

Philippians 3:12-21

Study Questions – Lesson 7

1. This weeks' memory verse is Philippians 3:14

"I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

2. Read verses 12-21. List the phrases from verses 12-14 which reflect Paul's desire to continue to grow spiritually.
 - o What words or phrases best describe your desire for spiritual growth?
3. In verse 12, Paul acknowledged that Christ had laid hold of him for a purpose; he was determined to pursue that purpose. What do you learn about Christ's purpose for Paul? Acts 9:1-15, 26:16-18; Galatians 1:15-16
4. God has a definite purpose for each of us. What does 2 Timothy 1:9 say regarding this?
 - o What do you believe is God's purpose for your life?
 - o How are you pursuing that purpose?
5. Paul's statement in verse 13, "but one thing I do" reflects his single purpose. Which verse in Philippians do you think best states his one purpose in life and why? (Answers may vary.)

6. Warren Wiersbe said, "'One thing' is a phrase that is important to the Christian life. Too many Christians are too involved in 'many things' when the secret of progress is to concentrate on 'one thing.'" What do these Scriptures teach about a believer's focus on "one thing"? Psalm 27:4; Luke 10:38-42; Philippians 3:13
- Are you able to say "one thing" characterizes your life? Why or why not?

 - What changes do you need to make, if any?
7. The word "forgetting" in verse 13 does not mean he no longer remembered the past. In this context it means, "to no longer be affected by it." How do these Scriptures illustrate this? Galatians 1:11-16; Philippians 3:4-7; 1 Timothy 1:12-17
8. In verse 13, Paul used a Greek word for "reaching forward" that means "reaching out like a runner racing towards the finish line." How does the Christian life compare to running a race? Acts 20:24; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Philippians 3:13-14; 2 Timothy 4:7
- How well are you "running" this race of life? (What hurdles are you facing? Have you grown weary or gotten your "second wind"? Are you looking back or is your focus on the finish line?)
9. Verse 15 begins with the word "Therefore." That word instructs us to look back to the previous verse(s) to understand the verse. What does "have this mind" in verse 15 mean based on verses 12-14?

10. In verse 15, Paul mentioned mature believers having the same mindset as he had. How are believers to maintain unity though at differing levels of maturity? 1 Corinthians 10:23-24; Galatians 6:1-3; Ephesians 4:1-3; Philippians 3:15-16

11. Paul instructed the Philippians to follow his example. Describe what his example looked like to other believers. 1 Thessalonians 2:8-12

12. What do you learn about Paul's attitude toward the "enemies of the cross of Christ" in verse 18?
 - o How does he describe them in verse 19?

 - o In what ways does our culture encourage us to "put our mind on earthly things?"

 - o How you do personally try to maintain an eternal perspective?

13. Hebrews 11 is a record of many faithful saints from the Old Testament. Read this chapter and give some examples of how an eternal perspective helped them to endure suffering.

Further explanation of our "resurrected body"

In Philippians 3:21, it states that when Christ returns, He will give believers a new, glorious body like His. What does that mean and how will it be done? Scripture has not answered all the questions we may have about this topic, but it has provided some explanation. The commentaries of Bill MacDonald, Warren Wiersbe and David Guzik have also been utilized to help answer these questions.

How is a "natural" body resurrected to a "spiritual" body?

Paul answered this by giving the analogy of a seed in 1 Corinthians 15:35-38. A seed produces a plant, not another seed. The plant is not the same as the seed it comes from, but there is a vital connection between them. The seed is planted, it dies and from that death comes life.

One of the commentators explained, “When you bury the body of a believer, you are “sowing a seed” that will come out of the earth as a resurrection body. It is buried as a natural body and by the power of God is raised a new spiritual body.

How does a “natural” body compare to a “spiritual” body?

Both have a physical body but they are very different. The natural body is described in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44 as sown in corruption, dishonor, and weakness. Our present physical bodies are subject to disease, weakness, aging, and death.

On the other hand, the spiritual body will be raised without corruption. It will be raised in glory and in power. It will no longer be subject to disease, weakness, aging, or death. It will be a body perfectly suited for heaven.

What about the believers alive at the Rapture; how do they receive a resurrected body?

1 Corinthians 15: 50-53 helps answer this question. In verse 51 Paul said, “We shall not all sleep.” The word “sleep” in this context means to experience death. All believers whether alive or dead, will receive a spiritual body at the Rapture of the church. In verse 51 it goes on to say, “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” Then in verse 53 he stated the corruptible must put on the incorruptible; meaning those alive at the Rapture will receive a resurrection body as well.

What was Christ’s resurrection body like?

- It was a physical body. He asked the disciples to touch Him to see that He was not a spirit but had flesh and bones. (Luke 24:40-41)
- He ate food after His resurrection. He asked the disciples if they had anything to eat and they gave Him some fish and honeycomb. (Luke 24:41-43)
- He was not bound by the laws of nature in His resurrected body. He disappeared while two disciples were talking with Him and appeared in a room when the doors were shut. (Luke 24:31, John 20:19, 26)

14. What do you think you will enjoy most about your spiritual body?

6. "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things charity." Comment on this statement.

7. In verse 17, Paul encouraged believers to follow his example. Which of Paul's characteristics would you most like to imitate?

8. How do other believers encourage you by their example of godly living?
 - o Name at least one way you are an example to those around you.

 - o Is there any area of your life that you cannot tell others, "Follow my example?"

9. How does Paul describe those who are "enemies of the cross" in verse 19?
 - o What kind of life results from someone whose mind is set only on earthly things?

10. What does it mean to you that heaven is your true home, and how do you keep an eternal perspective in this fallen world?

11. Do you eagerly look for the Savior's return for His church? Why or why not?
 - o What are you most excited about when you think of heaven?