

Memory Verse

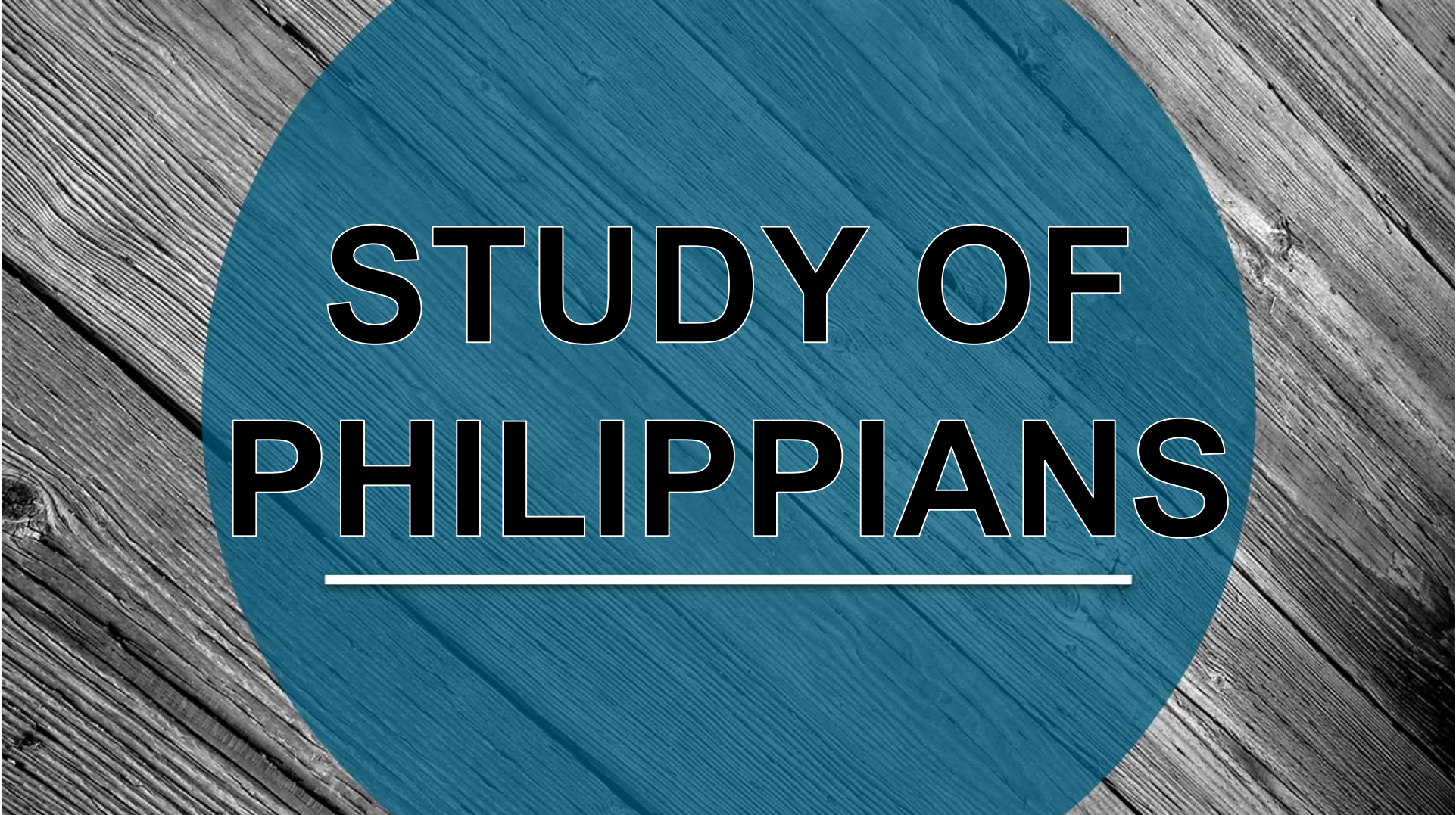
Philippians 3:17-18

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

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**STUDY OF
PHILIPPIANS**

PHILIPPIANS

Part 16

Developing Discernment

Philippians 3:17-19

We have learned...

- Paul thanked them for their financial gift, brought by Epaphroditus, and discussed many issues in chapters 1-2
- In chapter 3, he shifts to a group who said Gentiles had to follow the Law with faith
- Paul warned them about this group, though they were not in the assembly
- Paul focused on faith in Christ in running the race, with Christ, for Christ, towards Christ

Philippians 3:17-19

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.

What is discernment?

The power or faculty of the mind by which it distinguishes one thing from another; power of viewing differences in objects, and their relations and tendencies; penetrative and discriminate mental vision; acuteness; insight; as, the errors of youth often proceed from the want [lack] of discernment.

What is discernment?

Charles Spurgeon said: "Discernment is not a matter of simply telling the difference between right and wrong; rather it is telling the difference between right and almost right."

A. 3:17 – Learn from Others

Paul said, *brothers... join in imitating me*. The NASB translates this as, *join in following my example*. Paul just *admitted he is not perfect*, but pursues Christ in a race. He says *to join him*. This word is only used here in the New Testament, and refers to being the *same kind of imitator*. As Paul follows Christ, he is their example to follow and to *imitate him as he follows Jesus*.

A. 3:17 – Learn from Others

He says "*keep their eyes on*" or *be attentive, closely watch, or watch others* who do the same. He mentioned Timothy and Epaphroditus in *chapter 2* as examples of faithful service. He may be referring to them, and expanding on that. In other words, *we should look for and be able to find Christians* whom we can look up to, and *see their relationship with Jesus* and learn from them.

A. 3:17 – Learn from Others

James 3:1 - Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

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

A. 3:17 – Learn from Others

Titus 2:7-8 - Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

If *you desire* and if *God gifts you* to be a formal leader within the body of Christ, there is the **blessing and burden of *being in the spotlight.***

B. 3:18 – Love the Truth

In *verse 18*, Paul warns them again!

Whether Paul is talking about Judaizers, or a different group is *not clear*. Yet, he says **many are enemies of the cross**. He *often told them and tells them again*: there are *many*. The word "many" can mean *a multitude, plenteous* or *numerous*. About 32 years after the resurrection, there were ***numerous enemies of the cross!***

B. 3:18 – Love the Truth

He told them many times, and is *warning them again...* with **tears**! The word for *tears* is strong. It refers to *weeping aloud, expressing uncontrollable audible grief, mourning or lamenting*. When Paul says he is *telling them with tears*, this is a picture of *weeping loudly, as mourning for a lost loved one, to warn them about the enemies of Christ. Acts 20...*

B. 3:18 – Love the Truth

There is another *admonition to pay attention*, as **leaders**, and be aware of false teachers that **WILL** arise from *outside of the church* and *within the church*. He tells them to *be alert, aware or awake*, and to remember he warned them constantly with tears. The word *tears* is different in *Acts 20*, but, the *idea is still there*.

B. 3:18 – Love the Truth

Paul says these are *enemies of the cross of Christ*. He will *give details in verse 19*. The word for "enemies" is - *enemies*, those who are *hostile to the cross of Christ*, and to *truth*. They want to be *inclusive of everyone*, no matter what they believe, how they live, and what they think. They **don't want to admit** Jesus is the only way, but say there are many paths to God. We are to be *loving to all*, based in truth.

*Love not based
in truth is not true
love.*

C. 3:19 – Look at Reality

In verse 19, Paul *begins with the ending* of the enemies of the cross. Who are these enemies? They may be the Judaizers, or a *group that didn't want any law to hinder their passions*. In either case, we must look at what is truly going on with *what we watch, listen to and what is explained to us*. This does **not** mean we are *hyper critical*, nor does it mean we are *callous*, but we ask: ***What is really going on?***

C. 3:19 – Look at Reality

- Their end is destruction.

Strong's says "destruction" means, "**the destruction which consists in the loss of eternal life; eternal misery, perdition, the lot of those excluded from the kingdom of God:**" This is eternal damnation of the *enemies of the cross of Christ*. There is **no doubt** *where they will end up*.

C. 3:19 – Look at Reality

- Their end is destruction.

Jude 3-4a - Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation...

C. 3:19 – Look at Reality

- Their god is their belly.

Jude 4b - ...ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. - The reference to their *god being their belly* doesn't mean that they are gluttonous, necessarily. *They worship themselves, their desires and their flesh. They live for what fulfills them!*

C. 3:19 – Look at Reality

“From a Greek perspective such a focus is purely physical. Thus, in practice, their physical desires have become their god. From a Jewish perspective, the stomach represents food allowed or not allowed by Jewish food laws. Their god has become self-protection from ritual pollution, thus the preservation of their self-perceived perfection. Their goal is earthly things. For the Greeks these are things that give prominence and pleasure in

C. 3:19 – Look at Reality

this life. For the Jew, these are rules, regulations, and rituals humans have devised on earth trying to please God in heaven.”

Holman New Testament Commentary - Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians & Colossians.

C. 3:19 – Look at Reality

- They joy in their shame.

Rather than revulsion of their sin, they rejoice in their sin! Romans 1:28-32 – After saying people do not acknowledge God and giving a long list of sins, Paul says in verse 32: Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

C. 3:19 – Look at Reality

- Their minds are set on earthly things.

Their thinking, way of life, attitudes and everything, in contrast to heaven in *verse 20*, is **focused** on the earth. Speaking of *false teachers in context*, Peter said in *2 Peter 2:(14)17-19* - These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. For, speaking loud boasts of

C. 3:19 – Look at Reality

- Their minds are set on earthly things.

folly, they entice by sensual passions of the flesh those who are barely escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.

Prayer

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” Philippians 4:6

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