

BE A BRINGER

“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....” John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....” I Samuel 12:23a



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The Joy Of Doing Right

A mark of mature Christianity is discipleship—making disciples and being discipled. This is where Paul goes in Philippians 3:17: “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.”

Paul is not timid about putting himself out there as an example. But he’s not encouraging this so that the church will be full of Paul clones. The best way to take this instruction is found explicitly in 1 Corinthians 11:1: “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” Some translations render the verse as, “Follow me as I follow Christ.” The implication is that Paul wants people to follow him to the extent that he is teaching them to follow Jesus. They should stop following him if he ceases to lead them to Jesus (Gal. 1:8; Acts 17:11).

This is a paradigm for discipleship. “Join” connotes activity, a connection. You can’t be discipled from a distance, in other words. “Imitate me” speaks to the level of training involved. Paul is modeling Christian discipleship, and by “copying” him, in a sense, his own disciples will end up following Christ as well. “Keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us” means studying the lives—beliefs, customs, habits, temperaments, fruit—of mature Christians in to learn how to develop their beliefs, customs, habits, temperaments, and fruit —of mature Christians in order —to learn how to develop their beliefs, customs, habits, temperaments, and fruit.

Throughout the New Testament we learn the important reminder that our faith, though personal, was never meant to be private. I have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. But that personal relationship with Christ was never meant to play out in the privacy of my own mind and heart.

By living out my faith, I become an example to others in following Christ. And when others further along than me boldly live out their faith, they become examples to me. We talk a lot in the church about “sharing our faith” and “being a witness,” usually as these practices apply to evangelism. But there is a very real need to continually share our faith with our brothers and sisters, to be witnesses day after day, even to the already converted. We keep evangelizing each other.

Indeed, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer says in his book on Christian community, *Life Together*, we should meet each other as bringers of the gospel. We need the word of Christ in each other. Paul puts himself out there as an example and urges the Philippians to look for other Christians to learn from. We are in no less need of discipleship today. Despite all the information we have in everything from books to blogs, we still need to be trained by living examples, mentors in the faith who will serve us by walking with us. It’s our responsibility to find people we can disciple, and it’s our responsibility to be discipled.

KEY VERSE

Philippians 4:1 (NKJV)

“Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved. “

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday: Philippians 3:17-4:5

Introduction

1. In our key verse Paul tells the Philippians to stand firm in the Lord. What are some things that can make that difficult to do?
2. Put in your own words what Paul’s main concern for the Philippians might be.

Tuesday: Philippians 3:17; I Timothy 4:12; I Corinthians 11:1

Follow The Right People

3. Who should a Christian follow? What criteria should be met?
4. Who are some people you follow? Who are some people who follow you?

Wednesday: Philippians 3:18-19; Romans 8:5-7

Don’t Choose The Value System Of The World

5. What types of things did Paul observe about the world’s value system?
6. Paul says about the enemies of the cross of Christ that they have their minds “set on earthly things”. There are some earthly things we need to think about like career, family, etc. What is the difference between having a mind “set” on these things versus just thinking about them to be responsible?

Thursday: Philippians 3:20-21; Ephesians 2:19; I Peter 1:3-4

Choose The Value System Of God

7. What does it mean to be a citizen?
8. What impact should heavenly citizenship have on the Christian?
9. How eagerly are you waiting for Jesus? What earthly things might diminish some of your eagerness?

Friday: Philippians 4:1-5; James 5:8-9

Obey The Lord

10. Why were the Philippians Paul’s crown of victory and celebration?
11. Who is an example of standing firm that you can imitate? How should you begin imitating them?
12. In what ways does Paul instruct the Philippians to obey the Lord in 4:1-5?
13. What sorts of things occupy your mind? How does it affect your joy in the Lord? How does it affect your peace or your relationship with the God of peace?