

Philippians Series

Lesson #080

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Dean Bible Ministries

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Imitating Paul = Imitating Christ

Philippians 3:17–21



In Php. 3 the focus is on standing firm against error.

Two sources:

- 1. The Judaizers: added human works to justification and/or spiritual growth (sanctification).**
- 2. The enemies of the cross of Christ, Php. 3:17ff**

Php. 3:15, “Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

Php. 3:16, “Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.”

**φρονέω *phroneō* 1 plur pres act
subjunctive [imperatival]
to be wise, to think**

**φρονέω *phroneō* 2 plur
pres act indicative
to be wise, to think**

Php. 3:15, “Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

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subjunctive [imperatival]
to be wise, to think

φρονέω *phroneō* 2 plur
pres act indicative
to be wise, to think

στοιχέω *stoicheō*
pres act infin
to walk in line

Php. 3:17, “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.”

Php. 3:18, “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:

Php. 3:19, “whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

Php. 3:20, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Php. 3:21, “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.”

Php. 3:17, “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so **walk**, as you have us for a pattern.

Php. 3:18, “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:

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Php. 3:21, “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.”

Php. 3:17 Follow Paul's walk, not the **walk of the many, the enemies of the Cross.**

Verse 17 focuses on imitating Paul's **walk**

Php. 3:18–19 describes the licentiousness of the libertines who are described as enemies of the Cross.

Verse 18 describes **the walk of the many as enemies of the Cross.**

Verse 19 describes the consequences and the characteristics.

****Issue here: believers or unbelievers, and they are believers.**

Php. 3:20–21 Paul gives the reason for the challenge to imitate him, our citizenship is now in Heaven.

Php. 3:20 Our heavenly orientation: we focus on the coming of the Savior.

Php. 3:21 The end result: transformation of our physical body to a resurrection body.

**Php. 3:17, “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.”
[NKJV]**

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συμμιμητής *summimētēs*

masc plur nom

joint-imitator

***Remember “same
rule” “same mind” in**

Php. 1:8, 12

**Php. 3:17, “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.”
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masc plur nom
joint-imitator
*Remember “same
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Php. 1:8, 12**

**τύπος *tupos*
masc sing acc
(m) image, pattern,
example, sign; type**

Summary of the teaching on imitation

1. Paul has already set Christ as the primary example for all believers.

Php. 2:5, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,”

2. Paul states in many ways that Christ is the ultimate example.

1 Cor. 11:1, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”

γίνομαι *ginomai*

**2 plur pres middle
imperative**

**to become something
you were not before,
be, be born, be
created**

μιμητής *mimētēs*

**masc plur nom
imitator**

2. Paul states in many ways that Christ is the ultimate example.

1 Cor. 11:1, “Become imitators of me, just as I also imitate Christ.”

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μιμητής *mimētēs*

masc plur nom imitator

3. Context indicates that Paul has been emphasizing running the race for the prize; i.e., pressing and pushing forward to do our best until the very end. Paul is not setting himself apart, it is “we” and “us” and “y’all.”

Php. 3:14, “I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Php. 3:15, “Therefore let US, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

Php 3:16, “Nevertheless, to the degree that WE have already attained, let US walk by the same rule, let US be of the same mind.” [NKJV]

**What the Bible Teaches
About**

Imitating Others



1. The key word:

μιμέομαι (*mimēomai*), imitate, follow;

μιμητής (*mimētēs*) imitator;

συμμιμητής (*symmimētēs*), fellow-imitator.

In the New Testament the word always has a positive sense.

Used in the epistles.

Jesus never commanded His disciples to follow Him using these words.

2. Key Verses in Chronological Order

Be Imitators (followers) of us and the Lord

1 Thess. 1:6, “And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,”

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Be Imitators (followers) of us and the Lord

1 Thess. 1:6, “And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,”

1 Thess. 1:9, “For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

1 Thess. 1:10, “and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

1 Thess. 1:2, “We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers,

1 Thess. 1:3, “remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

1 Thess. 1:4, “knowing, beloved brethren, y’alls appointment by God.

1 Thess. 1:5, “For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

1 Thess. 1:6, “And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,”

1 Thess. 1:6, “And you became imitators of US and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit,”

γίνομαι *ginomai*

2 plur pres middle imperative

to become something you were not before, be, be born, be created

+ μιμητής (*mimētēs*) imitator

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δέχομαι *dechomai*

**aor middle part masc plur nom
an aorist ptcp
to take, receive**

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to take, receive**

θλίψις *thlipsis* fem sing dat (f)

adversity, persecution, oppression

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1 Thess. 1:6, “And you became imitators of US and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy from the Holy Spirit,”

τύπος *typos*

masc sing acc

**(m) image, pattern, example, sign;
type**

The result:

1 Thess. 1:7, “so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.

1 Thess. 1:8, “For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.”

2. Key Verses in Chronological Order

Imitators of the Churches in Judea

1 Thess. 2:14, “For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans,”

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γίνομαι *ginomai*

2 plur pres middle imperative

to become something you were not before, be, be born, be created

μιμητής (*mimētēs*) imitator

2. Key Verses in Chronological Order

Imitators of Our Example of Work (2 Thess. 3:7–9)

2 Thess. 3:7, “For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;

2 Thess. 3:8, “nor did we eat anyone’s bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you,

2 Thess. 3:9, “not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.”

2. Key Verses in Chronological Order

2 Thess. 3:7, “For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;”

μιμέομαι *mimēomai*

Pres mid infin

to imitate

δεῖ *dei*

3 sing pres act indic

it is necessary

2. Key Verses in Chronological Order

2 Thess. 3:7, “For you yourselves know how it is necessary to imitate us, for we were not disorderly among you;”

μιμέομαι *mimēomai*
Pres mid infin
to imitate

δεῖ *dei*
3 sing pres act indic
it is necessary

2 Thess. 3:6, “But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly [in idleness] and not according to the tradition which he received from us.

2 Thess. 3:7, “For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;”

μιμέομαι *mimēomai*
Pres mid infin
to imitate

ἀτάκτως *ataktōs* in idleness

ἀτακτέω *atakteō*
1 plur aor act indic
to be lazy, idle

2. Key Verses in Chronological Order

Imitators of Me (1 Cor. 4:16)

1 Cor. 4:16, “Therefore I urge you, imitate me.”

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2 plur pres middle

imperative

to become something

you were not before,

be, be born, be

created

μιμητής (*mimētēs*) imitator

Context of 1 Corinthians

- a. Divisions over personalities, 1 Cor. 1:10–17
- b. Risked voiding the gospel message of the Cross of Christ

1 Cor. 1:17, “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

1 Cor. 1:18, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” [NKJV]

- c. Failure to grow spiritually, chapter 2**
- d. Living like unbelievers, chapter 3**
- e. Chapter 4: failing to be faithful stewards of the grace gifts God had given**
- f. 1 Cor. 5–6: problems with permissive attitude toward immorality and bringing lawsuits against each other**
- g. 1 Cor. 7: problems understanding marriage, celibacy, singleness**
- h. Problems at the Lord's Table, the meeting of the church and spiritual gifts, and the resurrection of Jesus, chapter 15**

Context of Chapter 4

1 Cor. 4:1, “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

1 Cor. 4:2, “Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”

Their arrogance:

1 Cor. 4:6, “Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

1 Cor. 4:7, “For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”

1 Cor. 4:14, “I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.

1 Cor. 4:15, “For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

1 Cor. 4:16, “Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

1 Cor. 4:17, “For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.”

2. Key Verses in Chronological Order

Imitate me (1 Cor. 11:1)

1 Cor. 11:1, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”

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Imitate me (1 Cor. 11:1)

1 Cor. 11:1, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”

1 Cor. 11:1 concluded the previous section, 1 Cor. 8:1–11:1

The issue was personal liberty and love vs. arrogance.

1 Cor. 8:1, “Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.”

1 Cor. 10:32, “Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God,

1 Cor. 10:33, “just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

1 Cor. 11:1, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”

2. Key Verses in Chronological Order

Eph. 4:31, “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

Eph. 4:32, “And become kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Eph. 5:1, “Therefore become imitators of God as dear children.”

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Eph. 5:2, “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.”

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γίνομαι *ginomai*

**2 plur pres mid impera
to become, become
something you were not
before.**

**Emphasis is on the progress
of spiritual growth.**

Eph. 5:1, “Therefore become imitators of God as dear children.”

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**2 plur pres mid impera
to become, become
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**Emphasis is on the progress
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**μιμητής *mimētēs*
masc plur nom
imitator, copier,
mimic**

Eph. 5:1, “Therefore become imitators of God as dear children.”

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**ἀγαπητός *agapētos* neut
plur nom (verbal)
beloved; Frequently used
of an only child, receiving
the full attention and love
of the parent.**

Eph. 5:2, “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.” [NKJV]

***περιπατέω peripateō*
2 plur pres act
impera
to walk, walk around**

**Php. 3:17, “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.
Php. 3:18, “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:”**

Eph. 5:2, “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.” [NKJV]

**περιπατέω *peripateō*
2 plur pres act
impera
to walk, walk around**

Eph. 4:1, “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,”

Eph. 4:17, “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,”

Eph. 5:2, “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.” [NKJV]

**περιπατέω *peripateō*
2 plur pres act
impera
to walk, walk around**

**ἀγάπη *agapē* Noun fem sing dat
love**

**ἀγαπάω *agapaō* Verb 3
sing aor act indic
to love**

Eph. 5:2, “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.” [NKJV]

**περιπατέω *peripateō*
2 plur pres act
impera
to walk, walk around**

**ὑπέρ *huper*
Preposition (+gen) as
a preposition for
substitution**

**ἀγάπη *agapē* Noun fem sing dat
love**

**ἀγαπάω *agapaō* Verb 3
sing aor act indic
to love**