

## Philippians 3:17-21 — Follow Godly Examples

**July 26, 2020**

Good morning CrossWinds! It is great to be able to fill in for Pastor Jordan on the Spencer Campus while he is away on a much deserved vacation. I look forward to being on the Spencer Campus in person next weekend. I love seeing the Spencer campus family. I am very much looking forward to being with them.

Turn in your Bibles to the book of Philippians. We are in Philippians 3:17-21. While you are turning, let me take a moment to remind you what Paul has taught us earlier in this chapter.

In this chapter, Paul gave us his testimony. Paul began life with an impressive resume. He had a long list of accomplishments on his resume ranging from his Jewish background to his zeal for God. When he died, he planned to show that list of accomplishments to God. He was confident God would be impressed and he would be eagerly welcomed into heaven because he was such a good guy. That worked for Paul until he met the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus. When Paul realized the price of admission to heaven was being perfect, he realized he wasn't even close to being good enough. He knew he needed to burn his old resume and write a new one. On his new resume there could only be one thing, and that is the name of Jesus.

Jesus lived the perfect life Paul could not live. Jesus died for sin and rose to new life because he conquered Satan, sin, and death. Jesus offered to forgive all of Paul's sin if he would, by faith, ask for Jesus' death on the cross to pay for his sin and if he would ask Jesus to be the king of his life.

Paul was put into a right relationship with God, not because of anything he did but because of everything Jesus did for him. Jesus died for the sin Paul couldn't pay for. Jesus lived the perfect life Paul did not live. God's amazing offer is if Paul would ask Jesus' death to pay for his sin and ask Jesus to be in charge of his life, all of Paul's sin would be placed on Jesus, who died for it. All of Jesus' purity and perfection would be given to Paul so when God looked at Paul's life, he wouldn't see all the filth of Paul's sin. Instead Paul's sin would be gone and God would see in Paul's life all of the undeserved righteousness and purity of God's own son!

Paul was brought into a right relationship with God by grace alone, through faith alone, by the finished work of Jesus alone.

Just like Paul, that is the only way we can be saved. It is the only way our sin can be dealt with. It is the only way our sin can be forgiven before God and the only way we are can be brought into a right relationship with God. When we call out to Jesus, asking for his death for our sin to save us from our sin, he will. We are born again. We deserve none of this.

While it is amazing news that we are saved by faith alone in Jesus alone, last week, we learned that being saved only by our faith can lead to a misunderstanding of the Christians faith. Some people think that since we are made right with God apart from any work, that means the Christian faith doesn't involve any work. That isn't true. Paul clarified this last week. While we are saved by trusting in the finished work of Christ, when it comes to spiritual maturity in life, that takes work, hard work. Last week, Paul said we are to pursue spiritual

maturity with all the effort and intensity of a runner in a race pushing himself or herself to cross the finish line first. Spiritual maturity involves straining to pursue Christ, not jogging to pursue Christ but running to win.

How do we pursue Christ? Spiritual maturity means doing the hard work of turning away from sin and fighting the desires of sin. It means the pursuit of knowing Jesus better by reading our Bible. It means having the self-discipline of an athlete when it comes to a Bible reading plan, like an athlete has a physical training plan. It means making time to read good Christian books instead of social media.

Last week, Paul gave us principles of spiritual maturity that every Christian needs to know. Of course, there is no magical shortcut. All of them involve hard work as we pursue Jesus.

This morning, Paul continued the theme of pursuing spiritual maturity. Paul moved from talking about principles of spiritual maturity to the importance of following good patterns of spiritual maturity. We need to find and follow other spiritually mature people that can serve as examples for us to follow so we learn from their lives what it means to follow Christ in real life. Let's read the text and you will see the importance of finding and following godly examples come screaming out of these verses.

Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.  
Philippians 3:17–21 (ESV)

Our text breaks apart under three headings: 1. It is important to follow godly examples in Christ; 2. We must avoid bad examples that lead us away from Christ; 3. We must fix our eyes on our future with Christ and live for that in this world.

### **Follow the example of godly people who love Christ.**

#### **Follow the example of Paul.**

#### **Brothers, join in imitating me... Philippians 3:17 (ESV)**

Paul came right out and said to the Philippians, and to us, that when you are looking for a spiritually mature person to follow and to learn from, look at his life and follow him. This could easily be misunderstood. It sounds like Paul was extremely cocky. It sounds like he was putting himself on a pedestal of perfection. It sounds like he was filled with arrogance. He was not. Someone from the modern media would love to misquote Paul and take his words out of context in this verse. Paul was not saying he was perfect and that is why we should follow him. Paul was very aware of his own sin. Look what he said about himself, only a few verses earlier.

#### **Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect... Philippians 3:12 (ESV)**

Look what Paul said about himself in 1 Timothy.

#### **This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—and I am the worst of them all. 1 Timothy 1:15 (NLT)**

Paul was not holding himself up as a perfect example. He was holding himself up as a fallen and imperfect example but as someone who was a little

further along in spiritual maturity, even though he had not arrived at spiritual maturity. Let me give you a way to think about this.

When I was in high school, I used to go rock climb at summer camp. I didn't rock climb in the Midwest, where rock climbing at summer camps consists of plywood walls with plastic hand holds. I went to summer camp in upstate New York where there are real mountains. We climbed real rock faces. When we climbed, there was no guarantee of being able to find the next handhold as you climbed the rock.

When we climbed, there was always someone that climbed the back of the rock face. He tied into a tree, and put a rope around his waist. He let that safety rope down the front of the rock. It was attached to climbers for safety. As we were climbing, sometimes we would get stuck part way up because we couldn't find the next hand hold, and the spotter would yell, "You can do it!" I remember thinking, "How do you know I can do it? How do you know anybody can do it? You have never done it. You cheated. You climbed to the top of the rock by climbing the back side of the rock. Your encouraging words are not encouraging to me." What I needed was somebody who climbed the front side of the rock before me. Even if she didn't make it to the top, but she climbed farther than I did, I could at least be encouraged by her example and I could follow her example. That was the Apostle Paul.

Jesus is the only one on the top of the rock. He is the only one who lived a perfect life. We are all striving to climb the rock and be more like Jesus. Paul was not perfect. He was not on the top with Jesus, but he was farther up the rock than

most of us, so we can learn from him by following the example of his life about what it means to become more spiritually mature like Christ.

This is why Paul said, “join in imitating me.” In Greek, the word imitate is the word mimic. Paul said we should learn from him by watching him and mimicking the way he lived. Paul didn’t just hold himself up as an example for the Philippians to follow, but he said the same thing to the Corinthians.

**I urge you, then, be imitators of me. 1 Corinthians 4:16 (ESV)**

He said the same thing to the Thessalonians.

**And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit... 1 Thessalonians 1:6 (ESV)**

Paul never held himself out as an example to follow because he claimed to live a perfect life. He held himself out as an imperfect example that was just a little farther up the rock face of becoming more like Jesus.

Paul held himself out as an example to follow because he knew we don’t just need principles of spiritual maturity. We need patterns of spiritual maturity to follow. We need to see what spiritual maturity looks like in the lives of everyday people. We can learn from and follow them.

While Paul offered himself up as one example for people to follow, he certainly didn’t claim he was the only example to follow.

**Follow the example of others who are mature in Christ.**

**...keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. Philippians 3:17 (ESV)**

The words “keep your eyes on” means to observe or watch. It comes from the world of athletics, specifically a distance running event. As all runners know, in a race it is wise to fix your eyes on a runner that is in front of you and pace

yourself by him or her. That helps you run faster and farther than you would on your own because you paced yourself off someone better than you. This is what Paul told the Philippians to do when it came to spiritual maturity. They were to look around them and find someone that was more spiritually mature, then pace their lives off of what they saw in someone else's life. Spiritual maturity is learned by imitating more spiritually mature people around us. We are to fix our eyes on them and follow them.

While Paul was encouraging the Philippians to find and follow godly men and women around them, we have no idea of their specific names. In a similar fashion, I have no idea the names of the spiritual mature people in your life that you should follow and seek to imitate.

While I cannot give you the names of people you should learn from, I can give you the positions you should follow. In the church, it is the responsibility of the pastors, elders, and deacons to live lives that are worthy of imitation. A leader in the church is to live a life worthy of imitating in the church.

As I think about that responsibility, it falls heavy on my heart. This is not a responsibility I take lightly. It is a part of my job. I cannot and don't want to ignore it. I think about it often. I would go so far as to say that more important than the teaching that comes from a pastor's mouth is the life a pastor must live.

All of us know of amazingly gifted pastors that have figuratively burned a church to the ground, not through the heresy of their teaching but the heresy of their living. One current example is the ministry of James MacDonald. If you have listened to his preaching, you know he is an amazingly gifted teacher. He built a

huge church in Chicago and hosted a popular radio program that spanned the nation. All of it figuratively burned to the ground because of his poor character off stage. His ungodly words and the evil actions of his life came back to haunt him. It reached a boiling point when someone recorded some of his off-camera evil words and threatening actions. Those recordings were played to his elders. They were even put on the radio in Chicago. The elders were forced to fire him. In a day, everything he was doing was gone. He was an incredibly gifted teacher on the stage, but the example of his life off the stage destroyed everything. He was not an example worth imitating. More important than the preaching of a pastor's mouth is the example of a pastor's life.

Look what the Apostle Peter says about the importance of elders and pastors living a life that is worth following.

...not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 1 Peter 5:3 (ESV)

Look what Paul said to the young church leaders Timothy and Titus about the importance of them not just teaching the church but of providing an example for others to follow in the church.

Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, Titus 2:7 (ESV)

Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12 (ESV)

So church leaders must not think of their jobs as only teaching the Word of God and making leadership decisions. They must also think of their jobs as being those who provide spiritually mature examples for other people to follow.

Mature men and women are to model for other Christians what it means to treat their spouses with gentleness in a difficult marriage. They are to model what it means to disciple their children when life pulls them away from the home. They are to model what it means to find time to study God's Word in a busy schedule. They are to model what it means to handle anger when they are upset. They are to model how to deal with difficult people that are hurtful and disrespectful.

This doesn't mean pastors, elders, and deacons are perfect. Paul wasn't perfect. It does mean they must focus on living a life worth imitating in the good times and in the tough times.

**Follow the example of spiritually mature living people.**

As I thought about the importance of examples, and the power of good ones, those who were most influential in my faith came to mind. As you might expect, those who were the most influential are other pastors. Interestingly, it wasn't their preaching that most impacted my life. It was the way they lived that I can't forget. Let me give you an example.

One of the most influential people was Haddon Robinson. I did my doctoral program under him. His classes were amazing. He was incredibly bright. He had amazing wit and could hold an audience's attention so tight you could hear a pin drop. He was considered one of the top five preachers in the English language in the 20th century. That is amazing. What impacted me most about Dr. Robinson was not a sermon he spoke, but it was the life he lived.

When I finished my ordination in the Evangelical Free Church, the instructions were to ask a guest preacher you respected to preach your

ordination sermon. At the time, I was pastoring a small church in rural Michigan. There was nobody near me I could ask to preach that sermon. Undeterred, I decided to shoot for the moon. I emailed Dr. Robinson, asking if he could come to our small church of only 140 people to preach my ordination sermon. I was sure he would turn me down. To my surprise, he didn't.

He wrote back letting me know he would be in Holland Michigan, for two weeks recording a year's worth of material for his nationally broadcast radio program, Discover The Word. If I could coordinate the dates, he would be willing to travel north a few hours after two weeks of intense recording and preach at my ordination then spend the weekend with me and my family.

As he preached my ordination sermon, I sat in the pew listening to Dr. Robinson with awe and humility. One of the best preachers in the English-speaking world, who was exhausted after two weeks of intense recording, took time away from his busy schedule as a seminary president and evangelical celebrity to preach a special sermon for me, an unknown small town pastor at a tiny church in rural Michigan.

After the weekend, I told Cindy, "When I get to be his age, I hope I am like him. I want to be somebody that genuinely cares about the nobody, just like he did for me."

It is funny that what impacted me most from one of the best preachers in the world is not a sermon he spoke but the example of the life he lived.

We cannot underestimate the power of being godly examples and following godly examples.

## Follow the example of spiritually mature dead people.

While we are looking for examples to follow, don't limit yourself to living people. Make sure you find some dead people that are worth following. They lived in earlier generations and you can meet them through their biographies.

Let me tell you about one man I met through his biography that powerfully influenced me. His name was Robert McQuilken. His famous biography is called [A Promise Kept](#). If you have been through premarital counseling with me, you know that book is required reading. Robert McQuilken was the president of Columbia International University. His wife came down with early onset Alzheimers. Rather than institutionalizing her, he chose to resign to take care of her. In his famous biography, he said he resigned from his prestigious position because he wanted to be a man of his word. When he married his wife, he married her for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, til death do us part.



He really meant it. He was going to be with his wife, caring for her, all the way to the end.<sup>1</sup>

When I read his brief biography, tears were running down my face.

I ran across his biography when Cindy, my wife, had been diagnosed with an autoimmune disease. She was weak and sick on the couch. Fingers on her hand had turned black and were rotting. The doctors were talking about

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<sup>1</sup> Listen to a portion of Robert McQuilken's resignation speech. <https://youtu.be/vG95dJXNIDU>

amputation of those fingers. They discussed with us the possibility of Cindy losing her life in the months ahead of us. At the time, we had three little children running around the house desperately in need of their mother.

I remember crying to God, “God, I don’t know what the future holds but I want to be by Cindy’s side all the way to the bitter end, just like Robert McQuilken was there for his wife all the way to the bitter end. I want to be a godly man just like him.”

Thankfully, my wife recovered and her disease went into remission, but the example that Robert McQuilken set with his life showed me what true north looked like in those dark days of my life. My friends, we cannot underestimate the power of being a godly example and showing others what it means to follow Christ in this ordinary, and often difficult, world.

### **Don’t follow people that aren’t following Christ.**

We have just learned the importance of following good examples in Christ and how they help us to run after Christ harder. Now, Paul warned us about the danger of following poor examples for Christ and how they can lead us astray.

### **Don’t follow obvious enemies of the cross.**

**For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Philippians 3:18 (ESV)**

In life, we need to be very careful whom we hang around with. We need to be careful whom we allow to influence our lives. It is easy to be drawn away from Christ by the example others give us that we unconsciously follow. Let me give you two obvious enemies of the cross.

**Entertainment** — The music we listen to can be filled with dark lyrics that set our thoughts on ungodly things that pull us away from Christ. Thankfully, we can gather at church and enjoy some great worship music that fixes our thoughts on Jesus, not just the passing pleasures of this world. The movies we watch can also suck us away from Christ. It is hard to find movies that build us up in Christ. Most of the movies feature godless themes lacking any virtue. They are filled with murder, sex, betrayal and revenge. That is not the kind of material we want filling our minds. It is not the kind of material we want settling in our hearts for us to learn from and remember. The same is true for YouTube and the rest of the Internet. The web is filled with godless, evil, and wicked material, that if we consume it by watching it on our screens, will leave us not sick to our stomachs but sick in our minds as our thoughts are about anything but Jesus.

One statistic I ran across this week claims that 30 percent of all Internet traffic is pornographic in nature.<sup>2</sup> I have read statistics that claim higher percentages. Either way, the statistics are alarming. That number doesn't include all the other unhelpful stuff and crude material that we are so easily exposed to on the Internet.

Too many people think that what we watch doesn't matter. The truth is what we role play in our minds becomes what we real play in our lives. Watching murder and sex scenes does not mold anyone into a more godly man or woman. It does not help you become a better husband or wife. It is a bad influence. It

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/internet-porn-stats\\_n\\_3187682?guccounter=1&guce\\_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce\\_referrer\\_sig=AQAAAM2KPMw3Ufr0It8EaCoNgbIFchjHKt4ZFPNUusSoSZLK9Obmr7EmnpUYI0-kOjkU2SWefmGY1nV0T4cK2Zd4aYuE1aIQsfoSywnrVfehWjXC2yan3jPj3Zm3pwDT19nTLIZdvJ76nPlwE0jbLD2yBLEeUZOZc6j7hI0fjy2K9F5Y](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/internet-porn-stats_n_3187682?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAM2KPMw3Ufr0It8EaCoNgbIFchjHKt4ZFPNUusSoSZLK9Obmr7EmnpUYI0-kOjkU2SWefmGY1nV0T4cK2Zd4aYuE1aIQsfoSywnrVfehWjXC2yan3jPj3Zm3pwDT19nTLIZdvJ76nPlwE0jbLD2yBLEeUZOZc6j7hI0fjy2K9F5Y)

tears us down. It pulls us away from Jesus. Look what the Bible says about our thought lives and the importance of guarding what we feed our minds.

**We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ... 2 Corinthians 10:5 (ESV)**

If you are struggling with Internet issues and are looking for something to block material or to help hold you accountable about what you see on the Internet, I recommend [Covenant Eyes](#). This is the service we install on all staff computers. Their spouses get accountability reports about what they are viewing on the Internet each week. That is a great incentive to purity.

**Non-Christian Friends** — Another enemy of the cross can be our non-Christian friends. For young adults, it is hard to find good Christian friends. I know what it feels like. On Friday nights, it is easy to find yourself weighing the options of staying home by yourself for another boring night versus hanging out with friends who do not know Christ but will have a good time. It is easy to tell yourself that if they offer you drugs, you will say, “No.” If they want you to join them for hard liquor, you will say, “No.” It is easy to tell yourself that if you meet someone of the opposite sex at the bar that is interested in you, you will just say, “No” and walk away.

Let me be blunt. It doesn't work that way. The more time you choose to spend with your non-Christian friends because of your loneliness, the easier it becomes to say, “Yes” to your non-Christian friends because of your loneliness. Soon you find yourself being led away.

**One who is righteous is a guide to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray. Proverbs 12:26 (ESV)**

We need to examine our lives. If spending time with our non-Christian friends is dragging us back into old sinful patterns, we need to cut those friends out of our lives, because instead of us leading them, they are leading us, and leading us away from Jesus.

Let me be painfully honest. Sometimes, if you are going to cut bad friends out of your life, you must be willing to be lonely. Too many people are not willing to be lonely so they go back to their godless friends that are a bad influence. Be willing to pay the price of loneliness.

If Christians around the world are willing to lose their lives to faithfully to Christ, we should be willing to suffer a little loneliness to be faithful to Christ. Unfortunately, many people are not willing to do that. Are you willing to pay that price? It has been said, "Show me your friends; I will show you your future." That is a very true statement.

**Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." 1 Corinthians 15:33 (ESV)**

**Do not follow subtle enemies of the cross.**

In this passage, this was Paul's primary emphasis. His primary focus in these verses was not the obvious enemies of the cross but the subtle ones.

These are people who claim to be interested in Jesus but as time passes, it becomes obvious they are only loosely associated with Jesus. They have no hunger to read their Bible. They have no genuine brokenness when they sin. They have no sense of judgment after death. They have no heart drawn to God because of his love.

Soon it becomes clear they are friends who are Christians in name only, not genuinely in their hearts. It is easy for younger Christians to make friends with people like this and then to find themselves drawn away because these people are not genuinely interested in following Christ.

Paul was very clear about the future of the future of these spiritual pretenders. He said their end is destruction. They flash the name of Christ but draw people away because they do not have genuine interest in him.

Paul gave us three ways we can recognize these people.

**How do we recognize subtle enemies of the cross?**

**1. Their God is their stomach.**

I have this verse highlighted in my Bible. I like the wording. It is very convicting. The obvious meaning is you can recognize these people because they live for pleasure, specifically the pleasure of food. Their deity is Doritos. Their house of worship is the all-you-can-eat buffet. Dieting is a dirty word. The key thing to notice about this kind of person is he or she lives to satisfy whatever bodily urges he or she has at the moment, such as food. There is no sense of the long-term consequences that comes with gorging themselves.

We shouldn't limit this to only food. There are plenty of people who live to satisfy not just their eating urges but to satisfy their sexual urges. If they see a sexual opportunity, they pursue that opportunity. There is no sense of delaying sexual gratification for the wedding night. Yet God says:

**Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. Hebrews 13:4 (ESV)**

We don't just see this with food and sex, but we also see it with money. This is the person who gets a credit card and cannot restrain himself from purchasing things now even though he will have to pay for them later. There is no desire to save now and purchase in the future.

If you find yourself around a person who claims to be a Christian, but she is living to satisfy her immediate desires in the areas of food, sex, and purchasing junk, that should be a caution flag about her life. These people have a lifestyle associated with those who are enemies of the cross. They are not thinking and living wisely in this life so they will be richly rewarded by Jesus in the next life. Be careful about calling these people the friends you want to follow.

### **Their glory is their shame.**

The second way we recognize a person who is a subtle enemy of the cross is they like to brag about shameful things. I was in line at Starbucks on Saturday morning a few weeks ago and some young guys from out of town were behind me getting their morning coffee. I couldn't help but overhear their conversation. They were bragging to one another about who was more smashed the night before. "I was so wasted," and "No, I was more wasted than you were." That is not something to brag about. That is bragging about a shameful thing. The good part about it is they had no idea they were saying this with a pastor only 3 feet away from them and I was getting a good illustration of what it means for someone to glory in his shame.

If you find yourself around people that brag about the shameful things they do, and who was more foolish and like an idiot than the other guy or gal, a flag

should go up in your mind. These people are not the kind of people I want to call my friends. I don't care if they claim to follow Christ. Bragging about who can be more of an idiot means they are not the kind of people I want to pattern my life after.

**They set their minds on earthly things.**

Another way we can recognize people that are bad examples to follow, even if they claim to know Christ, is all they are care about are earthly things. They do not consider how earthly choices will influence eternal lives. All they live for is here and now. They have no sense that this life isn't really life, no sense that after this life is real life. Look what the Bible says about this life and its relationship to the next one.

And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment... Hebrews 9:27 (ESV)

For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. Matthew 16:27 (ESV)

What matters is not what happens to us in this life, it is how we handle what happens to us in this life. What matters more than being diagnosed with cancer is how we handle our battle with cancer. Are we trusting in God in the midst of that battle or will we let our cancer battle turn us into angry and bitter people? We will all die of something. We will be rewarded in heaven for how we handled the diseases that took our lives not that we had diseases that took our lives.

If you are around people who claim to be Christians, but they are living just for this life and have no sense of the way our earthly choices have direct

bearing on God's eternal rewards, that should send up a flag. Even if these people claim to love Christ, you do not want to pattern your life after them. We do not want to follow their example. They are not spiritually mature people living a life worth imitating.

**Instead of living for our earthly lives, we are to live for our eternal lives.**

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. Philippians 3:20–21 (ESV)

While poor examples to follow live only life for the moment, we are to not live for the moment. We are to live for our eternity with Jesus.

Look what the writers of the Hebrews says should be our attitude toward life in this world. We are only here temporarily. It is a brief stopover on the way to our final destination of being with Jesus.

For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come. Hebrews 13:14 (NLT)

We are eagerly awaiting our savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to be constantly thinking about Jesus and remembering that he is coming back. When Jesus returns, he will punch our tickets that will take us home to be with him forever. That life will be much better than this life.

In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. John 14:2–3 (ESV)

When Jesus comes back, he will judge each of us according to how we have lived. He will reward us, or we can lose rewards. It is all based on the

choices we make in this life, which will lead to being richly rewarded on the day we see Jesus.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. 2 Corinthians 5:10 (ESV)

When Jesus comes for us, not only will he reward us, but he will transform us. He will transform our dead and rotten bodies to be like his glorious resurrection body.

...when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2 (ESV)

How do we know Jesus is powerful enough to raise our dead bodies from the grave? How do we know that bodies that died more than 2,000 years ago, whose matter has been scattered around the world, will be able to be regather, reassemble, be brought back to life and then transformed into a glorious resurrection body that will last forever? How do we know that mind-boggling claim will take place? We know it because Jesus promised to use the same power he used to create the universe out of nothing and the same power he used to conquer death to conquer our deaths and to resurrect our bodies out of chaotic matter. He will then use his creative powers to transform our resurrected bodies into resurrection bodies just like his.

That is what we look forward to. That is what we live for. This world is not our home. Our eyes are not on earthly things. Our eyes are on the day we will be raised to life like Jesus and we will be with Jesus. There will be nothing more blessed in the universe than we will be because of Jesus.

How can we let our god be our stomach, our glory be our shame, and set our mind on earthly things?

My friends, you and I cannot begin to get our minds around how good God has been to us in Jesus and how good God will be to us in Jesus. Let us turn away from those who are bad examples in our lives, because they are only living for this world, and let us follow good examples of spiritual maturity. Those are people who have their eyes and their hopes fixed on being with Jesus and being rewarded by Jesus.

My friends, turn away from those who claim to be Christians but are only living for this world. Follow Godly examples who are living this life with a focus on the next one when they will be richly rewarded by Christ.



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