

Two Ways To Walk

Introduction. The New Testament writers used "walk" several dozen times to figuratively speak of how one lives or conducts themselves. In Philippians 3:17-21, Paul discusses two different ways to walk in this life: walking like "a citizen of heaven" and walking like "an enemy of the cross of Christ." There should be no question as to which way we will walk, but to better understand why, we will examine some reasons Paul gives in this passage.

I. ***An Admonition To Walk Like Paul And Others***

A. "Be followers together of me."

1. Paul frequently encouraged others to follow his example (1 Corinthians 4:16; Philippians 4:9).
2. In what way are people to imitate Paul?
 - a) To the degree he tried to imitate Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).
 - b) To the degree of his devotion to Christ (Philippians 3:7-16).
3. Paul was worthy in many ways of imitation.
 - a) Perseverance (Philippians 3:14).
 - b) Teaching (Acts 20:27).
 - c) Boldness (Acts 13:46).
 - d) Knowledge (Philippians 3:8).
 - e) Hope (Romans 5:1-5).

B. "Mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."

1. Just as there were some in Thessalonica who imitated Paul (1 Thessalonians 1:6-9), so there were those at Philippi who did the same, and were thus worthy of emulation.
2. Examples are important. Jesus, the greatest teacher of all time, used examples as one of His chief means of teaching. He spoke of people: Abraham, David, Solomon, Moses, Jonah, Lot's wife, Noah, and Jacob. He mentioned places: Sodom and Gomorrah, Chorazin and Bethsaida, Tyre and Sidon, and Capernaum and Jerusalem. He referred to objects: the temple, the sparrow, the seed, and the lily.
3. Wherever there is an example, there is an influence. People who lived centuries ago are still influencing us and our children (Romans 5:19; Hebrews 11:4). Noticing the examples of others can be very beneficial (Psalm 37:37), especially when we consider the outcome of their conduct (Hebrews 13:7).

C. We should not only be good imitators, but good examples ourselves.

1. This is especially true of those who teach and preach God's word (1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8). It may frighten us -- and if it does, it should -- to realize that our influence is lifelong!

2. In a land of great opportunity, you can be so much if you try hard enough, and sometimes you cannot accomplish anything no matter how hard you try, but there is something you will always be, whether you try or not -- an example.
3. Students imitate teachers. Children imitate television characters. Teenagers imitate entertainers. There are people who imitate you (Ephesians 5:1; 3 John 11). If you really think about it, what would people see in you (2 Corinthians 13:5)?

II. ***A Warning Concerning Those Who Walk As "Enemies Of The Cross"***

- A. "Of whom I have told you often."
 1. Paul found "repetition" to be a valuable tool (Galatians 1:8-9; 5:21; Philippians 3:1).
 2. Also, it was necessary to be "negative" at times (Philippians 3:2).
- B. "And now tell you even weeping."
 1. Negative preaching should not be done without compassion (2 Corinthians 2:4).
 2. Paul is setting the right example to love our enemies, even "enemies of the cross".
- C. Who are these "enemies of the cross"?
 1. We know they are many.
 - a) "For many walk".
 - b) So not just a few (Matthew 7:13-14).
 2. We know their end.
 - a) "Whose end is destruction".
 - b) Have we pondered the outcome of their conduct (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)?
 3. We know who is their god.
 - a) "Whose god is their belly."
 - b) They are set on satisfying only their fleshly appetites (Romans 8:5-9).
 4. We know wherein is their glory.
 - a) "Whose glory is in their shame."
 - b) They take pride in what is shameful (Revelation 18:7).
 5. We know upon what they set their minds.
 - a) "Who set their mind on earthly things."
 - b) Contrast this with where the mind should be (Colossians 3:1-2).

III. ***Reasons To Walk Like Paul And Others***

- A. "For our conversation is in heaven."
 1. Our true loyalty is to what is above, not what is on earth (1 Peter 1:3-4).

2. Because of this, we have special responsibilities (1 Peter 2:9-12).
- B. "From whence also we look for the Savior ... who shall change our vile body."
 1. Though now in heaven, our Savior is coming again one day (Acts 1:9-11).
 2. When He does, what glory there will be for those who are "citizens of heaven".
 - a) He will "change our vile body" (1 Peter 5:1, 4).
 - b) It will be "fashioned like unto his glorious body" (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).
 3. This He will do by the same power by which He subdues everything to Himself (Matthew 28:18; 1 Peter 3:22).

Conclusion. Are you walking as a "citizen of heaven" or an "enemy of the cross of Christ"? The answer depends on where we have set our minds. If we set our minds on what is earthly, we are "enemies of the cross of Christ". We make our bellies to be our god, we glory in what is shameful, and our end will be destruction. If we set our minds on heavenly realities, we are "citizens of heaven". We eagerly await Christ's coming and our transformation. Have you become a "citizen of heaven"? If not, why not become one today (John 3:5)?