

THE RIGHT AND WRONGWAY TO LIVE

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Philippians 3:1-4:1

Imagine two young men in their early twenties. Both are of comparable intelligence and natural ability. They live only 20 miles apart. But their circumstances are very different. The first young man lives in a comfortable apartment, drives a decent car, has many fine clothes in his closet, eats well, and is pursuing the career for which he has just been educated in college. The second young man lives in a dirt-floored shanty, has no car, has only one ragged change of clothes, eats a minimal diet, has no hope for an education, and tries to find manual labor jobs to make ends meet. What's the difference between these two young men? Citizenship! The first young man lives in San Diego, California, and is a United States citizen. The second young man lives in Tijuana, Mexico and is a citizen of that country. The way these men live is greatly affected by their respective citizenships. If the young man from Mexico could somehow move north, acquire his U.S. citizenship, and get an education and a better paying job, his life would change dramatically.

In Philippians 3:17-4:1 (4:1 ought to be the concluding verse of chapter 3); Paul uses this analogy of citizenship to show that as citizens of heaven, we should live differently than those who are citizens of this earth. In Philippians 3:1-11, Paul uses the analogy of an *accountant* to show that the human effort and merit he formerly was counting on for right standing with God he had written off as loss so that he could gain Christ as his righteousness. In 3:12-16 he uses the analogy of an *athlete* to show that the Christian life is a marathon race in which we must keep pressing on toward the goal, the purpose for which Christ first laid hold of us. Now (3:17-4:1) he uses the analogy of an *alien* to show that ... **Christians must live as citizens of heaven, not as citizens of this earth.** (By Steven J. Cole)

Let's take a look at what Paul was communicating to the Christians in Philippi and to us today. Please read Philippians 3:1-4:1 and answer the following questions.

- 1) Read Phil 3:7-11, Explain in your own words what are Paul's goals in life?

- 2) These verses seem to characterize Paul's life and could be seen as his life's purpose. If you were to sum up your life purpose, what would you say?

- 3) Read Phil 3:12-4:1, Paul compares his quest for heaven to a race. What are the similarities?

- 4) V13 Paul says: "...Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize..." What do you think Paul meant when he said: "forget about what is behind and strain toward what is ahead?" Explain how this has influenced you (good and bad) in your Christian race.

Wrong Way Too Live:

- 5) Paul states that Christians must not live as citizens of this Earth. Paul gives us three distinguishing marks that show us how we, as citizens of God's kingdom, are not to live. Explain. (Phil 3:17-19)

Right Way Too Live:

- 6) Paul states that Christians must live as citizens of heaven. Paul talks about 3 things that distinguish the Citizens of Heaven. Explain. (Phil 17, 20-21 and 4:1)