

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Philippians:
A Choice to Rejoice*

Lesson 11: Living for Jesus

Bible Text

Philippians 3:17-21

Memory Verse

"If we live in the light as He is in the light, we share what we have in God with each other. And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, makes our lives clean from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

Word List

pattern: to try to be like something; to behave like a good example

perishing: those who are dying or being destroyed

standard: something that is good and that is used to determine the quality of other things

Fanny Crosby was born blind. But she lived a full, rich life. She was a teacher for the blind. She played many musical instruments. She wrote over 8,000 songs that praise God. She lived over 200 years ago, but her songs are still sung in churches around the world. Her positive attitude is one we could all copy.

Someone once told Fanny that it was a shame that she was born blind. But Fanny

disagreed. She said that she would have wished to be born blind if she had been given the choice. This seems strange, but Fanny had a good reason for such a wish. She said that the first face she would ever see would be the face of her Savior in heaven. We could all follow Fanny's example of faith.

Living for Jesus

(Philippians 3:17)

17 Christian brothers, live your lives as I have lived mine. Watch those who live as I have taught you to live.

"Do what I say, but not what I do."

This sentence means the speaker does not live up to the **standards** he or she sets for others. Paul was a good teacher who lived every day for Jesus. He could say, "Do what I say *and* what I do." The reason Paul could be so bold was that he copied Jesus in the way he lived. He taught that believers should **pattern** themselves after Christ. That is exactly what Jesus said, too (Matthew 5:48, 11:29).

Paul knew that he was not the only good example. The believers could watch for other good examples and follow them. But sometimes it is easy to be fooled. We might be tempted to follow a bad example. Paul said to measure all examples by what he had taught. Paul lived what he taught others to do.

He told the believers to copy God. In Philippians 2:5, Paul said, “Think as Christ Jesus thought.”

We can do the same in our lives today. Every good example must match the Word of God. People are watching us all the time. We are examples to others. Other people see Jesus in the way we live. Maybe the example that means the most is how we respond to suffering. Can we be content even when we are suffering? How do we react when we see others suffering?

Rescue the Perishing (Philippians 3:18-19)

18 There are many whose lives show they hate the cross of Christ. I have told you this before. Now I tell you again with tears in my eyes.

19 Their god is their stomach. They take pride in things they should be ashamed of. All they think about are the things of this world. In the end they will be destroyed.

The believers in Philippi lived in a very wicked world. We can understand the pull of sin because we live in a very sinful world, too. When we see these sin-filled lives, do we judge them as evil? Or are we concerned because they are **perishing**? Do we give up on them or try to rescue them from sin and death?

There were some people in the church in Philippi who lived like enemies of Christ. The cross had not made a difference in how they lived. In fact, their sinful lives made it harder for others to find Jesus. Paul could have been angry at these sinful people. He could have ignored them. But these sinful lives broke the heart of Paul. He knew they would be destroyed by their sin. Paul wanted to lead them to Christ who could rescue them and give them life that lasts forever.

In Philippians 3:10, Paul said that he wanted to understand and have a share in the sufferings of Christ. How would Jesus react to sinful people? In the last week of His life, as Jesus came near the city of Jerusalem, He wept for it. He knew the sinful lives of the people. He knew their hard hearts. He could see how they hated and hurt other people. But what broke Jesus’ heart was the price they would pay for their sin. Jesus knew that sin always leads to death, and it broke His heart (Luke 19:41-44).

Paul felt the same way. He shared in the broken heart of Christ. He knew that some people in Philippi lived very sinful and selfish lives. Some people said they wanted to experience everything this world offers. There are people who say that today, too. But they really only want to experience what is fun and what makes their bodies feel good. They do not want to suffer or die or be destroyed.

These men and women said that Christ came to save only their souls. So, they decided it did not matter what they did with their bodies. They lived to please their own desires. And they were proud of the sinful things they did. They even said that living sinful lives made God's grace clearer!

This makes no sense at all. The only thing sin leads to is death. It never brings glory to God or makes Him clearer for others to see. True children of God are dead to sin (Romans 6:1-2).

This World Is Not My Home (Philippians 3:20-21)

20 But we are citizens of heaven. Christ, the One Who saves from the punishment of sin, will be coming down from heaven again. We are waiting for Him to return.

21 He will change these bodies of ours of the earth and make them new. He will make them like His body of shining-greatness. He has the power to do this because He can make all things obey Him.

Things to Think About

1. What in your life proves you are living for Jesus?
2. How do you measure the examples you follow?
3. How concerned are you about those around you who do not know Christ?
4. What will you do this week to lead others to belief in Christ?

God cares about how we think. What we think controls how we live. Those men could live such sin-filled lives because they were not thinking about God's call from heaven. They were thinking only of this world. They were not reaching up to God's standards. They had let their own desires become their gods. They did not care about leading others to Jesus. They did not believe that they would die for their sins.

Jesus said that when we think like man thinks, we stand in the way of God (Matthew 16:23). When we think only of this world, we become enemies of Christ. We live like Jesus only when we live in the light of heaven. God's thoughts help us understand the high price of sin. It is easy to be a good citizen and to live by the low standards of right and wrong. Believers live by the higher standards of heaven. This world is not our home. We are just passing through on our way to heaven. God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts. His ways are higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:8). We must always be reaching up to the high calling of God.

The Roman leaders called themselves "savior." They said they were doing good for the people. Many leaders today say that they are doing good for the people, too. But the leaders of this world can never save our souls. They can never bring life to dead bodies. We have a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is

coming again. Would you want Jesus to find you thinking or acting like His enemy when He returns? Our bodies can tempt us to do things that do not please God. Our minds can tell us that it does not matter how we live. But one day, Christ will change these weak and ugly bodies into strong and beautiful ones. He has the power to change wrong thinking to righteous thinking. He has the power to change death to life. Praise God, we have a Savior!

Things to Remember

There are good examples of living for Jesus all around us. We can recognize those as good because they match the standard of God's Word. Their lives follow the pattern of Christ Jesus. But there are also bad examples all around us. We can recognize these examples because they stand in the way of God's call to all people to come into a relationship with Him.

We can only rescue those who are perishing if we are living for Jesus. We must remember that this world is not our home. We belong to a higher standard in Christ Jesus. We must pattern our lives, our bodies, and our minds after Christ Jesus, our Lord.

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