

**Lesson 8 Philippians 3:15-4:1**

*Verses 15-16*

*Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; <sup>16</sup> however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.*

**15. “Perfect” here refers to the mature.**

- a. The attitude to which he is referring is the one which he has just described—that of pressing toward the prize, of grasping hold of that for which we have been grasped by God.
- b. If there is any area in our lives where our attitude isn’t perfect, we can rest knowing God will reveal it to us.

*Philippians 2:12-13*

*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

*When we do that, if we begin to think otherwise, the Lord will reveal that unto us. This is a promise that when we are putting first the kingdom of God, the Lord will show us if we begin to get off track. That’s a wonderful promise. We don’t have to be introspective. We just have to seek the Lord with all our hearts.  
Andrew Wommack*

*The answer is found in the fact that in verse twelve Paul is speaking of a finished process and absolute spiritual maturity beyond which there is no room for improvement, whereas in verse fifteen he is speaking of relative spiritual maturity where there is room for development and growth.-Wuest*

*This is the same point he made in Colossians 2:6, which says, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.”-Andrew Wommack*

*Just as he told the Christ story so that they would have a "mindset" (phroneite) in keeping with Christ's, so now he has told his story so that they will "take a view" (phronōmen) of things in keeping with his own. Fee*

*<sup>1</sup>What are we to conclude? Are we perfected or are we not? What did Paul mean when he said that Jesus would complete the work He started in us? As we focus on the context of Hebrews 10, we see that the author states that we have been “perfected forever” by the one sacrifice offered for our sin. This forgiveness of sin resulted in our salvation. Through that offering Jesus perfected us forever in the sense that our sins are forever forgiven and our redemption is sure. Wuest confirms this understanding.*

*The word “perfected” is the translation of teleioo which means “to bring to a state of completion.” Here, the completeness of the state of salvation of the believer is in view. Everything essential to the*

salvation of the individual is included in the gift of salvation which the sinner receives by faith in Messiah's sacrifice. The words "for ever" here are to be construed with "perfected." It is a permanent state of completeness in salvation to which reference is made. The words "them that are sanctified" are descriptive of the believer. He is one set apart for God.

Using Hebrews 10:14 and Philippians 1:6 we can conclude that we are both perfected (telieoo) in regard to everything Jesus accomplished on the cross, and subsequently brought to a state of completion (epiteleio), which most certainly refers to our maturation, or one might say, to fulfilling what Jesus already accomplished. C. D. Hildebrand AWPAG<sup>1</sup>

**16. Consistent in Scripture is the idea of not going backwards. It makes perfect sense to live by the revelation and maturity we currently have.**

**Luke 9:62**

*But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."*

**Hebrews 10:35-39**

*Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. <sup>36</sup> For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:*

<sup>37</sup> *"For yet a little while,*

*And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.*

<sup>38</sup> *Now the just shall live by faith;*

*But if anyone draws back,*

*My soul has no pleasure in him."*

<sup>39</sup> *But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.*

- a. "The standard" or "the rule" (as in other translations) is not referring to Christian laws. It is clearly speaking of the individual state of maturity in each believer.

*More likely, however, it does not here refer to some external "rule" that he and they have in common, but refers specifically to "that which we have already attained" in the preceding clause, exemplified in the gospel. Fee*

- b. One of the ways many have "gone back" is by receiving false teaching. Gigantic in this area of false teaching is the idea that WE need to DO certain things to complete OURSELVES. We are instructed not to allow ourselves to be cheated by these false teachers.

**Colossians 2:8-10**

*Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; <sup>10</sup> and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.*

- Complete is not referring to maturity. It is speaking of the fact that we have all we need to live this life.

---

<sup>1</sup> AWPAG: Are We Preaching "Another" Gospel?

“Complete” is *plēroo*: to make replete, that is, (literally) to cram (a net), level up (a hollow), or (figuratively) to furnish (or imbue, diffuse, influence), satisfy, execute (an office), finish (a period or task), verify (or coincide with a prediction), etc.: - accomplish, X after, (be) complete, end, expire, fill (up), fulfil, (be, make) full (come), fully preach, perfect, supply.

*Verse 17*

*Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.*

17. Paul’s example here is likely referring to the personal way of thinking and living he has just described.
- a. Give up your religious pride and practices as a means of attaining righteousness. Count them as rubbish in comparison to gaining and knowing Christ. Your righteousness (and gaining and knowing Christ) is based on faith in Jesus Christ.
  - b. Continue maturing in the Lord by continuing to have faith in Him and letting His grace teach you and His Spirit lead you.
  - c. God has not only saved you, but He has a purpose for your life. Discover it. Do it. Keep doing it. In this way we follow Paul’s example.

*“Be together, jointly, imitators of me” (Vincent)-Wuest*

*Paul was telling the Philippians to separate themselves from the people who were not living according to the example Paul had set.-Andrew Wommack*

*Paul had suffered the loss of all things for Christ (Philippians 3:7), accounted all things dung in comparison to knowing Christ (Philippians 3:8), shared in the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings (Philippians 3:10), forsaken his own righteousness and accepted Christ’s alone (Philippians 3:9), forgotten those things that were behind and reached toward the prize that was heavenward in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14), and was walking according to the light and understanding of God’s Word that he had (Philippians 3:15-16). Here, he was admonishing other Christians to follow that example (1 Corinthians 11:1, 1 Timothy 4:12, and 1 Peter 5:1-3). Andrew Wommack*

*The word “mark” is the translation of a word which means “to fix the attention upon with a desire for or interest in.” It means “to observe intently.” Wuest*

*Verse 18*

*For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,*

18. Now, Paul gives an opposite example. Commentators differ as to whether these people are believers or non-believers. The fact that he is weeping might indicate that these he is now going to discuss are Christians or perhaps the Jews who refuse to believe. Whether believer or unbeliever Paul is extremely sad about them.

- a. If these are believers, it is all the more stunning that he calls the “enemies of the cross of Christ”.
- b. Because he calls them “enemies”, this is why some commentators think they are not believers.
- c. He could be referring to believers who were trying to perfect themselves.

*This is saying they were opposed to the concept that Jesus accomplished everything through His death on the cross.-Andrew Wommack*

*These people may have even accepted that Jesus did die for our sins, but they didn't accept that Jesus paid it all. They believed they had to add to what Jesus did for them by contributing their own holiness to the mix. But Jesus plus anything equals nothing (Jesus + anything = 0). Jesus plus nothing (except faith in what He did) equals everything (Jesus + 0 = EVERYTHING).-Andrew Wommack*

*Anyone who preaches that Jesus' sacrifice was necessary but believers also have to be holy to obtain favor with God is the enemy of the cross.-Andrew Wommack*

- d. One has reason to think Paul is thinking of specific individuals. He is weeping, crying outloud, wailing for them. This word is used in the New Testament for deep remorse due to loss, sadness for sinfulness, and for mourning for the dead.
  - *Weep—klaiō: to sob, that is, wail aloud (whereas G1145 is rather to cry silently): - bewail, weep.*
- e. This deep crying gives rise to the likelihood that these were believers, people whom he knew, who were not only not reaching forward, but we going back. False teaching will stunt our growth and even cause us to go backwards, becoming “estranged from Christ” and “falling from grace”.

*He otherwise reserves "weeping" and tears for those within the Christian community. Thus, he now weeps over them not because they are pagans living like pagans who have never known Christ – why make such a point at all, one wonders – but because as professed believers in Christ they should know better. Fee*

*Thus the opening clauses seem to point to some outside the Philippian community who are not (or no longer) walking in the ways of the Lord -- or who think of themselves as doing so despite the way they live.-Fee*

*They probably consider themselves to be within the household of faith, and most likely are, or were, but whom Paul now assigns to a place outside Christ, precisely because they have abandoned Christ by adopting a lifestyle that is totally opposed to the redemptive work of the cross.-Fee*

### Verse 19

*Whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.*

19. Verse 19 should NOT describe a believer. Yet, there are believers, even those who seem to understand the gospel of grace, who use “grace” as a license to sin. This

deception is as powerful as the one that teaches we need to perfect ourselves by not sinning.<sup>2</sup>

- a. Paul describes a different type of end than the one he desires for himself—one of reaching the goal of the high calling of God in Christ.
- b. If these are believers, the “destruction” here would refer to their works being consumed.

**1 Corinthians 3:9-17**

*For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building. <sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. <sup>11</sup> For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. <sup>14</sup> If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; **but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.** <sup>16</sup> Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? <sup>17</sup> If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.*

- c. “Whose god is the appetite” means that they worship pleasure—pleasing themselves.

*The Epicureans represented a Greek school of philosophy which taught that the satisfaction of the physical appetites<sup>3</sup> was the highest aim of man. They had allowed their Christian liberty to degenerate into license (Gal. 5:13). They did not understand God’s grace and thus thought lightly of continuing in sin (Rom. 6:1, 15). -Wuest*

*Paul, acquainted with the Greek classics, writing to Greeks who knew their own literature speaks of these as having their belly as their God. He probably was thinking of the Cyclops in Euripedes who says, “My flocks which I sacrifice to no one but myself, and not to the gods, and to this my belly, the greatest of the gods: for to eat and drink each day, and to give one’s self no trouble, this is the god of wise men.” -Wuest*

- d. Some are proud of what they should be ashamed. The word “shame” can also be translated “disgrace”.
- e. Again, it is normal for unbelievers to focus on the things of this earth. This is why we believe he is referring to believers—it is why he was wailing over their condition. Yes, sadly, some believers focus continually on the things of this earth.

---

<sup>2</sup> Many sins have an addictive nature, some physical and some psychological. It is possible that someone who continues to ignore the grace of God who is teaching them to “live godly” (Titus 2) could find their hearts hardening toward Christ Himself, fighting against His leading. They are bent on pleasure or addicted to it, and must continually ignore Christ who is wooing them to forsake sin. What is the solution for such a person? 1) The kindness of God, sometimes as shown through other believers, leads them to repentance. 2) In rare cases, such as in 1 Corinthians, the elders of the church along with the church “turn the person over to satan for the destruction of the flesh”, treating this person as if he were an unbeliever. In other words, the community of Christ does not accept that how you are living is acceptable.

<sup>3</sup> Physical appetite is referring to all lusts of the flesh/the body.

- f. It is easy to fall into this trap because we live on this earth and must interact with it, but we must always see ourselves as separate from it, and live accordingly. We are not of this world.

**Titus 2:11-14**

*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup> teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, <sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. <sup>15</sup> Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority.*

*Namely that they live only for the present; they have set their minds on earthly, not on heavenly, things. - Fee*

- g. Keeping our focus on our ultimate destination provides further liberty from sin. There is something very powerful in remembering we are not of this earth.

**Colossians 3:1-4**

*If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

**1 John 3:1-3**

*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

### *Verses 20-21*

*For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; <sup>21</sup> who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.*

#### **20. Paul is refocusing.**

- a. We are citizens of heaven. “Citizenship” can also be translated “community”. We are part of the heavenly community, not of this earth.
- b. We are eagerly waiting for our Savior—the Lord Jesus Christ. “Eagerly wait” means to “expect fully”.

#### **21. Paul continues to refocus.**

- a. We will be transformed—changed from mortal to immortal
- b. Our “humble state” refers to the *debase* state of being human  
Tapeinoōsis: Depression (in rank or feeling): - humiliation, be made low, low estate, vile.
- c. We go from this humiliation to His *glory*.  
“Glory” is “doxa”: glory - dignity, glory (-ious), honour, praise, worship.
- a. This will happen by the power He has to subject all things to Himself.

**Romans 8:18**

*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

**1 Corinthians 15:51-57**

*Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—<sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.<sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.<sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”*

<sup>55</sup> *“O Death, where is your sting?*

*O Hades, where is your victory?”*

<sup>56</sup> *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.<sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*This passage reminds us that, despite appearances often to the contrary, God is in control, that our salvation is not just for today but forever, that Christ is coming again, and that at his coming we inherit the final glory that belongs to Christ alone – and to those who are his. It means the final subjugation of all the “powers” to him as well, especially those responsible for the present affliction of God’s people. Fee*

**Chapter 4 Verse 1**

*Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.*

1. **The “therefore” refers to the most immediate context of the fact that our citizenship is in heaven and we will one day be transformed. Let us stand firm in the Lord.**

**1 John 3:1-3**

*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.<sup>2</sup> Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.<sup>3</sup> And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

- a. **Paul is aching to see them.**

**Philippians 1:8**

*For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.*

- b. **He calls the Philippians “my beloved”.**

*It is “divinely loved ones and longed-for ones.” -Wuest*

- c. **“My joy”—the thought of the Philippians brought continual joy to Paul. He calls them his beloved.**

**Philippians 1:3-4**

*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,<sup>4</sup> always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy.*

- d. “My crown” was a way of saying that they were his reward at the coming of Christ.

**1 Thessalonians 2:19**

*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?*

- e. “Stand firm” means to remain stationary, persevere. “Stand firm” in what? In the faith (not law), in our current maturity (not subjecting ourselves to sin), and against the enemy.

- In the faith/the gospel of His grace/in the Lord

**1 Corinthians 16:13**

*Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.*

**2 Corinthians 1:24**

*Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm.*

**Galatians 5:1**

*It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*

*-This verse is not speaking of freedom from sin, but freedom from the law as opposed to living under grace.*

**1 Peter 5:12**

*Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard him), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!*

- In our current maturity (not subjecting ourselves to sin)

**Philippians 1:27**

*Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.*

**2 Timothy 2:19**

*Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.”*

**Romans 6:1-2**

*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*

- Against the enemy

**Ephesians 6:11**

*Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*

*“Stand fast” is translated from one Greek word, “STEKO,” which described a military soldier who stood fast in the midst of a battle. It is only the strength and power of the Lord that are able to make us stand and to keep us from falling (Jude 24). That is why Paul told the Philippians to “stand fast in the Lord.”-Andrew Wommack*

*Therefore, my brothers, individually loved ones, and individually and passionately longed for, my joy and my victor's festal garland, thus be standing firm in the Lord, beloved ones.  
-Wuest*