

**Philippians: Lesson #43: Paul's Pattern**  
**Notes for Parents to Study with Their Children**  
**For Sunday, October 5<sup>th</sup>**

Read Phil. 3:1-21 (a simplified explanation of the text is supplied at the end of these notes).

**Memory Verse:** Phil. 3:14 "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

**Beware of the Dogs!**

- Have you ever seen a sign that says that. Beware of the dog!. Someone usually puts that up near their yard if they are afraid that the dog might bite and hurt someone.
- Paul says we have to beware of the dogs, and he is talking about people that try to influence us to do wrong or believe wrong things. We shouldn't listen to what they are telling us.

**Paul's Goal**

- Imagine for a moment that you are playing basketball. The ball is passed to you. You dribble down the court and get ready to shoot, then you realize someone took away the goal. There's nothing to throw the ball into. If players didn't have a goal, the whole game is meaningless.
- Some people have different goals in life: some want to have a particular job, some want to make a lot of money, some wish they could be famous. But Paul had spiritual goals.
- Paul had been important in the Jewish nation, but he gave all that up to serve Christ.
- Paul said his goal was to truly know about Jesus, to understand more about His suffering, and His great resurrection. Not only that, Paul wanted to be part of the resurrection of the dead, when Christ raises the dead at the end of the world.
- Picture a runner in a race. He isn't at the finish line yet. He can't be looking backwards at what is behind him. He has to keep his eyes on the finish line and push himself hard to reach his goal and arrive at the finish line.
- That's what a Christian has to do. The life of a Christian is like a race. We can't look back at the things we leave behind us. We have to look ahead to our goal. And we have to press hard to reach our finish line.

**Paul's Pattern**

- It is the work of a Christian to follow what Christ revealed to the apostles. Paul told the Philippians to follow his example or pattern and to imitate anyone else who followed the pattern.
- God showed us what our goals should be like, how we should live, what our families should be like, what the church should do, and how we should worship. We have to follow those patterns.

### **Some Don't Follow the Pattern**

- It's a shame, but some people who claim to be religious don't really live the way the Bible says to. They don't follow the good examples it sets and don't do what the apostles taught us.
- These people do things they should be ashamed of, and all they really care about is feeding their belly. They only care about this life, not about heaven.

### **Our Citizenship is in Heaven**

- Christians do care about heaven. They try to think of heaven as their real home. Have you ever listened to the song at church -- "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through."? That's the idea. We can enjoy this world, but we are going to enjoy heaven even more.
- We are waiting for Jesus to come and take us home to heaven. When He comes back He will change our bodies to be like His, a heavenly body that will never die, never be sick, and never have to be sad.

### **Simplified Explanation of the Text**

#### **Paul Writes to Warn About the Dogs**

1 As for the rest of what I'm writing about, my brethren, constantly rejoice in the Lord.

Writing to you about the same things I've told you before is certainly not something I would hesitate to do, and I know it would help keep you from stumbling.

2 Beware of the dogs! Beware of those who work hard at doing wicked and troublesome things! Beware of those who only mutilate themselves!

3 I issue these warnings about those who claim to be the circumcision, the Jews, because I want to remind you: We are the circumcision that worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus. We don't put our trust in fleshly things.

#### **Paul's Former Life**

4 Now if anyone had a right to trust in fleshly things, it would be me. If some think they have a reason to trust in fleshly matters, I would have even more right.

5 I was circumcised, just as the Law said, on the eighth day. I am one of the children of Israel, from the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews. In regard to my understanding of the Law, I lived as a Pharisee.

6 As to how fervently zealous I was for my religious beliefs, I persecuted the church. As to the kind of righteousness which is in the Law no one would have found fault with me.

#### **He Gladly Gave Up that Life to Follow Jesus**

7 But all those things that I though would profit me, I now count as a loss because of Christ.

8 So yes, I would certainly count everything as a loss for the greater gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. And even though it is because of Him I have lost everything, I count all the things I've lost as nothing more than garbage so that I can gain Christ.

9 And I want to be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which comes from following the Law, but the righteousness that comes from God which is by faith in Christ.

10 To know Christ and His powerful resurrection, and also to share in His sufferings and have my life molded by His death.

11 If by any means, I might arrive at the goal of the resurrection of the dead.

### **Paul Fervently Pursued His Goal of Going to Heaven**

12 Its not that I believe I've already received it now, or that I am already reached the goal, but I keep pursing it so that I can grab hold of it, the very thing which Christ grabbed hold of me.

13 Brethren, I don't count myself as already having grabbed it in my hand, but this one thing I do: I truly try to forget about what is behind me, and I stretch out my hand to reach what is in front of me.

14 I'm pushing on and carefully watching my target: the prize awarded to those who win the race, the call to come upward to heaven.

15 So let all who are spiritually mature have that same attitude. And if any of you don't think that way, God will also uncover this so that you can see this about your attitude.

16 But wherever you've gotten to in your spiritual maturity, keep walking by that same standard and same understanding.

### **Paul's Pattern**

17 Brethren, join together in following me and carefully watch all those who walk according to the pattern we set.

18 I tell you this because many, who I've mentioned before and tell you now sadly, are enemies of the cross of Christ.

19 The people I'm talking about will ultimately be destroyed. Their God is their belly and they are proud of what they should be ashamed of. They set their minds on earthly things.

### **Our Citizenship is in Heaven**

20 But in contrast with that, our citizenship is in heaven. And from heaven we are looking for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

21 Jesus Christ will transform our lowly body so that it can be remade like His glorious body, using the same power He can work to bring all things under subjection to Himself.