

A CHOICE OF LIFESTYLES

Philippians 3:17-21

4/27/03

We as Christians have a choice to make- To live like the unsaved world or to live like the citizens of heaven that we are.

JHBC student- "Sometimes we get tired of doing what we know is right; especially when everyone else seems to be doing it the other way."

This is particularly true when it is our Christian friends who are the ones making the bad choices.

We can follow the example of Christ, Timothy, Ephroditus, and Paul, or we can follow the example of far to many others.

1. We Can Follow the Example of Paul. 3:17

- a. We can choose to put Christ and His kingdom first. 1:18, 20-24
- b. We can choose to sacrificially serve others. 1:29-30; 2:17
- c. We can choose lay aside our earthly accomplishments and religious standing in order to know Christ better. 3:4-11
 - We can be willing to risk our reputations and job promotions in order to put Christ first.
 - ◆ Mike Alexander
- d. We can choose to press on to gain our heavenly reward. 3:14
 - Hebrew 11:13-16 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* from

which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

- **Hebrews 11:24-26** By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; *for he was looking to the reward.*

◆ This is what motivates the spiritually minded.

2. We Can Follow the Example of the Many. 3:18-19

a. They are enemies of the cross.

- Reject the knowledge that God has given to them.
- They don't want God to rule over them.
- They buy the lie of Satan in the Garden of Eden.

◆ You can't trust God or His word.

◇ God's holding out on you.

◇ God doesn't really love you.

◇ Sin isn't that bad.

◇ I can sin and get away with it.

◇ "I know others who have gotten away with it."

◇ "I can handle the consequences."

◇ "God understands."

◆ Romans 1:18ff

b. Their god is their appetite.

- their desires and passions
 - ◆ Appetites for fun and pleasure
 - ◇ recreation, relaxation, leisure, exercise
 - ◇ endorphine addicts
 - ◆ Appetites for approval
 - ◆ Appetites for advancement, achievement, recognition, control and influence
 - ◆ Appetites for things
 - ◇ Newer cars, bigger houses, nicer clothes, more expensive jewelry, etc.
 - ◇ cf God's people in Israel and bought into the same value system as the culture during the days of Haggai.
- Many unsaved people pursue whatever their bodies and emotions desire
 - ◆ alcohol, drugs, sex
 - ◇ **Kitty Muggeridge in Gazing on Truth**
Self-fulfillment soon grows into a quest for self-indulgence with a vocabulary of I, Me, Mine and self-indulgence, in turn, soon becomes unbridled. The self-indulgent pursuit of pleasure embraces tolerance of homosexuality, addiction to eroticism, addiction to drugs and alcohol, habitual divorce, vandalism and lawlessness. Thus liberty becomes libertinism. It is a dictatorship of permissiveness which enslaves its citizens, a dictatorship whose decrees are endlessly purveyed by the media.
 - ◆ . 1 Corinthians 6

c. Their glory is their shame.

- They brag about their sin and rebellion.
- They take delight in their self-will and rebellion.
 - ◆ Listen to much of today's music.
 - ◆ Look at the attitudes of the many of today's heroes and super stars.
- They pride themselves in their shameful deeds.
 - ◆ They brag about who they ripped off, how much they drank, who they told off, or who they beat up. (cf Isa. 5:11-12, 20-22)
 - ◆ They take pride in how many people they have slept with or how they got away with cheating on a test.

d. Their minds are focused the on earthly things.

King Henry IV of France once asked the Duke of Alva if he had observed the great eclipse of the sun that had recently occurred. "No," said the duke, "I have so much to do on the earth that I have no leisure to look up into heaven."

From Making It Happen, by Charles Paul Conn,
 When I lived in Atlanta, several years ago, I noticed in the Yellow Pages, in the listing of restaurants, an entry for a place called Church of God Grill. The peculiar name aroused my curiosity and I dialed the number.

A man answered with a cheery, "Hello! Church of God Grill!"

I asked how his restaurant had been given such an unusual name, and he told me: *"Well, we had a little mission down here, and we started selling chicken dinners after church on Sunday to help pay the bills. Well, people liked the chicken, and we did such a good business, that eventually we cut back on the church service. After a while we just closed down the church altogether and kept on serving the chicken dinners. We kept the name we started with, and that's Church of God Grill."*

This incident is not unlike many churches, denominations, and individuals who over time, have drifted away from their original purpose.

- ◆ Job, sports, friends, fun
- ◆ fishing, hunting, golfing, skiing etc.
- ◆ getting a date and being popular is more important than following God.
- ◆ making money becomes paramount
- ◆ Their attention and focus is on the things of this world. The physical and material.
- Col 3:2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things on earth.
- Mk 8:36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?

3. Each Path Leads To A Different Destination. 3:19a, 20-21

a. One leads to destruction. v.19 cf Mt 25:41,46; 2 Peter 3:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8

Make sure that you have chosen the right road! cf Mt 7:13ff

- ◆ 2 gates lead to 2 paths lead to 2 destinies vv. 13-14
- ◆ 2 trees produce 2 fruits lead to 2 destinies vv.17-20
- ◆ 2 houses on 2 foundations have 2 different destinies vv. 24-27
- note our passage
 - ◆ 2 gods (appetites or the true God)
 - ◆ 2 glories (shame or future rewards)
 - ◆ 2 mind sets (earthly things or heaven)

- ◆ 2 citizenships (earth or heaven)
- ◆ 2 destinies (hell or heaven) cf Rev 3:10
- One path leads to destruction, the other leads to heaven.

b. The other leads to heaven. v. 20

- We are made citizens of heaven the moment we come to Christ. v. 20a
 - ◆ Our names are recorded in heaven's registry (Phil 4:3; Rev 20:15)
 - ◆ We are now ambassadors from heaven to earth on behalf of God. II Cor 5:17-21
 - ◇ **Hebrews 12:22-24** But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of *the* righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than *the blood* of Abel.
 - ◆ Eric Barker, a missionary from Great Britain, spent over 50 years in Portugal preaching the Gospel, often under adverse conditions. During World War II, the situation became so critical that he was advised to send his wife and eight children to England for safety. His sister and her three children were also evacuated on the same ship. Although his beloved relatives were forced to leave, he remained behind to carry on the work. *On the Lord's Day following their departure, Pastor Barker stood before his congregation and said, "I've just received word that all my family have arrived safely home!"* He then proceeded with the service as usual. Later, the full meaning of his words became known to his people. He had been handed a wire just before the

meeting informing him that a submarine had torpedoed the ship, and everyone on board had drowned. He knew that because all were believers they had reached a more "desired haven." Although overwhelmed with grief, he managed by the grace of God to live above the circumstances and to stay on the firing line for Jesus. The knowledge that his family was enjoying the bliss of Heaven comforted his heart.

- We are now awaiting the return of our Savior. v. 20b
 - ◆ Acts 1:11;
 - ◆ Hebrews 9:28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him.
- We will be marvelously transformed v. 21

We who are citizens of heaven should live like it.

- heaven's lifestyle (Gal 4:17ff)
- heaven's values cf I John 3:2
- heaven's work (II Cor 5:17ff)
- heaven's power v. 21 (Gal 5:16ff)
- heaven's language (Col 4:6; Eph 4:29)
- heaven's peace (Phil 4:6-7; Heb. 13:5)
- heaven's joy
- heaven's hope

Are you a citizen of heaven?