



## Philippians 3.17-21 “BITTER OR BETTER”

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In chapter three, the first error Paul warns against is that of the legalism of the Judaizers.

**Phil. 3:2 Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh**

These Judaizers were legalists because they taught salvation and sanctification were not by grace through faith in Christ alone but belief in Christ **PLUS** circumcision, keeping of ceremonial law and adherence to Jewish man-made custom, tradition and ritual.

- Remember, these Judaizers claimed to be followers of Christ.
- Yet they were in error because they were adding some form of works to salvation or Christian living.
- These were false Jewish-Christians who claimed to be followers of Christ but insisted that all Gentiles become like Jews in order to be saved.
- **They were Judaizers.**

### **Matthew 15:7-9**

7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

8 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth,

And honor Me with their lips,

But their heart is far from Me.

9 And in vain they worship Me,

Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' ”

**17 Brethren, join in following my example,**  
and note those who so walk,  
as you have **us** (Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus) for a pattern.

- **God loves patterns – and freely gives them to us**
  - Patterns of worship

- Patterns of loving
- Patterns of obedience
- Patterns of giving
- Patterns of response when challenged
- **Following... example** (followers together) (4831) ([summimetes](#) from [sun](#) = together with + [mimetes](#) = an imitator from *mimos* = an imitator) is an imitator of or follower with others, a joint follower, a joint imitator.
  - **Remember the preposition [sun](#) speaks of an intimate, almost inseparable relationship.**
  - Summimetes is the first word in the Greek sentence which places emphasis on this word.
    - **συμμιμητής, οὔ, ὁ** **one who joins others as an imitator, fellow-imitator** w. obj. gen. foll. *συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε* *join (w. the others) in following my example Phil 3:17.*—DELG s.v. *μίμος*. M-M. s.v. *συνμιμητής*. TW. <sup>1</sup>
    - **41.46 συμμιμητής, οὔ** *m*: one who joins others as an imitator—‘to join as an imitator, to be an imitator together with others, joint imitator.’ *συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε* ‘join in being my imitators’ *Php 3:17.* <sup>2</sup>

- **Paul publicly embarrassed Peter for his hypocrisy about the Judaizers.**

- Christian Jews that came from Jerusalem to fellowship with the Christian Gentiles of Antioch
  - Even Barnabus acted the hypocrite!
 

**Galatians 2:11–14**

**11** Now when Peter had come to Antioch,  
**I withstood him to his face,**  
because he was to be blamed;

**12** for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles;  
but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself,  
fearing those who were of the circumcision.

**13** And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him,  
**so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.**

**14** But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, “If you, being

<sup>1</sup> William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 958.

<sup>2</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 508.

a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?

## To be an example – you must have a trait or character worth imitating.

- **Do you?**

### **1 Timothy 3:1–7**

**1** This is a faithful saying:

If a man desires the position of a **bishop**, he desires a good work.

**2** A bishop then must be blameless, if married, a husband devoted to his one wife, even tempered, thinks through many things, has good behavior, his family is hospitable to others, able to teach;

**3** not addicted to wine, never violent, not greedy nor has a love of money, but gentle, does not join or start quarrels, not covetous of what the Lord has not given him;

**4** one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence

**5** (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);

**6** not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.

**7** Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

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

### **2 Corinthians 2:4**

**4** For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

**19** whose end is destruction,  
whose god is their belly, (epicureans, not stoics <sup>3</sup>)  
and whose glory is in their shame —

<sup>3</sup> The comic poet Eupolis uses the rare word Κοιλιοδαιμων [*Koiliodaimōn*] for one who makes a god of his belly and Seneca speaks of one who *abdomini servit*. Sensuality in food, drink, sex then as now mastered some men. These men posed as Christians and gloried in their shame. (A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933).

who set their mind on earthly things.

- **The Holy Spirit knows that many more people walk as enemies of the cross**
  - A life of bitterness leads to a bitter end
    - **EVERY CHOICE – BITTER OR BETTER?**
    - **No one should want to spend time around bitter people.**

### **Psalm 1:1–6**

**1** Blessed is the man

Who walks not in **the counsel of the ungodly,**

Nor stands in **the path of sinners,**

Nor sits in **the seat of the scornful;**

**2** But his delight is in the law of the LORD, (Heavenly minded)

And in His law he meditates day and night.

**3** He shall be like a tree

Planted by the rivers of water,

That brings forth its fruit in its season,

Whose leaf also shall not wither;

And whatever he does shall prosper.

**4** The ungodly are not so,

But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

**5** Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,

Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

**6** For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,

But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

### **There are Christians who constantly complain**

- Never happy with anything
- Critical of everything
- Nothing is good enough
- They can turn your heart cold to many things!

### **Romans 16:17–18**

**17** Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, **and avoid them.**

**18** For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly,

and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

**20 For our citizenship is in heaven,**

from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

**21** who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

- **The worldly will focus on the things of the world**
  - Swayed by the world's lies
  - Influenced by the world's desires
  - World view changes with what Hollywood tells them
  - The world makes a man **bitter** for what he doesn't have
- **The Godly focus on the things of Heaven**
  - Motivated by the Word of God – only standard of truth
  - Influenced by the Holy Spirit's desires
  - World view broadens with each encounter with Christ
  - Heaven makes us **better** because of what we do have
- **All Christians shall change one day! – Promise of healing!**

**1 Corinthians 15:42–44, 48-58**

**42** So also is the resurrection of the dead.

The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.

**43** It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory.

It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.

**44** It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

**48** As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.

**49** And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

**50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

**51** Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—

**52** 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.

**53** For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

**54** 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."

**55** "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

**56** The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

**57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**58** Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.