

As a citizen of the Heavenly Kingdom, Paul experienced a new vision: *"We look for the Savior."* A citizen of heaven living on earth is never discouraged because he knows that his Lord is one day going to return. The spiritually minded believer does not live for the things of this world; he anticipates the blessings of the world to come. It means that what he does today is governed by what Christ will do in the future.

Paul mentioned particularly that the believer will receive a glorified body like the body of Christ. Today we live in a "body of humiliation," but when we see Christ, we will receive a body of glory. It will happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (1 Cor. 15:42-53). At that moment, all the things of this world will be worthless to us – just as they ought to be, relatively, today. If we are living in the future tense, then we will be exercising the spiritual mind and living for the things that really matter. Living in the future tense means letting Christ arrange the things in life according to the proper rank. It means living with eternity's values in view, and daring to believe God's promise that *"he that does the will of God abides forever"* (1 John 2:17).

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Philippians 10: **Living in the Future Tense**
Phil. 3:17-21
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In Philippians, Paul compares the Christian life to a race. For Paul, the goal, the prize at the end of the finish line of our life race is to become like Christ. So, Paul's reason for living, his goal in life, was to become more and more like Jesus. This life goal should also be our reason for living, our goal in life. Last Sunday we learned two principles of becoming more like Jesus: Never quit training and never look back. In today's text we will add two more principles that will help us to achieve that goal.

3. The third principle is training with good mentors.

In verse 17 Paul says, *"Join with others in following my example, brothers and sisters, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you."* He saw that if an athlete wanted to be a good runner, it would help if he/she ran with or trained with others who knew what they were doing. He/she needs a good trainer or coach. Likewise, to be a growing Christian, a maturing believer, we need to hang around or relate to other maturing or growing Christians. We need to follow good examples. And the good example that Paul first mentions is himself. But he doesn't say that he is perfect or that he has arrived. 1 Corinthians Paul says, *"Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ."* In other words, attempt to imitate Christ just as I am attempting to do. Jesus is the Master Mentor. And Paul saw the power of following the example of Jesus.

Research has shown that the quickest way to become an expert in any endeavor is to imitate exactly someone who has already mastered it. The best way to master something is to imitate a master. Our family didn't have a TV until I was in the 3rd grade. I watched TV at my friend's or neighbor's house or at a TV shop through the window. Finally, my father decided to buy a TV, a

black & white TV at that time. Even though it was a used one, it was an RCA, made in the USA which was the best brand in early 70s and I was so proud to have it as my TV. However, the Sony TV came along with a camera and portable audio player and it became the best brand during 80s and early 90s. During that time Samsung imitated Sony and finally, I think Samsung TV became the well-known brand with good quality.

This tendency is the same in the phone industry. Nokia was the best selling and best well-known brand in cellular phone devices in the 90s and even early 2000s. Then Samsung and LG tried to imitate Nokia and they became more popular than Nokia today. Then Apple joined in the cell phone industry with a brand name iPhone 10 years ago and it has changed our life style a lot, as well as the phone industry.

Paul understood this principle. He knew that anyone who wanted to excel in the Christian walk would do well to find a mentor who was obviously maturing and who was close to the Lord.

In verses 18-19 Paul does warn us to be careful for there are people out there that we should not mentor. As Christians we belong to those who are bound for heaven. We value things of eternal significance. Paul warns us that there are bad people in the world. So, Paul is saying we must choose our mentors carefully and make sure they are worth mentoring.

4. The fourth principle is to know whose team we are on. In verse 20 Paul says that as we run through life, we must not *"...forget that we are on heaven's team...and that is where our citizenship lies."* On the side of eternity we are playing an away game. In order to make a victory we must remember where our goal post lies.

One of the impressive scenes in the movie *Lion King*, was when Simba realizes who he is. When Simba remembers who he is, it

becomes a turning point for him, getting out of *Hakuna Matata*, the Land of 'No Worries & Problems Free' and going back to his kingdom to face risking his life for the sake of his kingdom and people. In the middle of the night Mufasa, father of Simba, showed up and inspired him, saying "Remember, who you are!" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=maARmxjj3f0>)

Do you know who you are? Do you know where you belong? Most of you are citizens of the USA. Some of you are citizens of your own country.

I came to the United States with an F-1 visa, which is a student visa. Since I served a Korean congregation, I started the process of becoming a permanent resident (a green card) through an immigrant lawyer. It was a very challenging process with a lot of documents, interviews, waiting, and money for two years. But I got my green card before 9/11. I heard that the process of immigration got harder after 9/11 in 2001. 5 years after I got a green card, I started the process of getting US citizenship. This process was relatively easier than getting a green card, but it still required a lot of documents, office visits, interviews, and the oath ceremony. I experienced that it was hard to get a US citizenship, so I value and honor being a US citizen.

In addition to our country's citizenship we need to also remember that we are citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom. Our US citizenship or our own country's citizenship is temporary. It expires when we die. But our Heavenly Kingdom's citizenship is forever. We need to remember that we represent our Heavenly God.

In order to become more like Jesus, do you have good mentors or other growing Christians to watch and learn from? Are you running on the right team? Those who emphasized the Jewish law were living in the past tense, trying to get the Philippian believers to go back to Moses and the law, but true Christians live in the future tense, anticipating the return of their Savior (Phil. 3:20-21).