

Title ideas:  
The Joy of Knowing Our Citizenship!  
The Joy of Knowing Our Savior!

## Philippians 3:17-21 - The Joy of Knowing Our Savior!

Scriptures:  
Philippians 3:8-12 - Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Philippians 3:13-14 – Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 11:1 - Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

Philippians 4:9 - The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and

4831 – fellow imitator

note those who so walk, as you have us

4648 – notice carefully, keep thinking about, ponder, fix attention toward,

4043 – behave, live, conduct one's life

for a pattern.

5179 – model, example

Notes:  
Paul's one desire was to know Christ perfectly (Phil. 3:8-12).

Paul is calling all who read these words to a lifelong pursuit of knowing Christ better. That call peaked with his declaration of single-minded purpose (Phil 3:13-14).

Paul's call is an ever upward journey toward Christlikeness, toward God, and toward heaven.

Paul was not one to seek the attention of others for personal gain or recognition. And yet, here he is pushing himself out to the front and calling others to follow his example. Only the inspiration of the Holy Spirit would compel a man like Paul to do that.

Paul was convinced that he was following Christ well enough that he could encourage others to imitate him and the others who were living in the same manner (1 Cor. 11:1). Later Paul will say God's blessing will be on those who do this (Phil. 4:9). This is not an expression of arrogance but of absolute humility before God.

As Christians, we must never forget that our walk with Christ is not meant to be a solitary one. We must always be connected to those who are pursuing Christ better than we are and we must be connected to others who need our example of Christlikeness to grow in their knowledge of Christ.

"Those who pursue Christ will produce those who pursue Christ." (Hughes, 2013) page 158

Scriptures:

18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often,

4183 -

4043 – see verse  
17

Notes:

First, Paul calls them to walk in a manner that is worthy of the gospel that saved them. Then he warns them to watch out for those who are not. This is a warning about people who claim to be Christians but are not pursuing knowing Christ but are instead leading people away from Christ. Apostate Christians have been around the church from its very beginning. We must always be on guard against them.

and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the

2799 -

Notice Paul's reaction to the 'enemies of the cross of Christ' – not anger or frustration, but weeping. It should make us sad that someone is not in a right relationship to God, especially those who claim to be Christians. Paul's tears may also be because he knows the damage such people can do in the church. They are headed toward destruction and ruin and they are taking people with them.

enemies of the cross of Christ:

2190 -

"...true love weeps even when denouncing the enemies of the cross of Christ, just as the Lord Jesus wept over the murderous city of Jerusalem." (MacDonald, 1990) page 792

'cross of Christ' – This is not referring to the physical cross that Jesus on. It is referring the atonement that Jesus accomplished on the cross. Anyone who teaches a different way to be right with God is an 'enemy of the cross of Christ'.

The 'cross of Christ' also point to the gospel message.

Scriptures:

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 - For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

Romans 8:5-8 - For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

19 whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is* their

5056 -

684 – ruin -

2316 -

belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame—who

2836 – stomach, faculty of desire, feelings, heart, physical desires

1391 – splendor, brightness, radiance, honor, greatness

152 – shamefulness, what causes shame, indecent behavior

set their mind on earthly things.

5426 – have an attitude

1919 -

create a delusion out of desires and feelings.

Because their minds are set on earthly things, that is all they can think about. They are carnally minded (Rom. 8:6-7). It is inconceivable to them to think about heavenly things because they have no basis for thinking any other way than the way they do. Paul goes on to explain why we can live in this earthly world but have a heavenly attitude.

This is a word of judgement on those whose 'god is their belly'. It is meant as a call to the apostate to repent. It is not a condemnation of those who are weak in their faith and make poor choices. They should also repent and seek to know Christ better.

They were living as if there was no heaven or God or judgment.

Notes:

Paul spoke about these kinds of people in other places (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

'whose end is destruction' – This could mean that they are lost. They may have acted like Christians but had never surrendered their life to Christ in true repentance. Their eternal destiny is the infinite never-ending destruction of hell.

It might also refer to apostate Christians. They are walking in a way that is contrary to the word of God. An example of this would be an openly gay Christian. They might make it to heaven, but they will leave a wake of destruction throughout their life.

'their god is their belly' – The belly is literally interpreted as 'stomach' but also is symbolic of the center of desire, physical passions, and earthly pleasures. Rather than turning to God for satisfaction, they allow their 'belly' to guide and direct them. There is no higher power than their own desires. This is the primary motivation behind the pro-abortion movement. Many of them acknowledge that the baby is a living being but its right to life is trumped by their desire to be free to do what they want. They claim that bodily autonomy gives them the unquestionable right to do whatever they want with their body and that no one has a right to force them to do anything with their body without their express permission.

'glory is their shame' – the things they are glorying in are things they ought to be ashamed of.

Shame: a painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety; a condition of humiliating disgrace or disrepute.

June 2022 – Pride Week – people parading and celebrating what they ought to be ashamed of. Why aren't they ashamed? Because their god is their belly! Their desires or feelings rule their lives and determine the course of their lives. They set their mind on earthly things – they don't give any thought to God or eternity. Only now and what they want now matters.

This helps to explain how transgenderism can even exist. To be transgender one must deny the reality of gender and biology and

Scriptures:

Philippians 1:27 - Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel...

Ephesians 2:19-22 - Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which

4175 – “state n. — a politically organized body of people under a single government; especially as the place where one’s citizenship and loyalties lie.”

3772 – the abode of God

we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus

553 – look forward eagerly, hope

4990 – rescuer, one who delivers or saves

Christ,

Notes:

Paul called them to a relentless pursuit of ‘the upward call of God in Christ Jesus’ and then encouraged them to find good examples of people who were doing that and imitate them and then warned them to watch out for those who were not doing it. Paul then describes the basis on which we can do that.

‘our citizenship is in heaven’ – In (Phil 1:27) Paul used a word with the same root when he exhorted them to live worthy of the gospel. The word ‘conduct’ is literally ‘to live as a citizen’.

Philippi was a Roman colony. They depended upon Caesar to take care of them and to rescue them if they got into trouble.

Paul is saying that while they were living in Philippi, they were citizens of heaven. Being a citizen of the United States used to mean more than it does now. One of the benefits of citizenship is protection from evil through the enforcement of laws. One of the most glaring of those issues today is illegal immigration. I am not opposed to people coming to this country for the opportunities that it provides. I am opposed to those who do that illegally.

It can be frustrating to think about stuff like that. When you do sense your emotions stirring about those kinds of things, remind yourself – I am a citizen of heaven first and then a citizen of the US. And then we remind ourselves that Jesus will be coming back again, first, to take us home to be with Him forever, and then to cleanse this world of the evil that holds this world in bondage today.

We might be pessimistic about the present, but we should always be optimistic about the future.

‘we also eagerly wait for the Savior...’ – How eager are we in our waiting? My grandkids, Aurora and Harvey heard their cousins Liam and Lilianna were coming to visit. Every fifteen or twenty minutes one of them would come out and ask if there were here yet. They were eagerly awaiting their cousins.

Scriptures:

2 Peter 1:3-4 - His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Romans 8:29 - For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

1 Corinthians 15:49 - And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 - Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

1 Corinthians 15:27-28 - For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. 28 Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

Ephesians 1:15-21 - Therefore I also, after I

21 <sup>+</sup>who will transform <sup>3345</sup>our lowly body that it may

3345 – change  
appearance

5014 – humility  
low status 4983 -

be conformed to His <sup>+</sup>glorious body, according

4832 -

1391 -

to the working by which He <sup>+</sup>is able even

1753 –  
functioning,  
power, energy

to subdue all things to Himself <sup>+</sup>.

5293 – bring  
under control

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heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His

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power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

Notes:

'transform' – The bodies we are given in this life are not designed for eternity or heaven. They can only exist in this world. This is one of the 'exceedingly great and precious promises' (2 Pet. 1:3-4) of our faith.

'conformed' – This is the fulfillment of (Rom. 8:29, 1 Cor. 15:49).

Our current physical body is subject to sin, disease, injury, and death. When Jesus comes back for us He will give us a body like the body He has now – one that will last forever and is able to exist in God's presence in heaven (1 Cor. 15:51-54).

"It will be deathless, diseaseless, sinless, indestructible, designed for heaven and the spiritual world." (Unger, 1967) page 690

'subdue' – (1 Cro. 15:27-28)

'the working' - This is a reference to Christ's omnipotence. This is the power that raises the dead. It can help us to imitate godly examples of Christ while we 'press on to the upward call of God in Christ Jesus' and await our Savior Jesus who will transform these lowly bodies into glorious ones like His.

Here we are told it is Jesus who will raise us to eternal life, not the Father or the Holy Spirit. It was the power of the resurrection that saved us at it is that same power that will transform us.