

## Philippians (Part Nine)

**Philippians 3:12 - 4:3**

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Let us get back into the book of Philippians. We are marching our way through the third chapter and the last time we went through verses 12 through 16. Now just a little bit of review there; we will hit a couple of high spots before we go on into the next paragraph.

In verse 12, Paul states that he did not feel as though he had reached perfection. Now you remember we were talking last time about the difference between human righteousness and God's righteousness. And humanly men are capable of very high degree of morality. However, God describes in Isaiah 64 that there is such a great gulf between His righteousness and man's righteousness, that there is hardly any reason to consider the two together. What this means in practical fact is that man's righteousness is always going to reach a ceiling. It can go no higher, it has a limit to it. It is limited by self-interest, if nothing else. We are essentially self-centered because of human nature, because of Satan's nature within us, or at least being manifested within us, and so there is no way that human righteousness can ever attain to the righteousness of God, regardless of how man tries to perfect it.

On the other hand, the righteousness of God, being created or built within a man, has no limit. Is there any of us who can ever reach the place—I do not mean any of us necessarily here—but any man who has ever reached the righteousness of God? Well, the answer to that is so obvious. And so there is then always the possibility of further growth in the righteousness of God.

Now, in order to have a continuous growing of God's righteousness, a person has to have a certain mindset, a frame of mind, an attitude, an inclination. And that inclination is that he understands that he is never quite perfect and so his mind is always open to further growth and he does not look upon himself as ever having reached a plateau. That there is always room for growth. Now if we ever feel as though we have reached the limit, it is very

likely that we will stop right there and further growth will not be possible because we will actually be setting our mind, maybe unconsciously, against further growth. This is one of the problems with self-righteousness. See, it sets a limit and it is saying in effect that I am okay the way I am. And we will never grow beyond that point. The only way that we will grow is if we are able to see flaws and that can only come as a result of comparison with the Standard. Of course that standard is God, and if a person then has the right attitude, he knows that he has never reached the pinnacle.

So Paul then had to admit that he is not perfect but rather that he presses on, "that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me." And that, of course, is the perfection of God. Now he was willing, he was yielded, but he knew that it was going to be a lifelong process. And so what we are seeing here is Paul's way of saying that perfection is a process. And it never has an end as long as we are in the flesh.

In verse 13, he reiterates it in slightly different words, "I do not count myself to have apprehended, but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead." Now forgetting here does not mean, as I mentioned last time, obliterating the memories of the past. But rather it is a conscious refusal to allow them to absorb your attention and impede your progress. Guilt feelings will do this. Actually, when we feel guilty, it is because of something that we already did. And if we do not really believe that God has forgiven us when we have repented, but we are constantly mulling over the past, we are not forgetting the past, and those feelings of guilt are actually impeding our progress. You have to put those things behind. It does not mean you obliterate the memory, but you make conscious decisions not to allow them to come between you and growth, you and God.

Now in the context here of chapter 3, Paul is saying that he did not allow his Jewishness to hold him from growth. That is what he gave here, his pedigree. And he did not allow that part of his background to hold him back. Now if he had a lot of pride, it could have held him back because he would have taken pride in the pedigree that he had. But he said he counted those things all as loss. I go over this because there are people who are held back by what they have accomplished in this world. Whether there is a certain amount of pride there, most likely there is. Their faith, their trust is actually in that.

I think I mentioned the rich young ruler who came to Christ. He had accomplished a great deal in his life. He said all these things I have done since my youth up. He meant from the time that he was a child up until the time that he met Christ. Now, like Paul, he was counting on his works, and without realizing it, he had actually set a limit to his growth. And when Christ gave him understanding of the intent of God's law and the fact that he really was not keeping the law, there was lust there, he felt that it was too much. That was proof that he had set a limit. Now if he had really been humble, then he would have gladly done what Christ had said, in order that he might grow further. He did not count all things as loss for the excellency of Christ, like Paul did. But he was taking pride in what he had already accomplished. I do not have to go any further.

In verse 14, "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ." We have here a metaphor taken from, apparently, the chariot races, and Paul compares Christianity to a race. But there is a difference. A chariot race ends within a few miles. The Christian race is a continuous process until death. But nonetheless, there is a similarity in that both are headed toward a goal, and there is a prize that is involved. So, Paul said that we ought to look at life that way, that is, the way that he was looking at it.

Now he tells us that the goal that he was after, a little bit earlier in verse 8, was "the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" was what his goal was, and that Paul wanted to know that by experience, that is, the experience of living it. It was not just a matter of knowing about Christ. It was a matter of experiencing Christ living His life in him and therefore Paul would live as Christ did.

Verse 15, "Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you." Now maturity does not mean sinless. I think the King James there says those who are perfect. But rather it indicates somebody who has grown to a certain level of stability and maturity, and he is calling on those who have progressed that far to recognize the truth of what he said. That is, regarding perfection. That even as he had not attained it, neither have they, and that they had some ways to go, therefore they should have the same mind as he did, a mind that was open to change.

What he is continuing to point out here has to be seen in light of the problem that was in the Philippian church. It was a problem with unity. And he is calling upon these people who are being divided from one another to recognize that their division indicates that they have reached a plateau. And their unwillingness to submit to one another is what is impeding their further growth. And the only way to get rid of that impediment was to humble themselves and recognize that they were not perfect, recognize that they were at fault, that they did not see things from the right perspective—none of them did—and that the only way that they were going to overcome this was to adopt or consciously put into practice the kind of mind that he was talking about here. The recognition that they had not reached perfection. See, a failure to yield in this kind of a problem was an indication that they had gotten themselves stuck on that spot. So the only way they were going to grow out of it was to submit to one another, admit their fault, and go on from there.

What he is saying then, if we can put this in a bigger context other than the one that he is dealing with in the letter, is that it is only this kind of an attitude that actually will go on to perfection.

Now what are the qualities that he enunciated through here? I gave them to you. 1) It is a mind that is ready to quickly admit wrong and shortcomings. 2) (These things just follow right in course.) It can then be corrected. You can never go on to perfection if we cannot be corrected. Because if we are off course, if we are not hitting the mark, the trajectory will continue to take us further and further away from perfection! There has to be a course correction to come back toward the target, so there has to be repentance. Then it will be a mind that is open to new insights. Thus it is willing to be refashioned.

Verse 17 continues on with the thought. The context continues but the thought twists, has a little bit of a turn to it.

**Philippians 3:17** Brethren [he is talking to the ones that he was just talking to especially there in verses 15 and 16], join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

Here comes again a reiteration in a slightly different context of the necessity of a personality. Now, is Paul being egotistical and claiming superiority by pointing himself out as being worthy of being followed? Some may think that. I personally do not feel that that he was. But this is not the first time that he said, follow me. I know he said it in I Corinthians. He said, "Follow me as I follow Christ." He also did it, I believe, in I Thessalonians. I believe he did it also in II Thessalonians, where he pointed out that they had him as an example that they could follow.

One thing I want you to note is the use the pronoun "us." So he was not singling himself out, at least in this particular context, as being the only one worthy of being followed. There were others who could be followed as well. But I think you will agree with me that Paul has stepped into an area that could very quickly become a quagmire. Because it is very precarious business for someone to set himself up as being an example that others should follow.

Now, who should be the improvers? Whether it be in the church or whether it is out in society or anywhere, who should be the people who are the improvers? Who can say that they are so consistent in the way that they live that they can be an example? Are you? Am I? Now some improvers have a lyncher approach. Think of the Wild West. Now they improved society with quick justice. "There's the horse thief! Go get him!" They ride out on their own horses, and they get the guy, and they hold a trial very quickly, string the guy up on the tree and that is the end of the matter. So some people have that approach. Now that is an extreme. But it is something that has to be dealt with. Should that vigilante approach be followed? Are those people really the examples that that others in society ought to follow?

Now there are other people who do not have a lyncher approach, but nonetheless, they have their own self-interest that almost undoubtedly is going to be protected as they set the example for the rest of society. I mean, their interests might be economic, there might be some prejudices in their mind regarding race, language, education, social status, occupation. Should those people be the examples for society? When one begins thinking about these things, who is impartial enough to set himself up as the example that others should follow?

All of us are afflicted with a curse and that is that we can see other people's faults more clearly than we can see our own. Now what then is going to stop us from falling into the ditch that Jesus talked about, where we try to get the little tiny piece of sawdust, the mote out of this other person's eyes, see, we are going to improve his life, while we have a great big giant log stuck in ours. Very easy to fall into that ditch.

Now look at Paul here. How can somebody who acknowledges his imperfections set himself up as an example? He said, "I'm not perfect." And yet here he turns right around and said he is an example. I will take this one step at a time.

First of all, it cannot be that Paul is referring to his own righteousness because he just said a little bit earlier, a paragraph or so earlier, that he counted all that righteousness as nothing but dung. So he cannot be referring to his own righteousness. Now what he was asking people to imitate, I believe, was what he stated in verse 16. "Let us be of the same mind." What he was asking these people in this context to do was to imitate his attitude of mind. He is not claiming that he is perfect. He is not claiming that he is a perfect example in conduct, but he is claiming that he does have the right attitude. There is a great difference in that.

I believe that before one really can be a good example, he has to have this attitude. Because it is that very attitude where he knows that he is not perfect, which is going to keep him humble and enable greater growth to take place, and the greater the growth, the better the example. In addition to that, I also believe that that attitude is going to keep that person committed to God's purpose, that is, God's creation of his character. And if that is true, then a righteousness that is infinitely higher than what one previously attained to is going to be possible. In other words, it is going to make greater growth possible. And the greater the growth, the better the example is going to be.

Now this mind that he is talking about is so important to understanding the righteousness of God in us. I believe that a person is right when he feels so far from exhausting the meaning of a truly good life, let us say, the life of Christ, that he always holds himself open to more of God's Spirit to refashion

I want you to turn back to Matthew 5, verse 6. Now Jesus said,

**Matthew 5:6** "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness."

Only a person who is in the frame of mind that the apostle Paul is talking about here in Philippians 3 can be in this position of actually hungering and thirsting for righteousness. If a person is self-righteous, if a person has reached the plateau of human righteousness, he is not going to be hungering and thirsty for righteousness. Because again, humanity will limit the growth. But only a person who has this humility before God in recognizing that he has not attained to the righteousness of God and is thereby opened in mind, will be hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of God, and that person, Christ said, will be blessed. Or happy would be a little bit better translation.

Now in Luke the 6th chapter and in verse 26 there is a warning. If we go back to verse 24 it kind of shows the context of verse 26 a little bit more clearly.

**Luke 6:24-26** "Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full, for you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets."

What this is, is a warning to all of us against the deceptive sense of being an acceptable example. See, the feeling that we are an acceptable example.

Now back to Philippians 3. A couple of things here. I think that it is the hope of all of us to be a good example of the morality of God, of the spirituality of God. But being a good example is not a simple matter. It is a presumption to believe that we are sufficiently superior to do good to inferiors. You know, that is a bad example in itself. It is a hidden pride. In fact, it is the essence of Pharisaism. They set themselves up as the moral conscience of society. They set themselves up as the example that everybody in society was supposed to follow, and Jesus picked those people to pieces. You know why? Because

they were presumptuous enough to believe that they were good enough to be the example. They did not see the pride that was inherent within that kind of thought. You see, if we begin to think that we are a good enough example, then we are actually giving up the kind of mind that is necessary to continue growing. We will actually reach a limit to the growth that we are setting ourselves by thinking that we are a good enough example as we are right now. That is what I mean, that being a good example is not a simple matter. There are complex psychological problems inherent in this.

I got this quote a while ago and I wrote it down. I do not even know for sure where I got it. "Superiority, condescending to be benevolent [you see, to do good], is the beginning of tyranny." I will explain this a little bit further as we go on. This was Adolf Hitler's problem. We will see this a little bit later.

Being a good example is not a simple matter. That is, when we *set out* to be the good example. We can be a good example without even realizing we are a good example. And that is the best kind of good example there is. But if we set out to be a good example, and condescend to be that example, we are in trouble. We have got problems with pride and are not even aware of it.

There is, though, a responsibility to correct. In other words, there have to be improvers in the society. There have to be improvers in a family. There have to be improvers in a church. Now, while it is true that none of us is perfect enough to be the corrector of others, it is a fact that we cannot wait until we are perfect before doing something. Maybe one of the clearest examples of this is in childrearing. Should parents do nothing to their children until they themselves are first perfect? Maybe that is what the problem is. Everybody is waiting until they are perfect, and then they will correct their children.

But that same principle is at work in society as well. It is at work in the church. You see, even though none of us is really a good enough example to really be the improver or the corrector, yet it is a fact that it has to be done. Somebody has to do it. And so somehow or another, we have to rely on the good intentions of very imperfect people to be the correctors in combating evil. And we just have to put up with it. It is something that just has to be recognized that the very people who are the improvers or the correctors are not perfect themselves. It just has to be dealt with.

Now, if the people who are improvers have the same mind as the people who are being corrected, now we have a system that will maybe work. They have all recognized the imperfections exist and all are willing to be tolerant of one another while this correcting is going on.

Let us analyze this a little bit further. Now in order for this that I just mentioned to take place, it means that we have to have a common purpose, does it not? If all of us within a family or within a church or within a community, if we did not have a common purpose, then the improvers could never improve. The correctors could never correct. Nobody would ever accept the example that was being set. Now because we have a common purpose within the church, and is not that common purpose the working out of the will of God, does it not then enable us to at least have a higher degree of unity than is possible in the world because we do at least have a common purpose?

You see, that same principle should be at work within a family. And the common purpose is within a family to make a good family, to become one with each other. Now because there is a common purpose that overrides individual desires, then one is able to be tolerant toward another and compromise or not insist on rights. If this is not present, then the desire of self-interest will override and you are going to have wars within a family, within a nation, or within the church.

One more factor is necessary and that is, you have to have God's Spirit. The 6,000 years of man's history absolutely shows with irrefutable evidence that even though there are good intentions and even though there are common purposes which enable people to be willing to submit to the improvers, or the correctors, we will call them, it only lasts for a short while and finally the self-interest overrides and the thing breaks down in revolution, or divorce.

See, that is one of the things that God is proving to man in man's history. Adam and Eve rejected the Spirit of God, the one tool that they needed to produce the kind of society that they desired to have, and all of man's history has proved irrefutably, that despite the good intentions and the good plans and the intelligence and whatever else man is able to come up with, he

cannot do it. Because he is missing the primary ingredient that would make it all possible. And that is a Spirit that will enable one to be humble enough to make it work.

Now what happens in society is this: Conservatives—the Pharisees—tend to want to do good by taking charge and control of the good that is handed out. And they withdraw benefits if one does not accept the dominion of the benefactor. Now liberals, on the other hand, they tend to thrust more responsibility and control into the hands of the individual. Hitler was an archconservative. The liberals, they tend to thrust more responsibility for control into individual hands.

On a national basis, if we are thinking of Nazi Germany, the United States of America is very liberal by comparison. Who is the benefactor? Who is the corrector? Who is the improver of society? Well, in Germany, it was going to be Hitler and the Nazi Party. And if the German people or the Jews did not respond, then they withdrew the benefactions, the goodies, and went to war against them.

Now, the American system, the liberal democratic way puts the responsibility into the individual's hands. And therefore, it tends to be more creative because now you have got 250 million people thinking for themselves. There are a lot of creative ideas that come out of that. But it also tends to be a great deal more radical and revolutionary as well, and that is its weakness because everybody tends to do what is pleasing in his own eyes. And so in this pluralistic state of ours, eventually you reach a place where unity is impossible. We are rapidly heading in that direction because there is no common purpose. There is nothing to which you can get a majority to agree to. Now who is going to set himself up as the benefactor, as the corrector, as the example in that kind of a system and make it stick? See, it is an impossibility.

Jesus, by Pharisaic standards, He was a flaming liberal. But by modern liberal standards, He is about as conservative as you can get. But actually He is perfectly balanced. And see, there is where the ultimate example has to be.

I do not know whether this fits right here, but I thought it did when I was making out these notes. Do you know one of the reasons why psychology is

so popular today? It is because men have discovered ways of managing people through it. It is part of this process that we are talking about governing, only we are calling it managing here. In fact, I have even read psychology being called the science of human management, and that includes the self. That is why there are so many self-help books out. This is the way you manage yourself. You do it by this particular system. Instead of applying this science to somebody else and managing a business, you see, you are managing yourself by these ways.

Now there is a problem in this. And that is because psychology is divorced from God's Word. And when that occurs, psychology is not the management of people but the *manipulation* of people and that is not good because it then treats people, not as people, but as things to be manipulated. Now perhaps the most obvious example of this is in advertising. Advertising is nothing more than clever psychology to induce us to want what we do not need. That is exactly what Satan did in the Garden of Eden. He induced them to want what they did not need. And they bought it.

On a national scale by the government, psychology becomes propaganda and it is used to manipulate the people to move in the direction that the government, the benefactor, the example, the corrector wants the people to go. Now, most obviously it is used in terms of getting the people unified to take them to war. But it is manipulation. It is not real management, but it is psychology manipulating people to go into war to sacrifice themselves for the country. But it unifies people through manipulation, not by the example of a truly righteous person, like Jesus Christ. But it manipulates for governmental purposes.

Now let us bring this thing down to a real personal level. I wonder how many of you in the past have read Dale Carnegie's book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*? That book was written to show you how to win friends for your own good for business or for social reasons, to have success there. That is just the opposite of Christianity. Because true friendship does not seek to use others for their own end. That is manipulation. But that is psychology used in a bad way, an evil way. And unfortunately many, many of those books out there, those self-help books, are using this science of human management for manipulative purposes, even manipulating the self for one's own end.

I got off the track here a little bit, but I will just conclude this thought this way. It is a temptation for those who feel that they have arrived—they have hit the plateau, they have hit the top—to presume to set themselves up as examples for others. Now an example of that is that we Americans feel it is incumbent upon us to impress the American way on everybody as if somehow or another God's blessing was on it. But the American way is not God's way.

And I just want to conclude this to remind you to not consciously set yourself up as being an example for others. Resist that urge. Because it will very deceptively and subtly actually provide a plateau that is going to limit your growth. Instead, it would be better to have the idea in your mind that we are never a good enough example. Yes, we might be an example as far as we have gone, and that is good. But we are not the kind of example yet that Jesus Christ was and so we have a long way to go before we get to that place.

So just keep plugging, keep doing as well as you can. There is nothing wrong with that. But do not allow yourself to be deceived into thinking that you are the example for the entire church, this congregation, or whatever, because if you have, you are going to try to impress your example on others, and you will have arrived at a plateau, unfortunately. And until that is repented of, growth will not be possible in that area. So in conclusion, then, setting oneself up as an example is risky business.

**Philippians 3:18** 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:

Now, who are these people? Nobody knows. They might have been former members. Maybe some of the Judaizers that he was talking about. Maybe some of the pagans that were in the area around them. But whoever they were, they were enemies, and verse 19 shows that they had common characteristics.

**Philippians 3:19** whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

Let us expound on this a bit. Their common characteristics are these. They can see no higher good than satisfying their bodily appetites. That is what he means by "their god is their belly." It just does not mean the stomach, it is just a generalization for bodily appetites. It could include the eyes, sex organs, hands, you name it. "Whose glory is in their shame." It seems as though what they are most proud of, they ought to be ashamed of. And number three, they have purely earthly goals.

Now these three are fatal errors with God, and I can say that with authority because the beginning of the verse says their end is destruction.

You know, understanding this does no good unless we are able to somehow examine ourselves in the light of these things to see whether or not it is possible that we have somehow fallen into the trap here. I do not mean that any of us would consciously set our will to do these things. But we can just fall into it without even realizing it is taking place.

One of the things that we have to be aware of is that in this age of science, technology, it is very easy for respectable people, that is, you and me, to trust what our senses tell us about life. It is almost as if our senses were God. Now let me ask you, if Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego trusted their senses, what would have happened? What were their senses telling them? What were their eyes seeing? What were their ears hearing? What was their skin feeling?

Now if they trusted what their senses were telling them, it is very likely that they would have accepted deliverance from Nebuchadnezzar. Because all they had to do in order to get deliverance from Nebuchadnezzar was to bow down at the sound of the orchestra whenever it struck the chord that everybody was supposed to bow down to the image. But you see, there was something that was beyond the senses that was in their mind, something that was not physically discerned that was a part of their makeup and it was by that that they judged the circumstance that they were in. That is, that there was a spiritual aspect to their mind that enabled them to see God and His purpose. And so they did not then accept what Nebuchadnezzar offered to them.

There are many people today, including many of you whose trust is in science. Let us say, medical science. You will do virtually anything a doctor tells you to do. Is that wise? Is he God? Are your senses God? When he tells you that this will take away the pain or this will take away the disease, is that right? Now, wait a minute. Where did that doctor, where did that scientist get what he knows? Science only deals with that which comes through the senses. You see, it is limited to that and actually puts them in the same position as Nebuchadnezzar. Undoubtedly a deliverance can be given, but that is for you and me to decide.

You see, the whole realm of, let us say, the spirit world or the spiritual and all of those values, lies beyond the five senses. That is not something that discernible through the eyes, the nose, the ears, sense of touch, and smell. And because we are so surrounded by what the senses are able to perceive, God gets pushed into the background. That is why this thing that he says here, that they set their mind on earthly things is so important. Because the senses will exclude God and that is dangerous for us.

Now, perhaps the extreme in this area is the God-is-dead dead movement. But I am going to say something else to you. I think, that by and large, modern Protestantism is nothing more than practical atheism. Because God is essentially shoved into the background. It has nothing to do with saying that a God exists. That they believe. But if God and the spiritual realm is not made a part of the life of an individual, then that person is relying on his five senses and his five senses are being placed in the place of God. That is idolatry. That is not living by faith, see, unless God is a part of our everyday life.

Incidentally, if you have as many commentaries as I have and read what these Protestant theologians have to say, they themselves recognize that the great overwhelming bulk of Protestants do not give a hoot about God between Sunday services. They will make that statement and I can show it to you. They recognize the reality but they do not know how to deal with it. God has no impact on their lives. And so these people, without realizing it, are deceived into living what is nothing more than a practical atheism. And I

am not against their morality, which in many cases is very, very high. And I am very glad that they have it. You know, this is what God meant back here in Psalm 14 where David wrote,

**Psalm 14:1** The fool has said in his heart [it means in the heart of his heart], "There is no God."

As I mentioned to you before, the fool here does not mean somebody who does not believe that God does not exist, but rather, God is simply not a part of his life. He is not living by faith. Back in chapter 10 and verse 4 it says,

**Psalm 10:4** The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts.

The wicked here is merely the fellow who is walking along the street there. You know, it is not somebody who is particularly evil, it is just the common ordinary guy. God is not in his thoughts.

Now, what we have got to understand is this, and I think we do understand it. But there is a spiritual and moral imperative behind God's creation. In other words, God's creation was made with a purpose behind it. He did not just set a big machine running and sort of like sit back and see what happens. No, God is involved in His creation. He is managing His creation. He is working out a purpose within His creation. Now, if God is ignored, then there is only one recourse that mankind has if he feels that he is going to make any advances, and that is that he is going to depend on human reason apart from God, and that we have seen is capable of bringing forth great technological progress—apart from God. And so it cannot be managed properly.

And now let us examine this with with another illustration. Again, understanding that the five senses do not perceive God. Let us suppose that you went into a printing plant to study the printing press. And so you studied it piece by piece, gear by gear, shaft by shaft, cog by cog, wheel by wheel, belt by belt, you see, and you were able to see that this was connected to this, and this was connected to that, and that this thing made that thing work and that thing made this thing work. And you have this fantastic piece of machinery that produces newspaper at the other end. And so then you decided to search out the source of power and you found out that this thing

was run by an impersonal steam engine or electric motor. Now all this information was gathered without consulting with the editorial staff and therefore no understanding of what its mind was. And so what do you have? You have a machine that has no moral or spiritual purpose behind it. Because you are limited to what you are able to observe with your five senses.

Now instead of the printing press, examine the creation. That is exactly what men have done. They have by scientific methods, let us say, torn apart the earth. And this is connected to that, and that is connected to that thing over there, and this thing harmonizes with this and makes this thing over here go, and everything is working together harmoniously, and they come up with a picture of the universe as some great gigantic mechanism. But will they acknowledge a Creator? No, they will not acknowledge a Creator. You see, that is beyond science. And therefore the creation has to them no moral or spiritual imperative behind it, and they are left with human reason apart from God.

So what is the best they can come up with in the way of religion? They can come up with humanistic type religions which are in many cases moral, good, but they will never ever achieve the righteousness of God. So they are stuck. Now we know what is going to happen because God is letting it run its course. He is managing as it goes along. And very quickly that scientific mind that discovers all these things and how they work and how they are connected to one another, can turn into a war machine, and prophecy tells us that indeed that is what is going to occur. And unless God intervenes, mankind is going to destroy itself right off the face of the earth. So much for the five senses.

Now you have to examine yourself. How much of your life is being dictated by the five senses? How much of your life is being dictated by human reason? See, how much reliance, how much trust is there in those kind of things? Well, if you examine and you find out that a great deal is, then maybe you find yourself within the context of verse 19 about those who set their mind on earthly things. See, it is the revelation of God that gives sense to life, and without it there is no sense to life. That is why men are stumbling

around trying every kind of ism in religion and government trying to arrive at something that will produce unity, harmony, peace, prosperity, a good life. But it cannot be done.

But all along men are rejecting the knowledge of God. Even people who in all sincerity try to get the knowledge of God, let us say, in an elementary level, into places like schools where they would like to have the creation account taught along with evolution. It is constantly rejected because it is not provable by the five senses. And so mankind in the United States is systematically excluding God from his daily life. What you are going to see is a continuing fracturing of life in the United States because the more God is left out, the more division is going to be created. And the more division, the greater intensity of hatred and warfare.

Now there is one scripture that I wanted to turn here in Romans 1 in which Paul describes the process. You know, in a broad generality.

**Romans 1:22-24** Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped. . .

I think the lie there is what Satan told Adam and Eve in the Garden, the one that they bought where he used psychology on them and induced them to take, to desire what they did not need. The fruit of the tree, the freedom to decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong, you see, apart from God.

**Romans 1:25** who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

The end of that kind of thinking is idolatry, the worship of the self. The creature, man. He worships his own reason. We deify ourselves. We can almost see a worst case scenario 50 years in the past in Nazi Germany. And it is going to be repeated in the near future.

Here is what happened:

Devotion to mankind begins with a single person. "Superiority condescending to be benevolent." You see, it is the beginning of tyranny. Hitler was a do-gooder. He did not like the way things were being run in Germany, and indeed they were bad. No doubt about it. He had a better idea. Others had the idea that were somewhat similar to his. And one grew to two and two to four and four to eight and eight to 16 and 16 to 32 and 32 to 64. And now the Nazi Party is coming into existence. It grows into a group and they are devoted to doing good to others. But these people are fanatics. They are true believers. And the first thing you know, the devotion to doing good becomes divisive to others because they do not want to give up their position. They do not want the benevolence that this other group wants to force on them.

Now even within the group itself there begins to be divisiveness there because they cannot really agree among themselves about what is good for the whole. But there must be peace if they are going to accomplish their end. And so someone is appointed, elected, or appoints himself, dictator. Benefactor, as Jesus called them, the kings of the Gentiles. And he decides then what is good for all. And meanwhile, the movement is continuing to grow, and some resist. And those who do so are suspected of treason.

And so regimentation begins so that everybody conforms. The only way you can get conformation is to force people by dint of arms, power. And the first thing you know, as this thing continues to roll, it grows until people become the means of perfecting the whole organization and they are unable even to control their own lives. And thus they now exist for the state instead of the state existing under God for the service of the people. You have got a dictatorship. It began with somebody devoted to doing good, setting himself up as the example.

Now that is a worst case scenario. And it is going to happen again over in Europe. You mark my words. That is very likely the course that is going to be followed. Somebody is going to have to arise to bring order out of the

chaos, of the divisiveness that is inherently built within Democratic pluralism. So it is going to occur. And of course they are enslaved. No man can buy or sell without the mark of the beast.

This thing about setting oneself up as an example is shaky business. Now, none of us are going to carry it that far. As I said, that is a worst case example. But nonetheless, certainly a possibility.

Now would something like that occur if one really had God as a part of his life? No, it would never occur. The person would be too humble to allow it to occur.

And now verse 20. Here comes a contrast.

**Philippians 3:20** For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a contrast to verse 19. We do not behave the way those people do in verse 19 because our citizenship is in heaven. The people in Philippi behaved the way they did because their citizenship was in Rome. They were a Roman colony and they were supposed to be a little Rome, an outpost of Rome there in Macedonia. And so those people behaved like it says in verse 19. But we do not behave that way. We do not have those kinds of attitudes because our citizenship is in heaven. Therefore, earthly things, our belly and whatever, has to be secondary to what our God wants us to be. We belong to a different city, New Jerusalem (Hebrews 11:13). We look for a city whose builder and maker is God. Therefore, we have different sets of values on things.

But Paul makes a parallel in that the church is an outpost of a whole different way of viewing things. Now what is the basis for the way we look at things? Well, it is the good news of the Kingdom of God. That is our basis. And in that good news contains the story, the information, about Christ's death, Christ's resurrection, and His return. Those things are central to the good news of the Kingdom of God. And those things set the parameter of our way of life.

**Philippians 3:21** 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 emphasis here is on the transformation of a lowly body. The emphasis here is not on sin. But the emphasis is on disease, pain, and death. A body that cannot continue living, a body that breaks down, a body that feels pain. And when that is changed, we are going to receive a body that displays our essential character. Now the flip side of that is that our body today does display our essential character. The heart is deceitful above all things. The heart is sick. It is incurably ill. The body is subject to disease, pain, and death. Spiritually we are subject to death too.

There is one interesting thing here and that is, I think that Paul purposefully used the same set of words that he did over in chapter 2, verse 7, where it says, "but He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men." Remember, we were talking there about the two words, both meaning form. I can remember what the one is, it is *morphe*. And the other began with an H, but I cannot pronounce it at this time. Anyway, he used the same two words here and he is drawing attention to something. On the one hand, we are going to undergo a change of appearance and it is translated here "transform" our lowly body and so we are going to undergo a change of appearance. However, in that change of appearance, our outward appearance will then conform to our inward nature, that is *morphe*.

**Philippians 4:1** Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

Here he is actually beginning to move into his conclusion. And his conclusion has to include an encouragement, an exhortation to, at the very least, hang on to what they have and do not allow yourself to slide backwards. So he says "stand fast." Now this is exactly the same word that is used over in Ephesians chapter 6, verses 12 and 13 (I used it in the sermon last Sabbath), where you are holding on to a military position. You have your feet firmly planted in order that you are not able to be knocked about and

pushed aside by Satan. So he is saying then, do not let anything seduce you away. Now his concern for them is probably generated by his love. You see, he calls them beloved. And he told them that they were his joy and his crown. In this case crown does not indicate rulership but indicates joy, festivity, triumph, happiness. It indicates sitting at a feast where everybody is happily eating something.

Now, the word stand. Paul was writing this from prison and he was undoubtedly aware of some of the things that were going on in Nero's life. He was hearing of this man's strange behavior. He was undoubtedly hearing (maybe from some of the Christians who were visiting him, maybe from the soldiers that were chained to him), he was undoubtedly getting indications of the extreme perversity of Nero's mind. It had anticipations of what was soon going to occur. So he was asking these people to be committed. That actually sets the stage for what follows. Be committed to something. Be committed to a way of life. Be committed in your daily acts. So he uses the term stand.

At least if you are standing you are doing something that requires a measure of effort. You are fighting against gravity, if nothing else. You may shift your weight from one side, from one foot to another. But if you lift both feet off the ground, you are going to sit down. And if you sit down, Paul was indicating here, you are not going to be in a very good position to hold your position. You are going to be easily bowled over, easily taken. So in order to get the effect of this, you have to get that encouragement for the exhortation at the very beginning because he is going to begin to exhort them to do things.

The first thing:

**Philippians 4:2** I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord.

Bring your attitudes into harmony. What their fight was over nobody knows. Maybe it was a clash of personalities. Maybe because of what he mentioned earlier in chapter 2, there was a conflict because of personal ambitions. It is very likely they were zealous and active workers, and maybe they were both trying to do the same thing at the same time and they got into one another's hair. I do not know what it was. Nobody knows. Maybe the problem was

over Epaphroditus. We do not know. But whatever it was, there was a disagreement there, and as I said before, because neither one of them would back away and admit that they were wrong, they had reached a plateau and their growth was going to stop. It was not a mind that was open to correction.

**Philippians 4:3** And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

Now nobody knows who this unnamed companion is unless it is a man by the name of Syzygus. The reason I say that is because the word companion is also a person's personal name. Now why they have translated it companion, I do not know. Nobody knows. But they have chosen to do it that way. Just like my name means something, so did their names mean something. And this man's name meant companion, it meant comrade. But they have chosen to put the definition of the name in there rather than the man's name. So it may be that there is a play on words here, it may be that Paul originally wrote the man's name but somehow in the centuries it got cast aside.

At any rate, it is not super important, it is just interesting that Paul called, apparently, upon a single individual that he trusted a great deal to try to help these ladies by mediating their difficulty, whatever it happened to be. He told this person, "Help these women." Paul did not want to lose them because they were old friends. And who they were, again, nobody knows. Maybe one of these ladies was Lydia. Lydia is not thought to be that lady's name at all, but rather that was where she was from. Maybe it was one of those. She was the first convert in Philippi. Who knows? Nobody does. We can just guess.

Just another speculation; maybe these four people were Paul's first four converts in that area. Syzygus, Clement, Syntyche, and Eurodia. Who knows? Just interesting. They were real people though just like you and me. And they were close to him. Paul was very concerned.