

Philippians 2 – Shining Like the Stars in the Sky

After encouraging the Philippians to continue to live humble, Christ-like lives, this is what Paul tells them about their responsibility to set a good example for those around them:

“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.” (Philippians 2:12-16)

Paul was obviously repeating Jesus’ words in **Matthew 5** when He told His disciples that they were the light of the world, and as that light, they were to shine on those around them. God would be glorified because of the change that would be seen in them. Paul, in the above verses, tells the Philippians that the change would be gradual. There was “work” to be done. Every day they were to become more and more like Jesus, taking on His characteristics as their own.

The example we set is often that only way we can show the world what God requires of us. Our dealings with others cannot be the same as those who do not know God. Throughout Paul’s writings, he tells us of the traits we must copy from Jesus Christ if we are to be pleasing to God and affect others in a positive way.

In **Philippians 3:17**, Paul tells them to ***“Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.”*** In **Philippians 4:8-9**, he tells them this: ***“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”*** He had told the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 11:1** to ***“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”*** Luke wrote in **Acts 20:18-19** that Paul had told the people of Ephesus: ***“You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. I served the Lord with great humility....”*** He was able to say to all something we would not dare to say: Look at me – this is how you live a life patterned after the life of Jesus Christ. Do as I say and do as I do!

What qualities did Jesus Christ have that we should have? They are scattered all over Paul’s writings. To the Corinthians, he said ***“as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of***

righteousness in the right hand and in the left...; (2 Corinthians 6:4-7) To the Ephesians he described ***“the whole armor of God”*** -- ***“The belt of truth,” “the breastplate of righteousness,” “the gospel of peace,” “the shield of faith,” “the helmet of salvation,” “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,” and “all kinds of prayers.”*** (Ephesians 6:14-18) To the Galatians, he taught the ***“fruit of the Spirit”*** – ***“love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, and self-control.”*** (Galatians 5:22-23)

There are so many more characteristics of Jesus Christ that Paul told the ***“children of light”*** to reflect, but space does not permit all of them to be examined. Just know that we are to live as Jesus Christ lived, to the best of our abilities. Others will notice.

--Johnny Stephens