



## PROPER 22 ARTICLE NO. 2005.827

Strive for the prize.

**Phillipians chapter 3 verses 14 to 21.**  
**Written at Ephesus 55-56 CE**



**“I press toward the mark** for the **prize** of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as **be perfect** <sup>(5046)</sup>, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us **walk by the same rule**, let us **mind the same thing**.

Brethren, be followers together of me, and **mark them which walk** so as ye have us for an ensample. (For **many walk**, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, **that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ**: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our **conversation** is in heaven; from whence also we {I} look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our {my} vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

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 {Paul means **I**, not **we** as you can see from “*vile body*” which surely is not what he would say of anyone else - see <sup>B</sup>}.

<sup>B</sup> Paul had a deformity or some ailment that made him look ugly. He was sometimes disgusted with his body. Other writers mentioned his condition. This in addition to the thorn in his side.

**Much of this tract is commentary - don't take it as Gospel. It is here to encourage meditation and study. Use your gift of discernment, to find the truth.**

Page 2

### Phillipians chapter 3 verses 14 to 21.

In the first part :

Paul is encouraging a group of people that he obviously respects, to run with him in the race to being made perfect. He says he is getting closer to **being perfect**<sup>A</sup>. and those brothers who are in the same condition as him who are fully instructed, have dedicated their life, have trained unrelentingly for the great race, and continue to be single-minded, and not get sidetracked, focussing all their attention on the finishing line and the ultimate prize, which is the highest calling of God in Christianity - **being made perfect** and achieving eternal life with Jesus Christ.

But if any of them are mistaken about what the goal is, God will make it clear to them. Nevertheless wherever they are positioned, in this race, however poorly they have trained, let them all keep to the instructions, stay friends, stick together, support one another and keep clearly in front of them, the finish line, and the reward<sup>A</sup> fully instructed, have dedicated their life, have trained unrelentingly for the great race, and continue to be single-minded, and not get sidetracked, focussing all their attention on the finishing line and the ultimate prize,

#### <sup>A</sup>Perfection

Hebrews 6:1, 2 (Philips NT)

{This is basic}

“1 LET us leave behind the **elementary teaching** about Christ and go forward to adult understanding. Let us not lay over and over again the foundation truths--repentance from the deeds which led to death, believing in God,

2 the teaching of baptism and laying-on of hands, belief in the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment.”

“3 No, if God allows, let us go on.”

{This describes perfection:}

“4 When you find men who have been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift and received the Holy Spirit,

5 who have known the wholesome nourishment of the Word of God and **touched the spiritual resources of the eternal world**”

{Meaning: experienced a miracle.}

***The Views expressed here are strictly those of the author and probably disagree with what you have previously thought. Read other commentaries - meditate on the original KJV.***

## Doing Theology

Page 3

We don't much talk about attaining sanctification (or perfection-see <sup>A</sup> below) in the Church, but it is scriptural and can lead to Sainthood (hence St. Paul, and St. Luke who were made perfect).

In the second part: Paul then says something like:

"Pay attention to the way that the other brothers 'walk the Way' and compare their way with us, for many of the brothers may seem to be Christian but they are enemies of the atonement of Christ, and deny it's efficacy. and they even boast (*glory in*) about their circumcised part, which we would never show! (meaning the Jews). They are definitely not like us: they mind earthly things and think only of their comforts, to their destruction. Instead, be like me: my conversation is of heavenly things, and I look for the return of the Lord Jesus, and the resurrection when my vile body will be changed into a glorious body like His."

Page 4

### So what do we do this week?

**Go looking for old Bible commentaries in used bookstores, and pick obviously Anglican authors. You can tell from their titles (Rev.), the college they were at (Oxford, Cambridge), the name of the book (Saint, St. for Apostles names), and the name of the Church they worshipped at. Sometimes they identify their Religion in the introduction.**

Some of my favorite commentaries:

- o. "What St. Paul really said", - N.T. Wright available from the Cathedral bookshop.
- o. "The Life and Epistles of Saint Paul" - an old 1911 printing by Rev W.J.Conybeare, M.A. of Trinity College, Cambridge and Rev J.S. Howson D.D. (the AV used for the text) - available in the SC Diocese Library, and by Amazon.com for around \$15.

For a modern general commentary, a comprehensive volume is:

- o. "The New Jerome Biblical Commentary" : Brown, Fitzmyer, and Murphy. Seventy Four Contributors, and three editors.

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## Comparing KJV with NIV translation

NIV substitutes *live* for *walk*<sup>KJV</sup> which misses the idea that the enemies are those deceptively “walking the Way” with the brethren. The phrase *mark them which walk*<sup>KJV</sup> means watch all the believers to see who is on the correct path (behave like Paul), and who is going down a wrong path.

The KJV is clear in that, the men in error are **within** the group of believers (*for many walk*). NIV implies that the *many* are **outside** the fellowship of believers.

*Citizenship*<sup>NIV</sup> is misleading (see Greek below)<sup>A</sup>. Better would be: “the tenor of our life is in heaven”. And this would agree more with:

*Conversation*<sup>KJV</sup> is better. It implies the mind is focussed on heavenly (spiritual) things.

*our Lowly bodies*<sup>NIV</sup> - meaning: unacceptable to God, but Paul didn't say anything about the condition of the listeners bodies, he was talking only about his own *vile body*<sup>KJV</sup>.<sup>B</sup>

<sup>A</sup> **πολιτευμα**<sup>4175</sup> politeuma *pol-it'-yoo-mah*; from [4176](#); a community, i.e. (abstractly) citizenship (figuratively):-- conversation.

cf. Acts 22:28 where a different word means citizenship.

**πολιτεια**<sup>4174</sup> politeia *pol-ee-ti'-ah*; from [4177](#) ("polity"); citizenship; concretely, a community:-- commonwealth, freedom.

<sup>B</sup> Paul had a deformity or some ailment that made him look ugly. He was sometimes disgusted with his body. Other writers mentioned his condition. This in addition to the thorn in his side.

Amori Christi et Ecclesiae –  
Glen C. Miller OSV

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## NIV - for those of you addicted to it

“I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which **God has called me heavenwards** in Christ Jesus. **All of us who are mature** should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained. Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many **live** as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our **citizenship** is in heaven. And **we eagerly await a Saviour** from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”

(NIV) I find the passage in the NIV translation a bit depressing. Paul's listeners are not closing-in on perfection, they seem merely old (mature) and eagerly waiting for God to take them home. But how could this be? Paul himself was only in his late forties, with his best work ahead of him (Roman's and Rome itself). Why would Paul express himself at this time as a man waiting only for the end? I think that the NIV, in attempting to remove any suggestion of the idea of progression towards perfection, has mangled these verses, and missed the “mark”.

### Recommended Books

			ISBN
The Bible In English	Daniell, David	Yale	0-300-09930-4
The New Jerome Biblical Commentary	Brown, Raymond	Prentice Hall	0-13-614934-0
The Life And Epistles of Saint Paul	Conybeare W.J.	S.S. Scranton	
What Saint Paul Really Said	Wright N.T.	Eerdmans	0-8028-4445-6