been won.
- D. Pagan Libertinism (3:17-21). Paul’s response was that the nature of Christ and His kingdom is the standard by which the Christian must live.

See Romans 12:1-2, “Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

The phrase “following my example (verse 17) translates the Greek word *mimeoman*, from which we get the word *mimic*. In effect Paul says, “Mimic me as I mimic Christ.” The Greek word translated model means “to strike an exact image upon a blank piece of metal” and was used in Paul’s day to speak of making coins. Just as Paul sought to have his life marked by the image of Christ and stamped by the Spirit, so should all Christians.

Sources:

1. The Jeremiah Study Bible” by Dr. David Jeremiah
2. “Halley’s Bible Handbook” by H.H. Halley
3. “Ultimate Bible Guide: A Complete Walk-Through of All 66 Books of the Bible” from Holman Reference