


# Philippians

## Part 10

The Power of Role Models

# TALKING POINTS WALKING POINTS

## Leader's Guide

A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

### Starter Question

- ❶ From Sunday's sermon, what did you *like best*, or what *caught your attention most*—and *why*?

### Observation—What does it say?

- ❷ Read Philippians 3:12-21. In v. 15, Paul commands us to "think this way"—a way which is described in v. 12-14. Summarize from v. 12-14 the essence of "the way" Christians are to think. What category of people does Paul say should "think this way" (v. 15a)? Who does Paul hold out as an example of "the way" Christians are to think (v. 16-17a)? Does Paul expect that the Philippians will be able to find other similar examples (v. 17b)? Then, in v. 18-19 Paul describes some who think and walk in a different way! Describe that way. Are these two ways of thinking and living *slightly different* from, or *diametrically opposed* to, each other?

### Interpretation—What does it mean?

- ❸ Trace this logic: There are many "influencers" (v. 18-19) who think and live in a way that is diametrically opposed to mature ("perfect", v. 15) Christian "influencers" (v. 16-17). But notice this: Paul *has to point them out*. It is *not* immediately obvious from their rhetoric! What does that suggest to you?
- ❹ Imagine Pastor Doug warning TCCers: "*Don't be like that church down the street! They're evil!*" Is Paul being unloving, narrow, proud or judgmental in pointing them out? Why or why not?

### Application—What do I do with this?

- ❺ It seems that the Philippians were being deceived by influencers who hid evil behind a facade. Talk is cheap (Proverbs 20:6)! How can a Christian *know* if those who are influencing him are *truly* godly? How will you make sure that *you* are not deceived by fine-sounding, but wicked, "Christian influencers"?
- ❻ Read 1 Peter 5:1–5. The Apostles are dead and gone; who protects believers today? Take a moment to deepen your understanding of biblical eldership by reading this. ⇔

What dangers have you encountered in your Christian walk? How did they harm you?

How have you been allowing TCC's elders to influence and protect you?



2025-10-5



① Standard discussion-starter question. Just get folks talking, but don't linger here.

② The way Christians are to think (v. 12-14) includes:

- humility regarding one's relative maturity (v. 12a)
- regardless of relative progress, commitment to ever more maturity (v. 12:b)
- realization that God is the initiator (and therefore guarantor, 1:6) of progress (v. 12c)
- unwillingness to allow past failures to retard growth (v. 13)
- confident, goal-focused living (v. 14)

What category of people does Paul should "think this way" (v. 15a)?

- whoever regards themselves as mature

Who does Paul hold out as an example of "the way" Christians are to think (v. 16-17a)?

- himself and Timothy (see 1:1)

Does Paul expect that the Philippian's will be able to find other similar examples (v. 17b)?

- yes, there are "those who walk according to Paul's and Timothy's pattern"

Then, in v. 18-19 Paul describes some who think and walk in a different way! Describe that way.

- irrespective of their words, they are "enemies of the cross of Christ" (see Galatians 6:14)
- they're destined for hell (regardless of their assertions of righteousness)
- Yahweh is not their god; they are idolators; their appetite is their god (Romans 16:18)
- the things they boast about are actually shameful (Romans 6:21)
- their minds are set on earthly things (Colossians 3:1-3)

Are these two ways of thinking and living **slightly different** from, or **diametrically opposed** to, each other?

- Yes!

③ Not all Christian (speakers, authors, podcasters, etc.) are to be trusted—yet their error is not immediately evident. They hide wicked motives behind fine sounding words. Biblical guidance is needed to sort out godly and ungodly influences.

④ Not at all—in fact, it is one of the roles of the "overseer". The NT is full of warnings regarding false teachers, such as: 1 Timothy 4:1–2; Jude 3-4; Galatians 2:4; 2 Timothy 3:6; Titus 1:16; 2 Peter 2:1. Many teachings are in fact demonic! See 1 Corinthians 10:19-21; Deuteronomy 32:17; Psalm 106:37; and Revelation 9:20.

⑤ How can a Christian **know** if those who are influencing him are **truly** godly? How will you make sure that **you** are not deceived by fine-sounding, but wicked, "Christian influencers"? **Proximity is critical! Anyone can impress you from a distance, but when they live among you, when you get a chance to observe them when they're not "on camera", then you get a chance to see if their "walk" matches their "talk"!**

⑥ The Apostles are dead and gone; who protects believers today? **pastors/elders/overseers, as they apply the authoritative, apostolic writings (the Scriptures) to our lives.**

What dangers have you encountered in your Christian walk? How did they harm you?

**Be ready with your own answers, but allow group members to speak first.**

How have you been allowing TCC's elders to influence and protect you?

**ditto.**

## Sermon Summary    Text: Philippians 3:15-21

Last week we talked about how we can come to know Christ more intimately. We come to really know him by suffering triumphantly until death (3:10-14). Paul went on to challenge his readers to pursue the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Paul was looking forward to his own resurrection for he knew that then he would know Christ fully—and he would become like him—he would experience spiritual perfection. That spiritual perfection is still future. Paul made it clear that he had not yet attained that (3:12).

In verses 15-21, Paul is addressing those in the church who think they have already achieved the pinnacle of spiritual maturity. Paul is seeking to gently bring those who think they have already arrived to his more humble, and I would add, more accurate point of view. Paul says perfection awaits the resurrection. In the meantime, we should humbly pursue Christ and adopt His selfless, other-centered, self-sacrificing lifestyle (2:1-5).

In verse 16, Paul states that the goal is to move forward in our spiritual lives, not backwards - nor is the goal to hold steady. It is to advance. Paul also says to follow his example (v.17). A flesh and blood example is a powerful thing. When looking for role models, it's not perfection we are looking for, it is life direction. Are these people pursuing the upward call of God in their life? In discipleship, we are seeking to reproduce in others the spiritual standard we have attained, while continuing to press forward ourselves (2 Timothy 2:2). Paul sees himself and those who minister alongside him as important role models. We are to pattern our life after theirs.

Not all role models are created equal. There are good examples and bad examples. Paul warns us to watch out and not to follow those people. Avoid them. He goes on to contrast these enemies of the cross of Christ with true believers in verses 18-21. Not everyone is worthy of imitation (Luke 6:40). The truth is you will become like those whom you most admire—those whom you associate with most closely. It is the law of attraction and reproduction. When you think about it, all of us are on one of two paths—the path to destruction or the path of heavenly citizenship. You are pursuing one of two gods, the god of worldly desires or the God of the Bible. God calls us, His church, to pursue the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. He calls us to actively pursue Him. We are to press ourselves toward that goal.

We have to keep our eyes on Jesus—the author and perfecter of our faith. If we don't, we will be drawn off course. We will backslide. It's not intentional. It happens slowly, but surely. Paul calls us to live differently, intentionally and purposefully. God calls us to rejoice in our suffering. We really can rejoice in our suffering because of the power the Holy Spirit provides. As we pursue this upward call, we are not to merely look out for our own interests, but also for the interests of others. We are to be other centered, not self-centered. Let's pursue our heavenly calling and build upon the spiritual maturity we have already attained. Christ calls us to follow Him in discipleship.

Who is your Paul? Who is your Timothy? If you don't have one, find one.

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

***Both the Bible and secularists recognize the importance of role models (1 Corinthians 11:1).  
This week, choose a biblical character (such as Joseph, Ruth, Moses or Mary)  
and, using the following steps, see what you should learn to imitate...***

**Monday**— Studying a biblical character employs the same basic steps of all Bible study:

- (1) **Observation**, which asks, *"What does the text say?"*
- (2) **Interpretation**, which asks, *"What does the text mean?"*
- (3) **Application**, which asks: *"What must I do with this?"*

Take a moment today to read this helpful article from **GotQuestions.org** ➡



**Tuesday**— Make a list of all the passages which refer to the person you've chosen to study.

Caution: Several people often have the same name; you should consult a Bible encyclopedia or Nave's Topical Bible to make sure that you collect verses about the correct individual.

**Wednesday**— Observation: Ask yourself...

- What does the person's name mean? (Sometimes this is very significant.)
- What is his ancestry? Who are his descendants?
- Describe her spiritual interest. Did it grow or wane? Why?
- What were his main accomplishments? Defeats?
- What factors helped him trust God? Which ones caused him to stumble?

**Thursday**— Interpretation: Ask yourself...

- What was her role in the unfolding story of salvation?
- What spiritual principles are illustrated by his life?

**Friday**— Application: Ask yourself...

- What mistakes from his life should I avoid?
- What commendable aspects of her life should I emulate?
- What hope or warning can I gain from this life?