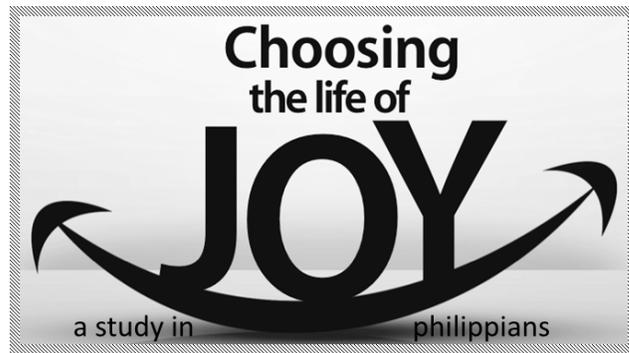


Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, February 13, 2019 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



CHOOSING THE LIFE OF JOY A Study in Philippians

Real Joy Is Determined By How You Walk and Where You Are Walking To – Part 2
Philippians 3:17-21

¹⁷ Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.
¹⁸ For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. ²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. –Philippians 3:17-21

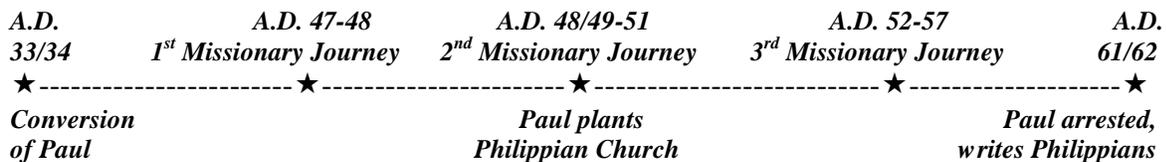
Facts on the Book of Philippians:

- 1. The book of Philippians is written by the Apostle Paul** – The apostle Paul wrote the book as clearly stated in Philippians 1:1-2, *“¹ Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*
- 2. The book of Philippians is written to believers/Christians at the church at Philippi** – As already stated Philippians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul during his Roman imprisonment to a group of people that were very special to him. These at Philippi had come to know the Lord Jesus through Paul’s witness to them during his “Second Missionary Journey,” and in response to the “Macedonian Call” of Acts 16. Notice who Paul identifies as the recipients of this letter in verses 1-2, *“¹ Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”*
- 3. The book of Philippians is actually a letter written by Paul to the church at Philippi** – The apostle Paul wrote this as a letter to the Christians in Philippi, from Rome. Paul ministered at Philippi during his second missionary journey, spending about three months in the city. The

ministry at Philippi marked Paul's entrance into Macedonia (Greece, Europe), which came about as a result of a vision he had in the city of Troas, just across the northeastern corner of the Aegean Sea from the port city of Neapolis and its close neighbor Philippi (Acts 16:8–12). During this first stay in Philippi—he later briefly visited the city on his third missionary journey (20:6)—Paul brought to faith in Christ people who would form the core of the burgeoning congregation in the city. Among them were Lydia, a businesswoman who opened her home to Paul and his coworkers (16:13–15), and the Philippian jailer, who was converted under Paul's ministry after an earthquake miraculously broke open the prison (16:22–34).

4. **The book of Philippians was written around A.D. 61/62** – Of the four Prison Epistles, Paul likely wrote Philippians last, near the end of his Roman imprisonment in AD 61 or 62. Paul sent the other three Prison Epistles—Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon—by the hand of Tychicus, as their destinations were near one another. However, the letter to the Philippians was to be delivered by Epaphroditus, who had come to Paul in Rome with financial help from the church at Philippi (Philippians 2:25; 4:18). But during his time in Rome, Epaphroditus took ill, which delayed his return home and, therefore, the delivery of the letter (2:26–27).

Philippians Timeline



5. **The book of Philippians is called a prison epistle, because Paul write the letter while he was imprisoned for his faith in Rome** - The book of Philippians is actually one of four “prison epistles” (or letters) and most likely the last of the four written by Paul. As stated, Paul wrote Philippians while he was in prison in Rome. The four “prison epistles” are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. Given the theme of the book it is significant that Philippians was written by Paul at a particularly difficult time in his life... while he was in prison.

INTRODUCTION

What could our having and experiencing true joy possibly have to do with how we walk or live each day and where we are headed? Much in every way! Let's remind ourselves of what we mean by joy. Remember Paul's letter to the Philippian Christians is all about “joy,” a word that is listed at least 16 times thought this short letter to these believers.

Dr. Warren Wiersbe, called Philippians, “**a personal manifesto on how to live a life full of joy.**” The book is a book of joy, and that is surprising given the circumstances surround the book. We have already established some characteristics of joy in our study.

7 Characteristics of Joy from Philippians:

1. Joy is a **HEART EXPRESSION** of a genuine believer toward **OTHER PEOPLE** (Philippians 1:3) – He blesses our lives with other people that make us joyful
2. Joy is a **FRUIT** of **SPIRIT** in the life of a believer place there by **GOD** alone (Philippians 1:11) – Our joy comes from Him.
3. Joy **IS NOT DEPENDENT** on our **OUTWARD CIRCUMSTANCES** (Philippians 1:12-21) –
4. Joy is found in cultivating the **MIND** of **CHRIST** and being like Him (Philippians 2:5-10)
5. Joy is found in **SALVATION** (Philippians 2:12-18)
6. Joy is found in **DISCARDING THINGS** that don't make for our joy (Philippians 3:4-11)
7. Joy is found in **PURSuing CHRIST** and **CHRISTLIKENESS** (Philippians 3:12-16)

Let's contrast what Paul tells us about "joy" under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the book of Philippians up against our sometime mixed up and confused blurring of the ideas of joy and happiness in this life. Are joy and happiness the same thing? How are they different? How does the Bible delineate the differences between joy and happiness or does it? I think most people would agree that happiness is a goal. What about joy? Doesn't everyone want to be happy? What is the difference between joy and happiness in the Bible?

6 Difference Between Joy and Happiness:

1. **The truth is the Bible never promises HAPPINESS, however it does promise JOY -** There is a difference.
2. **You can have joy and be HAPPY but you can't really be happy without JOY... at least lasting HAPPINESS -** It's easy to be happy when you have freedom from suffering, you're financially secure, and all your relationships are good, but then you have trouble with one or more of these, what happens to the "happiness?" It's probably gone but if you've trusted in Jesus and know you are secure in His hands (John 10:28-29) you've still got joy.
3. **HAPPINESS is based upon "HAPPENINGS," JOY is not -** Meaning if things happen to go well, you're happy, but if it happens that something bad occurs then your happiness is likely gone. Not so with joy. As I said before, you can be happy and have joy but happiness is dependent upon circumstances; joy is not. Here's why. Before Jesus went to Calvary He said *"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full"* (John 15:11). You will have *"sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you"* (John 16:22). Jesus promises the disciples that their joy will be full or complete. Filling a glass of water to the brim makes it full or complete. Jesus went to the cross to make sure that joy would be complete. Next, Jesus reassures them that no one's going to take their joy away. That is a permanent possession, not a fleeting moment like happiness is. Jesus says to them and He says to us, today you might *"be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy"* even though it is still today. John writes in John 16:11, *"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."* Hopefully I have established the fact that happiness and joy, though related on some level, is not the same thing. You can be in a state of happiness one moment and then dread the next. If something happens to go wrong, you lose nothing in heaven. You get bad news but your good news is better. You are happy one moment then sad the next but you can be joyful in that same moment.
4. **One is PERMANENT while the other is FLEETING -** In this context happiness is going to be fleeting, while there is permanence... a lastingness to joy. Even though joy and happiness have a lot in common, one thing that they don't have in common is one is permanent while the other is fleeting. The Permanence of Joy... we have joy because we've been saved. How amazing that we've been rescued from the wrath of God Who placed it on His Only Son. Paul rejoiced in this, writing *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope"* (Rom 15:13). One of the fruits of the Spirit is joy (Gal 5:22). This joy doesn't depart when we shed tears. Paul shows that the two can co-exist, writing *"As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy"* (2 Tim 1:4). Apparently Paul ached to see Timothy again and wept over him with longing but still had joy. Even when we encounter trials, James tells us, *"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds"* (James 1:2). Do you remember Jesus saying *"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full"* (John 15:11)? Full is a way of seeing it as complete and that same completeness of joy is found in many places in the Bible like in Jesus' words, Paul's epistles, James, Peter, and the Apostle John too (2 Tim 1:4; 2 John 1:12).

5. **One is from GOD and one is from US** – Biblical “joy” that is permanent and in all circumstances comes from the Lord and a personal relationship with Him. He places it in us, and give it to us. It is even listed as one of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. And although it could be said that no one is really “happy” until they know the Lord, there are many temporary things from which people may get happiness... though fleeting. It can be said that we can make our own “happiness,” yet what happens when something takes that thing (whatever it is) on which we have based our happiness away.
6. **One can COME and GO but the other will REMAIN** – A one preacher put it, “If joy and happiness were friends, happiness would be the unfaithful one of the two.” What do you think I means? Happiness will betray you given the wrong or bad circumstances, but joy is in all things.

Here is **Dr. John MacArthur** is a quote that we have turned to several time in our study. MacArthur says, “A believer's spiritual maturity can be measured by what it takes to steal his joy.” Listen, the truth is many things, almost anything can steal our “happiness” but for a genuine believer, a growing and maturing believer nothing should be able to steal your “joy.”

As we have said previously in our study, new Christians will quite often have misconceptions about God, the Christian life and other believers and the things we face in this life... namely the struggles, the problems, the trials this life can hold, and when those trial and struggles strike they may cause one to lose their joy, or for their joy in their Christian life to be stolen away. They may be left floundering in their faith and wondering, “where is God in all of this?” Has He left me? Why are all of these bad things happening to me.

But that is not only a reality for new Christians, many who have been Christians for years may carry these misconception tucked neatly in their back pocket and when trial, and difficulties, and hardships come... when things don't go as they expected in their Christian world these misconceptions may reveal themselves in a lack of joy and victory in their walk, in their life and witness, and even in their spirit and disposition communicated to others... ever wonder why some who call themselves Christians look so miserable all the time and it is reflected in how they treat others. . This look at the common misconceptions of Christianity is designed to dispel some of the myths that typically hinder Christians from growing and maturing in the faith even in the face of trials.

6 Commonly Held Dangerous Misconceptions Christians May Make: **These misconceptions really contribute to our inability to deal with the trials and struggles, the heartaches and difficulties of this life and affect our “joy” many even causing us to lose our joy. Exposing these “misconceptions” may help us to know we are not alone in our struggles, and may help us to really experience the joy of the Lord in all circumstances.*

1. **Once you become a Christian, God will solve all of your PROBLEMS (John 6:33, 1 Peter 4:12-13)** – *How might this misconception affect your joy and how might it show our blurring of joy and happiness?* In other words, “no more trials”... “all my restless tossing and trials are over.” Not so! Christians are shocked when the first trial or serious crisis hits. Here's a reality check -- get prepared -- the Christian life is not always easy! You will still face ups and downs, challenges and joys. You will have problems and troubles to overcome. Jesus said in **John 6:33**, “*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*” And **1 Peter 4:12-13** offers encouragement for Christians facing difficult situations, “*Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*”

2. **Becoming a Christian means giving up all FUN and following a life of rules (John 10:10, 1 Corinthians 2:9) – *How might this misconception affect your joy and how might it show our blurring of joy and happiness?*** This age old idea seem to imply that becoming a Christian will just be one problem after another...one trial heaped on another...that you will have to give up all your good times, all your friends, and that becoming a Christian is a real trial in itself. A joyless existence of mere rule-following is not true Christianity and the abundant life God intends for you. Rather, this describes a man-made experience of legalism. God has amazing adventures planned for you... not trial free, but amazing. As a matter of fact, Jesus, Himself described the life a Christian has as “abundant” when He said in **John 10:10**, “... *I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*” (NKJV) This verses gives a description of what it means to experience real life, full life... the best life even in the midst of a trial-prone existence. **1 Corinthians 2:9** says it like this and reminds us that though not problem free the Christ life is truly a blessed life, “*However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"*
3. **All Christians are LOVING, PERFECT people (Colossians 3:13, Philippians 3:12-13) – *How might this misconception affect your joy and how might it show our blurring of joy and happiness?*** This misconception can pose serious problems itself for a believer. It doesn't take very long to discover that Christians are not always loving and perfect people. Quite the contrary can be true sometimes for any number of reasons. But being prepared to meet the imperfections and failures of your new family in Christ can spare you future trials of pain and disillusionment from the hands of others from whom you may be tempted to expect perfection. Although Christians strive to be like Christ, we will never obtain complete sanctification until we stand before the Lord. In fact, God uses our imperfections to "grow us" in the faith. If not, there would be no need to forgive one another. As we learn to live in harmony with our new family, we rub each other like sandpaper. It's painful at times, but the result brings about a smoothing and softening to our rough edges. Paul reminds us in **Colossians 3:13** that we are to “*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*” The very fact that he encourage us to have to do this “bearing with one another” implies that we are not always loving and perfect people, but rather a people who must be “beared” with. Do you get it? And he reminds us in **Philippians 3:12-13** that we aren't there yet, but rather still a work in progress when he said, “*Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead ...*” In other words, I am not perfect yet... I'm still working on it, or rather He is still working on me!
4. **Bad things don't happen to truly GODLY CHRISTIANS (2 Corinthians 11:24-26, 1 Peter 1:6-7) - *How might this misconception affect your joy and how might it show our blurring of joy and happiness?***This point goes along with point number one, however, the focus is slightly different. Often Christians begin to wrongly believe that if they live a godly Christian life, God will protect them from pain and suffering... problems in this life... from trials. This just “ain't” so according to God's Word. Paul, a hero of the faith, suffered much. He lays out some of the bad things that happen to this truly godly Christian... just listen to it in **2 Corinthians 11:24-26**, “*Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers.*” Some faith groups believe the Bible promises health, wealth and prosperity for all who live a godly life. But this teaching is false. Jesus never taught this to his followers. You may experience these blessings in your life, but they are not a

reward for godly living. At times we experience tragedy, pain and loss in life. This is not always a result of sin, as some would claim, but rather, for a greater purpose that we may not understand immediately. We may never understand, but we can trust God in these difficult times, and know he has a purpose. Rick Warren says in his popular book, “The Purpose Driven Life” says *“Jesus did not die on the cross just so we could live comfortable, well-adjusted lives. His purpose is far deeper: He wants to make us like himself before he takes us to heaven.”* 1 Peter 1:6-7 says it like this, *“So be truly glad! There is wonderful joy ahead, even though it is necessary for you to endure many trials for a while. These trials are only to test your faith, to show that it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold--and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold. So if your faith remains strong after being tried by fiery trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.”* (NLT)

5. **Christian churches are always SAFE PLACES, where you can trust everyone and no one should ever GET HURT (1 Peter 5:8, Matthew 10:6) - How might this misconception affect your joy and how might it show our blurring of joy and happiness?** Although this should be true, it is not. Unfortunately we live in a fallen world where evil resides. Not everyone who enters the church has honorable intentions, and even some who do come with good intentions can fall back into old patterns of sin. People get injured in church, and words said in a heated moment can cut deeply. Disagreements and squabbles can seem to hurt even deeper in a church leaving their victim feeling like the one place they felt was a holy separate place is suddenly a war zone. “Trials” can come us even in the seemingly “safe” environment of the church, because churches are made up of imperfect people, and the enemy likes to disrupt and dis-unify the body of Christ whenever and where he can. Peter warned us of this very thing in 1 Peter 5:8, when he said, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* (NKJV) And Jesus, Himself, warned us in Matthew 10:6, *“Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves”* (KJV)
6. **Christians always feel CLOSE to GOD (Psalm 63:1, Psalm 42:1-3) –** When a person first becomes a Christian he or she may feel very close to God. Your eyes have just been opened to a brand new, exciting life with God. However, you should be prepared for dry seasons in your walk with God. They are bound to come. A life-long walk of faith requires trust and commitment even when you don't feel close to God. Sometimes those dry seasons and distant feeling can come in the midst of the problems that we face. It is in those moments that we may feel at times like God has deserted us, or our own disappointment with life may cause us to feel not as close to Him. In these verses, David expresses sacrifices of praise to God in the midst of spiritual times of drought. Psalm 63:1, *“O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”* (NIV) And Psalm 42:1-3, *“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’”* (NIV) He is still there even when do feel as close to Him as we may have at one time. Go to Him! Seek after Him and don't stop even in those times when problems persist.

3 Biblical Calls for a Believer's Joy in the Midst of Difficulties:

1. **Joy is part of the fruit of a Spirit-controlled life... Galatians 5:22-25 –** *“⁶²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”* In speaking of the fruit of the Spirit... the fruit that ought to flow from the life of a believer, notice that “joy” takes a front and center position. This ought to be one of the most striking qualities noticeable in the life of a believer regardless of the circumstances.

2. **We are to rejoice always... Philippians 4:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:16** – Paul says in **Philippians 4:4**, *“⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”* And similarly in **1 Thessalonians 5:16**, *“¹⁶ Rejoice always.”* Notice the word “always!” Paul signifies here the sphere in which the believer’s joy exists... a sphere unrelated to the circumstances of life, but related to the unassailable, unchanging relationship to the sovereign Lord.
3. **Joy in trials is seen as a characteristic of a believers life... James 1:2-4** - *“² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces ⁴patience. ⁴ But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”* James, particularly seems to give us something to focus on as a source of joy in trials... our spiritual growth and maturity in Christ. The Greek word “count” may also be translated “consider” or “evaluate.” The natural human response to trials is not to rejoice; therefore the believer must make a conscious commitment to face them with joy. “Trials” here is the Greek word that connotes trouble, or something that breaks the pattern of peace, comfort, joy, and happiness in someone’s life. The verb form of this words means “to put someone or something to the test,” with the purpose of discovering that persons’ nature or that thing’s quality. God brings such tests to prove... and increase... the strength and quality of one’s faith and to demonstrate its validity. Every trial becomes a test of faith designed to strengthen; if the believer fails the test by wrongly responding, that test then becomes a temptation, or a solicitation to evil. The word “perfect” is not a reference to sinless perfection, but to spiritual maturity. The testing of faith drives believers to deeper communion and greater trust in Christ... qualities that in turn produce a stable, godly, and righteous character.

All of that sounds good and maybe even right, but how do we get to the point at believers where we are able to look past the difficulties, and hardships, and trial and circumstances of this life like Paul and experience this in all things kind of joy. Paul closes out the 3rd chapter of Philippians with just such help but showing us 2 things about joy:

2 Things About Real Joy:

1. **Real joy is determined by how you WALK** – In other words how you live out your Christian life.
2. **Real joy is determined by WHERE you are WALKING to** – In other word your “citizenship”

Let’s explore each of these as Paul explains them in Philippians 3:17-21 to close out chapter 3.

➔ REAL JOY IS DETERMINED BY HOW YOU WALK (Philippians 3:17-19)

¹⁷ Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. ¹⁸ For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

Mahatma Gandhi once remarked, *“I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.”*

Even within the church some of us may find ourselves agreeing with this statement because human beings so often disappoint us. When someone points to the mishaps of a professed Christian as a reason not to embrace the faith, we may tell him to look at Jesus instead. But in our text, Paul calls his audience to look at people and to imitate them. Listen to how he says in in verse 17, *“¹⁷ Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.”*

- Paul says, “*follow my example*”... literally “be imitators of me.” *That’s pretty bold don’t you think!*
- ➡ *Would you be comfortable saying that? “Hey, follow my example!” Why do you think Paul could say that or do you think he was out of like to make such a boast?*

Since all believes are imperfect, they need example of less imperfect people who know how to deal with imperfection and who can model the process of pursuing the goal of Christlikeness. Paul was that model. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “*Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*” And in 1 Thessalonians 1:6 Paul said, “*And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.*” “*Note those who so walk.*” The Philippian believers were to focus on other godly examples, such as Timothy and Epaphroditus (see Philippians 2:19-20), and see who they conducted themselves in service to Christ.

2 Words of Caution and Concern Here:

- 1. We should follow the EXAMPLE of godly and faithful believers who have GONE BEFORE US** – It is okay for us to have “heroes” in the faith that we want to copy and imitate because they have done it well. However, a word of caution here... our primary focus should always... always be on Christ Jesus. Others, even godly others, can and will fail and fall short at times, and let you down. If your primary focus is on them their fall can be your downfall as well. That is why it is always dangerous to put others up on a pedestal. So what is Paul talking about here? To what degree should we “follow” others who may be a faithful and godly example? We are to follow and imitate what they did or do well, not what they don’t do well. Paul is certainly a good example to follow in most of what he modeled for us as recorded in the New Testament record, but we shouldn’t follow his example of a lack of grace, forgiveness and mercy as expressed in his ill-treatment of John Mark prior to his second missionary journey, causing a sharp dispute between Paul and Barnabas.
- 2. We should be careful how we LIVE our LIVES, because SOMEONE is always WATCHING US** – Others are always watching for the good and for the bad. The life of a believer is lived under a microscope. A lost and unbelieving world often watches, waiting for a Christian to fail, mess up, and fall so that he or she can cry “hypocrite” and prove that religion is false and doesn’t work. Sometime an unbelieving world watches to see if, in fact, faith is real and may provide some hope and help for a searching life. Other believers watch the life of a more seasoned believer in order to grow and learn. Sometime, if not careful in how one lives, a more seasoned believer may put a stumbling block in the way of a less mature believer, but the thing he or she allows in live, behaviors, attitudes, words, etc. How we live our lives as believers certainly matters?

The Pattern to Imitate

What Paul Is and Isn’t Saying Here?

- 1. Paul wasn’t saying he never SINNED or was FLAWLESS** – He wasn’t saying he was perfect, and should be worshipped as such. That is not the same as saying follow my example. Paul appeals to his readers to imitate him. This may seem to be an expression of insufferable vanity. However, remember in the first part of chapter 3 Paul has just used himself as a negative example of putting stock in one’s own status and accomplishments before God. He now regards these as rubbish for the sake of knowing Christ (chapter 3).
- 2. Paul wasn’t calling on other believer to imitate his FAILINGS but his SUCCESSSES** - Paul does not want his audience to imitate false teachers who valued external ritual practices like circumcision (3:1-3). Rather, he wants his audience to imitate him in throwing off all external markers for the single-minded pursuit of sharing in Christ’s suffering and knowing the power of his resurrection (3:10-11).

3. **Paul's was calling them to follow his example in who he FOLLOWS and who/what he doesn't FOLLOW** – Remember his words in **Philippians 1:21**, “²¹ *For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*” That's the example they are to follow. Paul's audience is to imitate him or, if he is not present, to imitate those who follow his example, like Timothy and Epaphroditus (see 2:19-30). The word “example” translates the Greek word *typos* in 3:17. Etymologically, *typos* refers to a blow that leaves an imprint, like what is left by a stamp or a seal. In moral discourse, the word came to refer to an example or pattern. Paul presents his own life as the *typos* that has made an imprint upon the lives of his associates and that is worthy of imitation. But Paul himself is not the archetype. Again, Paul's model for his life was Christ, reflected in the words “for to me, living is Christ and dying is gain” (1:21). For Paul, all of life is captured in Christ so that everything Paul does is generated by Christ and done for his sake. For this reason, Paul provides Jesus Christ as the quintessential example for his audience to follow. He calls them to think and act in humility and self-sacrificial service towards each other (2:1-4). They are to look at Jesus, who acted in humility and self-sacrificial service towards humanity in his incarnation and in his crucifixion (2:5-11). Jesus Christ is the archetype, the *typos* that made an imprint on the life of Paul. This is a certain kind of living that requires a certain mindset: not asserting your own rights, considering the needs of others as more important than your own. It took Jesus to the cross. It landed Paul in prison. Paul's call to imitate him is, in fact, a call to imitate Jesus.

Notice Paul's words again in verses 17:19, “¹⁷ *Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.*” ¹⁸ *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.*”

Notice that in these verses Paul contrast the walk of a genuine believer with the walk of those who aren't believers. The walk of a Christian is a distinctive walk. In other words there are things that distinguish it from the walk of others. ***If a genuine believers walk is not right, his or joy will not be right either... they won't experience the joy of the Lord as He desires. Why might this be true?***

When we speak of the “walk” of a believer or Christian, we are talking specifically about the life of a believer... how one lives his or her life. This is a favorite theme for Paul... one that he picks up in many of his letter found in the New Testament. Perhaps none give a better description of what that walk looks like than **Ephesians 5:1-15**, “*Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.*” ² *And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.* ³ *But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;* ⁴ *neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.* ⁵ *For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.* ⁶ *Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.* ⁷ *Therefore do not be partakers with them.* ⁸ *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light* ⁹ *(for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),* ¹⁰ *finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.* ¹¹ *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.* ¹² *For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.* ¹³ *But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.* ¹⁴ *Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”* ¹⁵ *See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,* ¹⁶ *redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”* Paul describes the walk of a believer, a walk filled with the joy of the Lord, three ways:

3 Characteristics of the Joyful Walk of a Genuine Believer:

1. **A walk of love (Ephesians 5:1-2)** – What does it mean to walk in love? We so often have a mixed up and confused understanding of love.

The ancient Greek language had four words to describe different types of love: *agape*, *phileo*, *eros*, and *storge*. Only two of these Greek words are used in the New Testament, *agape* (self-sacrificial love) and *phileo* (brotherly love).

A third type of love, *eros*, expresses sexual love, but the word is nowhere to be found in the New Testament. The fourth Greek word for love is *storge*, which relates to natural, familial love such as the love between a parent and child. In the New Testament, the negative form of *storge* is used twice. *Astorgos* means “devoid of natural or instinctive affection, without affection to kindred.”

Romans 1:31 describes sinful humanity as having “no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.” The Greek word translated as “no love” is *astorgos*. The other instance of this word is found in 2 Timothy 3:3, where it is translated “without love.” Paul warns that one mark of the “terrible times in the last days” (verse 1) is that people will lack natural love for their own families.

In Romans 12:10 we find an interesting compound: *philostorgos* is translated as “be devoted.” The word combines *philos* and *storge* and means “to cherish one’s kindred.” Believers in Christ, children of the same heavenly Father, are to “be devoted to one another in love.” As part of God’s family, we should show loving affection toward each other and be prone to love. *Philostorgus* is used only once in the New Testament, and that’s in Romans 12:10.

4 Greek Words for Love Used in New Testament Times: * *You will hear often that there are 4 types of love mentioned in the Bible. That is technically not correct. There were for different words for love used in New Testament times in the Greek language, but only two of those are actually used in the New Testament.*

- (1) **STORGE LOVE** – This is familial love... the love within a family between parent and child, a mother to her children or a father to his children. Family love. **NOTE: this word is technically not found in the New Testament, although the negative of this word is found “astorgos” (see above)**
- (2) **PHILIA LOVE** – This is friendship love or brotherly love, this is a friendship type of love between to friends. The city of Philadelphia gets its name from this Greek word, hence Philadelphia is called “the city of brotherly love.” **NOTE: this word is found in the New Testament on numerous occasions. A good example is John 13:35, where Jesus says, ³⁵“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**
- (3) **EROS LOVE** – This is romantic or sexual intimacy, the romantic love shared between a husband and wife. We recognize this Greek word for “sexual love” as it has been corrupted to mean “erotic” a word you most commonly hear associated with pornography. Sad that this words has been hijacked by the world to point to something perverted and ugly, because “sexual love” within in a marriage is beautiful, and create by God, and is something to be honored and esteemed not seen as dirty. Remember the world always perverts love. **NOTE: this words is not found in the New Testament, although a Hebrew equivalent of this word does appear in the Old Testament in the Song of Solomon.**
- (4) **AGAPE LOVE** – this is Divine love, God love. New Testament writers used this word to describe the way God loves us... God unconditional love for us. This is the highest form of love. In the New Testament it takes on a distinct meaning. *Agape* is used to describe the love that is of and from God, whose very nature is love itself: “God is love” (1 John 4:8). God does not merely love; He is love itself. Everything God does flows from His love. *Agape* is also used

to describe our love for God (Luke 10:27), a servant's faithful respect to his master (Matthew 6:24), and a man's attachment to things (John 3:19). The type of love that characterizes God is not a sappy, sentimental feeling such as we often hear portrayed. God loves because that is His nature and the expression of His being. He loves the unlovable and the unlovely, not because we deserve to be loved or because of any excellence we possess, but because it is His nature to love and He must be true to His nature. Agape love is always shown by what it does. God's love is displayed most clearly at the cross. "God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved" (Ephesians 2:4–5, ESV). We did not deserve such a sacrifice, "but God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). God's agape love is unmerited, gracious, and constantly seeking the benefit of the ones He loves. The Bible says we are the undeserving recipients of His lavish agape love (1 John 3:1). God's demonstration of agape love led to the sacrifice of the Son of God for those He loves. We are to love others with agape love, whether they are fellow believers (John 13:34) or bitter enemies (Matthew 5:44). Jesus gave the parable of the Good Samaritan as an example of sacrifice for the sake of others, even for those who may care nothing at all for us. Agape love as modeled by Christ is not based on a feeling; rather, it is a determined act of the will, a joyful resolve to put the welfare of others above our own. Agape love does not come naturally to us. Because of our fallen nature, we are incapable of producing such a love. If we are to love as God loves, that love—that *agape*—can only come from its Source. This is the love that "has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" when we became His children (Romans 5:5; cf. Galatians 5:22). "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters" (1 John 3:16). Because of God's love toward us, we are able to love one another. *NOTE: this word is used throughout the New Testament and perhaps nowhere is it better pictured and explained than in 1 Corinthians 13... the Love Chapter.*

When Paul calls us to walk in the love, he means we are love like God loves... to imitate God's love for us.

Characteristic of God's Love for Us:

- (1) God love for us is giving (Eph. 5:2)
- (2) God's love for us is forgiving (Eph. 4:32)
- (3) God's love for us is sacrificial (Eph. 5:2)
- (4) God's love for us is impactful (Eph. 5:2) – sweet smelling aroma
- (5) God's love for us is unconditional (Eph. 5:2)

This kind of love, as mentioned above is perhaps best pictured and described/defined in the great "Love Chapter," 1 Corinthians 13. (*READ: 1 Corinthians 13*)

Here is what that kind of walk of "agape" love that produces joy really looks like in the life of a believer:

15 Marks of the Walk of Love in the Life of a Believer that Produces Joy:

- (1) **Long-suffering** - The word "makrothumei" literally hints of taking a long time to get angry! In the New Testament, it has to do with how one should respond to abuse. Love patiently waits and attempts to win over one's adversary. William Barclay tells the following enlightening story. Edwin Stanton was the bitter opponent of Abraham Lincoln in the early days of their

political careers. Stanton characterized the awkward-looking Lincoln as a clown, a gorilla, etc. When Lincoln became president, however, he appointed Stanton as his secretary of war, because he felt that he was the best man for the job. Later, when President Lincoln lay dead from Booth's bullet, at the bedside Stanton tearfully said: "There lies the greatest ruler of men the world has ever seen." Patience had conquered (1956, 133).

- (2) **Kind** - A wise man declared: "That which makes a man to be desired is his kindness" (Proverbs 19:22). Kindness includes attributes like friendliness, compassion, generosity, and tenderness. To be kind is to be God-like (Luke 6:35). In a world that is saturated with harshness, a kind disposition is a refreshing breeze. There are many a woman who would trade a handsome husband for a kind one. Kindness would stifle the plague of child abuse. More kindness among brothers in the Lord would alleviate so much church trouble. The Scriptures demand that we be kind to one another (Ephesians 4:32).
- (3) **Not Envious** - The consuming flames of jealousy are as cruel as hell (Song of Solomon 8:6). What is jealousy? Jealousy is a feeling of displeasure caused by the prosperity of another, coupled with a desire to wrest (seize, take, snatch) the advantage from the person who is the object of one's envy. The loving person will rejoice at the success of others. Jealousy has destroyed many a home and church. Envy was one of the sins responsible for the death of Christ (Matthew 27:18; cf. Acts 7:9; 17:5).
- (4) **Not Boastful** - "Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth" (Proverbs 27:2). Is there anyone more of a bore than a braggart? Genuine love is selfless. It seeks to extol the virtues of others. Love has words of encouragement for the lonely, the downtrodden, and others who deserve and need uplifting. But some are ever tooting their own horns. When a windbag preacher boasts that were it not for his efforts the whole brotherhood of Christ would be immersed in apostasy, one cannot but be reminded of this descriptive.
- (5) **Not Arrogant** - The original language here denotes one who is inflated with a sense of personal pride. Pride is unreasonable self-esteem, generally accompanied by insolence and rude treatment of others. It deceives the heart (Jeremiah 49:16), hardens the mind (Daniel 5:20), and results in destruction (Proverbs 16:18). Love is characterized by genuine humility.
- (6) **Not Rude** - The Greek expression here literally suggests the notion of being "without form." It encompasses all sorts of evil activity, bad manners, and brutal rudeness. Love doesn't deliberately seek to be offensive. Have you known anyone who took pride in his ability to bludgeon others? The Christian's vocabulary should be characterized by such expressions as, "No, you first," "Please," "Thank you," "How may I help you?" etc. Love operates with determined politeness. The terms "gentleman" and "lady" should reach their zenith in the context of Christianity.
- (7) **Not Egocentric** - The meaning is: love does not pursue its own interests. Love is not selfish. It has been said that there are two kinds of people: those who are always thinking of their rights, and those who concentrate on their responsibilities. Ours is an age of woeful selfishness. Everyone is protective of their own rights, but in far too many instances the disposition evolves into an attitude that says: "Let others fend for themselves; I'm looking after 'Number One.'" After all, it's a jungle out there—a dog-eat-dog world. Whence came the origin of this fang-and-claw philosophy? Satan adopted it first, and he was followed by a long line of henchmen, e.g., Darwin, Nietzsche, Lenin, Hitler, et al. By way of stark contrast was the sacrificial example of the Son of God (Philippians 2:5-8), the apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 12:15), Timothy (Philippians 2:20), and numerous souls since those ancient times. Love thinks of others and seeks to serve.
- (8) **Not Quickly Provoked** - Love does not have a short fuse; it does not stroll about with a chip on its shoulder. Some folks are "chip-shouldered," gun fully cocked temperament, just ready to blow any moment and explode. Their day is ruined if someone does not provide the opportunity

for them to give a piece of their mind. Genuine love does everything possible to avoid combat. If conflict for truth has to come, so be it; but one should not live in the “objective case and kickative mood!”

- (9) **Not a “Record-Keeper” of Mistakes** - This descriptive does not mean that love ignores evil. That view would contradict numerous other passages of Scripture. There are times when evil must be exposed, rebuked, and disciplined. The Greek word for “account” is from *logizomai*, a commercial expression which suggests writing a transaction in the record so as not to forget it. Love does not keep score, as in, “Three times this month he has neglected to speak to me.” The one who says, “I must forgive you, but I will never forget what you did,” has miserably failed the test of agape. Love does not harbor bitterness nor does it plot revenge.
- (10) **No Pleasure in Wrong, Only in Truth** - Since love always seeks the good of others, it can never rejoice when evil prevails. When a brother falls — even an obnoxious one — we should never entertain secret thoughts of satisfaction. Rejoicing in moral wickedness is at variance with biblical love and does not have humanity’s welfare at heart. For example, those who exult in parades for “gay rights,” or who gleefully celebrate the liberalization of abortion laws, have utterly no perception of what real love is. Divine love cannot be divorced from objective truth.
- (11) **Supportive** - The verb *stego* conveys the picture of one object on top of another, thus hinting of either support (by the lower object) or concealment (by the upper object) (Vine 1951, 132). The ideas are not mutually exclusive — especially in this context. Love supports, uplifts those who are in need of such. Jesus was constantly in trouble with his Jewish critics because of his encouragement of the downtrodden (cf. Luke 15:1ff). Moreover, one who operates out of love will cover (i.e., be slow to expose) the mistakes of another. Love “would far rather set about quietly mending things than publicly displaying and rebuking them” (Barclay 1956, 137). It is unfortunate that some are militant to expose and rebuke, but so stubbornly resistant to forgiving. Of course there may be a time for the open exposure of wrong (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:1ff; 1 Timothy 5:20), but this is certainly not the initial procedure. The loving soul does not froth at the bit at the prospect of such an adventure!
- (12) **Trusts** - This does not mean that love is gullible. Believing error is both wrong and dangerous (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12). Rather, the apostle has something else in mind. The sense of the verb *pisteuo* (believes) here is probably that of trusting (J. B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English*). The word can surely have that meaning (cf. John 2:24), and that seems to be indicated here. Love will give the benefit of the doubt. When you hear a distasteful report concerning a fellow Christian, do you hesitate to believe it until the evidence is overwhelming In these times when error is so rampant in the church, we must resist the temptation to be quickly and recklessly suspicious. It is never proper to shoot first and ask questions later. We should strive to be more trusting of our loved ones in Christ.
- (13) **Hopes** - Love is optimistic; it entertains the highest expectations. Sometimes we see a struggling brother and perhaps think: “He will never make it.” Whereas we ought to say, “I believe that with God’s assistance — and mine — he will make it!” If we must err on the pessimism/optimism scale, let us err in the direction of hope.
- (14) **Endures** - Even when adversity challenges again and again, love continues to operate. Agape is tough. It is not easily discouraged. It may, on occasion, have a bloody head; nonetheless, it keeps its face in the wind and forges ahead. True love does not give up — on God, or on others.
- (15) **Never Ends** - The apostle concludes by affirming that agape “never ends.”

We said **REAL JOY IS DETERMINED BY HOW YOU WALK**, and now we are saying we are “walk in love.” How does walking in the kind of love we have been talking about affect or increase our joy? (Discussion)*it is a fact that if you are negative, bitter toward others,

unforgiving, lacking in love toward others you will lead a joy-less life... joy will come as you learn to walk in this kind of God like love toward others... you will just be more joy-filled

2. **A walk of light (Ephesians 5:3-14)** – Paul says in verses 3-13, “³ But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; ⁴ neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. ⁵ For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. ⁷ Therefore do not be partakers with them. ⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. ¹¹ And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. ¹³ But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.” Given the context in these verses and Paul’s call right in the middle of these verses, what does he mean when he says that as believer we are to “walk as children of light.” He is speaking of our behavior... how we live our lives every day. **It matters how you live your life, Christian!** We are not saved by being good or by moral behavior, but as believers we are called to it. We are saved by grace plus nothing else. We are not saved by what we do, but how we live our lives gives evidence that we are saved. But that is not all, how we live our lives to please the Lord dictates how “joy-filled” we will be. A believer/Christian, who is not living for the Lord will be a miserable Christian, if he or she is one at all. Today, it seem we have watered down sin, condoned sin, accepted sin into the church, we excuse it, cover it, make it okay, everybody does it... seems today we often have the “libertine” mind of the New Testament world that Paul so often encountered. There is nothing new under the sun.

4 Perspectives of What it Means to Walk in the Light:

- (1) **Walking in the light means we consider Jesus as “the Light” in this world** - The apostle John repeatedly used the “light” metaphor in relation to the Messiah. For example, he writes that Jesus is “*the true light that gives light to every man*” in John 1:9. In 1 John 1:7 he says, “*If we walk in the light as He [God] is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*” In verse 5, John says that God’s very nature is light. Jesus, then, is the conduit or provider of light to the world. So “walking in the light” speaks to living in daily and ongoing relationship/communion with Him. He is the Light.
- (2) **Walking in the light means we “walk” in that Light by following His precepts** - It’s the how to... our Christian duty and calling is to live in the light God gives, “*Now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*” (Ephesians 5:8). When we walk in the light, we cannot walk in darkness. Sin is left in the shadows as we let our light “shine before men” (Matthew 5:16). It is God’s plan for us to become more like Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:3).
- (3) **Walking in the light means we live daily in/by His power** – To “walk” is, in short, to live one’s life. One’s lifestyle or way of life can be considered a “walk.” “Light” in the Bible can be a metaphor for life, happiness, righteousness, or understanding. **To “walk in the light” is a common metaphor within Christian culture. It is often taken to mean “acting correctly” or even “living openly.”** Biblically, however, the phrase has the idea of relinquishing sin by following Jesus. The only Old Testament occurrence of this precise phrase is in Isaiah 2:5, “*O house of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the Lord.*” The Psalms contain similar phrases (56:13; 89:15), as does Isaiah (9:2; 50:10-11; 59:9). In the New Testament, “walking in the light” is directly related to following Jesus, who said, “*I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life*” (John 8:12). While this verse

does not directly say, “Walk in the light, i.e., Jesus,” it does pointedly warn of doing the opposite; therefore, those who follow Jesus are “walking in the light.”

- (4) **Walking in the light means we grow in His grace** – The very word “walk” also indicates progress. Walking is related to growth; it is taking steps toward maturity. Putting it all together, “walking in the light” means “growing in holiness and maturing in the faith as we follow Jesus.” Think of this, plants and vegetation need light to grow... kept in darkness plants die. Likewise, we need the light of the Lord to grow. This light can be found by walking daily with Him in relationship through His Word (the Bible), daily communing with Him in prayer, being faithful to the preaching and teaching of Word through the church, the body of Christ, etc.

We said REAL JOY IS DETERMINED BY HOW YOU WALK, and now we are saying we are “walk in the light.” How does walking in the light affect or increase our joy?

3. **A walk of caution (Ephesians 5:15)** – Paul says in verse 15, *“¹⁵ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶ redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”* The word translated there as “circumspectly” means “accurately or precisely with great care.” The Psalmist said it in **Psalm 1:1**, *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful.”* In other words, blessed is the man who is careful, cautious where and how he or she walks.

What are we to be cautious of, careful of... in our walk? What is Paul telling us about our walk?

3 Things to Be Cautious of In Your Daily Walk:

- (1) **We are to be cautious of the flesh (sin)** – I think Paul’s words in **Romans 13:11-14** are a powerful call for us to be cautious of our own flesh and sin. Paul says, *“¹¹ And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”* Paul tells us this in **Colossians 3:1-9**, *“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. ⁵ Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. ⁸ But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.”*
- (2) **We are to be cautious of the world** – Paul wrote these words in **2 Timothy 3:1-7** to Timothy, his young protégé in the ministry, essentially warning him and us to be aware, awake and cautious of the days we live in, with this picture of the world, *“¹ But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! ⁶ For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, ⁷ always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”* **1 John 2:15-17**

says it, ¹⁵ *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* ¹⁶ *For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.* ¹⁷ *And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”*

- (3) **We are to be cautious of the devil** – 1 Peter 5:8 says, ⁸ *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”* And Paul calls us in *Ephesians 6:10-11*, ¹⁰ *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.* ¹¹ *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”*

We said **REAL JOY IS DETERMINED BY HOW YOU WALK**, and now we are saying we are “walk in caution.” **How does walking cautiously affect or increase our joy?** (Discussion) *The world, the flesh and the devil will steal your joy, so if you can walk in such a way to be alert and aware of the schemes of these three enemies you can avoid the pitfalls and live a life of joy.*

REAL JOY IS DETERMINED BY WHERE YOU ARE WALKING TO (Philippians 3:18-21)

¹⁸ *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.* ²⁰ *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

If this world is all you have to look forward to, at best any joy you might have happened to catch a glimpse of will be short lived and fleeting. Scripture even says it more emphatically than that in *1 Corinthians 15:19*, ¹⁹ *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”* One of our greatest joys as believers is to know that the best is yet to come, that we have heaven, and eternal glory to look forward, that we win in the end, that one day we will be in a place there is not more crying, no more pain, no more suffering, not more sickness. Oh the joy of that day! This contrast between those who know Christ and have heaven as their hope, and those who don’t is set forth in the last few verse of Philippians. With these two important exhortations:

2 Important Closing Exhortations for a Believers Joy:

- 1. Don’t be Earthly-Minded (verses 18-19)** – Jesus, Himself, commands us in *Matthew 6:19-21*, ¹⁹ *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* According verses 18-19 of our passage some are not following this example as laid out by Paul and have become “enemies of the cross of Christ” (verse 18). They do not follow the example of Christ as modeled by Paul. Instead of having a mind set on Christ, they have “minds set on earthly things.” Instead of being guided by self-sacrificial service to others, they are guided by their own desires (“their god is their belly”). These people have not denied Christ by their confession or words, but have denied Christ by their behavior. They are enemies of the cross of Christ because they refuse to conform to the pattern of humility and self-sacrifice that led Jesus there.
- 2. Be Heavenly-Minded (verses 20-21)** - With a sharp contrast, Paul says that he and his audience are not earthly minded, but are heavenly minded (verse 20). Paul reminds them that their true citizenship is in heaven and not on this earth. Philippi was a Roman colony, so Paul’s audience were Roman citizens with rights and benefits of which they were proud. Paul himself invokes these benefits when he is in Philippi to his aid (Acts 16). But here Paul redefines the citizenship of the

Christian. The Philippians -- and we as Christians -- are citizens of Christ's city, governed by the gospel. Paul uses the present tense, "our citizenship *is* in heaven," which calls them to enact their true citizenship now in a foreign land. Paul has had his mind on the redefinition of citizenship throughout the letter. His use of citizenship language in 3:20 recalls 1:27. Most translations disguise the sense of the Greek language with a translation such as the NRSV, "let your manner of live be worthy of the gospel." Literally, it is "live as citizens worthy of the gospel." They do this by participating in the common cause of "standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel." Paul comes full circle in our passage to speak of citizenship again. Notice that in 3:17 Paul asks his audience to "join together" in imitating him. The kind of living to which he calls is not a solitary job, but is necessarily done in community. There is an old adage: "she is so heavenly minded that she is no earthly good." Paul's point, however, is that we must be heavenly minded if we are to be any earthly good. To enact our heavenly citizenship is to follow the example of Christ as modeled in Paul, acting in humility and self-sacrificial service to others. As citizens of heaven, we live in a foreign land where self-aggrandizement and self-satisfaction are prized.