

ON WINGS OF PRAISE MINISTRIES

“Always Expecting—Always Anticipating—Always Looking for the Manifested Presence of God.”



FOLLOW THOSE WHO FOLLOW CHRIST

Have we as Christians become so blinded by deception that we can no longer recognize the difference between a **TRUE MAN** of God and false leaders and teachers? The Apostle Paul warned the Philippians, and us by extension, that FALSE teachers had slipped into the church **“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.” (Philippians 3:17)** Without any sense of false humility, Paul declared that both his VISION and SPIRITUAL ATTITUDE were examples for us to follow. Through our powers of discernment, he instructs us to look for and **“to observe”** leaders who exemplify the very existence of God’s purpose—which is to **“Possess the likeness of Christ.”** The very context by which Paul wrote describes both his SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS before he found Christ and his utter abandonment of the flesh afterwards.

It’s one thing to be able to discern what is false, but it is of much greater value to know clearly the pattern of **TRUTH**. Paul reveals the attitude of his heart to the Philippians in chapter three. He lay’s out completely the pattern of what we should look for in LEADERS. In verses 5 and 6 he tells us of his most amazing achievements and what he had obtained, but in verse 7 Paul renounces the very things that he had attained saying **“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ”**. Nothing, no position or esteem among men can replace the **“Surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus (our) Lord.”** He tells us that the most amazing of achievements become as **“RUBBISH** in order that (WE) may gain Christ.”

Paul separates himself further from the Mosaic Law, revealing that his quest is to **“be found in Christ”** (verse 9), having received a NEW SOURCE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS which comes from God on the basis of **FAITH**.

We began this message with Paul’s admonition to **“Observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us”** (verse 17). God reveals this pattern we are to copy in (verse 10-11) **“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead”**. Actually knowing Christ is a big difference from memorizing God’s word.

Jesus, Himself, is the way, the truth, and the life. To know Him is eternal life and to live in FELLOWSHIP with Him is to partake of the very GLORY of heaven. Yet knowing Christ also means knowing the FELLOWSHIP of His SUFFERING as we lay down our lives to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Participating in His sufferings is part of knowing Him. In Paul’s pursuit of God he said **“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”** (verse 13-14). What did Paul choose to forget? He released to God all of his disappointments, wounds, and offenses of YESTERDAY, and he pressed towards the prize of possessing Christ.

Remember Paul’s warnings as you pray about whose teachings might influence you, because we must continually be looking for those who are pressing toward the prize of **“Christ Likeness”**. Paul is our example; he has set the pattern for us. In these times of deception, accusation, and false discernment, let us rightly discern the influence of Jesus in those who lead us. As we clearly see the Lord—**“LET US FOLLOW THOSE WHO FOLLOW CHRIST.”**

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