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Sermon Notes

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## **The Church's Great Omission: The Pattern of Discipleship**

### **Philippians 3:17**

Introduction: A Pattern for the Christian Life

Illus. A skilled artisan working from a pattern

#### **I. Christ's Pattern of Discipleship**

***John 13:15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.***

[Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, first published in 1963]

- A. Selection
- B. Association
- C. Consecration
- D. Impartation
- E. Demonstration
- F. Delegation
- G. Supervision
- H. Reproduction

#### **II. Paul's Pattern of Discipleship**

##### **A. Two Key Verses in Philippians**

1. Throughout the letter, Paul is presenting himself as an example to follow

again and again, he relates his attitude about suffering, life, death, ministry, money, prayer, joy, perseverance, humility, servanthood... his attitude and his lifestyle he commends again and again as an example for the Philippians to follow

2. Two sections especially and openly teach it, however

***Philippians 3:17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.***

***Philippians 4:9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-- put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.***

#### B. A Major Theme of Paul's Ministry

1. Statements of his own ministry

***1 Corinthians 11:1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.***

**[NASB] *2 Thessalonians 3:6-9 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.***

***1 Corinthians 4:15-17 Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 16 Therefore I urge you to imitate me. 17 For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.***

2. Statements about his churches

***1 Thessalonians 1:6-7 You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 7 And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia.***

3. Paul's example with Timothy

- a. time spent with Timothy

***Acts 16:1-4 He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. 2 The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. 3 Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 ... they traveled from town to town***

- b. Paul's example to Timothy

**2 Timothy 3:10-11** *You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings-- what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them.*

c. Paul's commands to Timothy

**1 Timothy 4:12** *Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.*

**Titus 2:7** *In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness*

**2 Timothy 2:2** *And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.*

C. Lifestyle Imparted

1. The "Pattern" of life

**Philippians 3:17** *Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.*

- a. Paul has been commending his way of thinking about the Christian life
- b. he has rejected his self-righteousness in Judaism
- c. instead he now wants only one thing: perfection in an intimate love relationship with Christ

**vs. 7-11** *But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ-- the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. 10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

This is what he wants more than anything!!

But how does he pursue it? That is answered in verses 12-14

**vs. 12-14** *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*

- A lifestyle in which he knows he is not perfect now, but someday he will be
- A lifestyle that is confidently assured of final perfection because Christ has taken hold of him
- A lifestyle of constant pressing, striving after perfection in Christ
- A lifestyle of look forward, looking ahead... forgetting what lay behind
- A lifestyle of ever-increasing holiness in the pattern of Christ

This way of thinking about the Christian life IS the right one, and Paul is UTTERLY CONVINCED of this:

*vs. 15-16 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. 16 Only let us live up to what we have already attained.*

Having said that, he now commends a whole lifestyle to them, as he has before:

***Philippians 3:17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.***

This pattern of Christianity is one being followed by people all over the world, says Paul... it is not just a few that are following it... it is a major world movement

**[NASB] 2 Thessalonians 3:6-11 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example. 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.**

There is a PATTERN or TRADITION of Christianity that Paul is presenting to all his disciples

## 2. The Meaning of the word "pattern"

***Philippians 3:17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the PATTERN we gave you.***

- a. Greek word = "tupos"... comes over into English in the form of "type", from which we get the word "typical"

- b. the original use of the word related to an indentation or impression made when struck by a metal stamp... perhaps the impression left in wax by a seal, or in clay by a mold

Illus. Striking an ancient coin... the die is etched by a skilled craftsman—perhaps a picture of the head of Nero with an inscription of the date. Then the coin is struck with great force and the impression is left on the face of the metal

The impression is called the tupos... the very word Paul uses here

### 3. A recognized pattern of a daily Christian life

Stewardship of everything valuable in life... how to live each moment, how to eat each meal, how to conduct each conversation, how to speak each word, how to make each piece of furniture or plow each furrow of a field  
**ALL TO THE MOMENT BY MOMENT GLORY OF GOD**

#### D. Content Imparted

- 1. Don't overemphasize lifestyle and miss this!!!

***Philippians 4:9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-- put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.***

- 2. Doctrine is VITAL to discipleship

- a. we live what we have come to believe
- b. we cannot live what we do not understand
- c. doctrine is the solid foundation for ALL lifestyle decisions

- 3. Paul's theology filled his letters AND his discipleship

***1 Corinthians 4:15-17 Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 16 Therefore I urge you to imitate me. 17 For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.***

- 4. Doctrine of the gospel the "type" to which we are all conforming ourselves

***Romans 6:17 But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted.***

***RSV Romans 6:17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,***

Simply, God entrusted your soul to the TYPE of teaching, the standard of the gospel in all its truth... the gospel is having its way with you, transforming your lifestyle by its perfect upward call

More and more you should be being conformed to the standard of teaching to which you were entrusted

Like the copper metal of the coin that is being struck, little by little you are being “smooshed” and molded around the pattern on the die... the pattern is Christ Himself

***Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.***

He is the pattern, ultimately, and His lifestyle is the way of holiness:

***John 14:6 “I am the way and the truth and the life...”***

Jesus IS the way of holiness, the pattern of godly living

#### E. Practical Godliness is the Goal

- how to pray with fervency and scriptural knowledge
- how to study the Bible and rightly divide it
- how to win the lost to Christ
- how to behave in church... worshiping in spirit and truth
- how to glorify God in everything you do, whether you eat or drink
- how to discipline yourself for godliness
- how to live as a Christian family
- how a man should treat his wife and Christ does the church
- how a father should train his children up in the nurture and fear of the Lord
- how to handle money as a steward of the Kingdom of Heaven
- how to bridle your tongue, using it only as a fountain of blessing
- how to handle lust and worldly temptations

- how to live a disciplined life in eating and earthly pleasures
- how to work hard with your own hands and provide for your families
- how to maintain a good reputation with outsiders
- how to care for the poor, both inside the church and outside
- how to suffer persecution with eternal joy
- perhaps even how to die with dignity and for the greater glory of Christ

For all this Christ came, lived among us, died and rose again

Because all these things matter, He left His Spirit within us to train us and show us the way of holiness

Because Christ loved us, He left us godly examples... men and women whose lifestyles of godliness can teach younger men and women how to walk in a manner worthy of Christ

BUT... we have failed in a major way!!!

### III. The Modern Church's Failed Pattern of Discipleship

#### A. The Greek vs. Hebrew Model of Training

##### 1. Greek model

***Acts 17:21 (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)***

Focus on content, a constant desire for knowledge

Debate, discussion, argument... all done by a leisure class who had the time to probe the depths of some concept to see that it was internally self-consistent

Logic and reason were used to develop a system of ethics which was thoroughly discussed in the cognitive sense

The disciples were then go out on their own and try to live it

Greek wisdom was an abstraction, and the assumption was that life would be changed and molded according to a pure understanding of philosophy

##### 2. Hebrew model

***Deuteronomy 6:6-7 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.***

Constant interactions with real-life situations made wisdom a daily life matter

The physical world was created good by God, so life was physical and wisdom had to engage the physical life in which they lived

**The Modern Church follows the Greek model, not the Hebrew model**

3. Jesus' discipleship was CONSTANT and out in the real world

***Mark 3:14 He appointed twelve-- designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach***

***Matthew 4:19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."***

4. The church's discipleship is OCCASIONAL and removed from the real world

We meet in dedicated buildings, sit and listen to learned teachers, take in data, information... and go home

## B. Critique of Modern Discipleship

1. Remember the Great Commission

***Matthew 28:18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."***

- a. teaching them... there MUST be content
- b. TO OBEY... there must be a lifestyle of obedience, or the Great Commission is not completed
- c. "I am with you always"... the same as with the Twelve... Jesus wants to teach you constantly

2. The Great Omission

- a. lifestyle discipleship
- b. role models and mentors who will say what Paul said

***Philippians 3:17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.***



***Philippians 4:9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me-- put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.***

- c. detailed discipleship in which daily life Christianity is taught and modeled
- how to pray with fervency and scriptural knowledge
  - how to study the Bible and rightly divide it
  - how to win the lost to Christ
  - how to behave in church... worshiping in spirit and truth
  - how to glorify God in everything you do, whether you eat or drink
  - how to discipline yourself for godliness
  - how to live as a Christian family
  - how a man should treat his wife and Christ does the church
  - how a father should train his children up in the nurture and fear of the Lord
  - how to handle money as a steward of the Kingdom of Heaven
  - how to bridle your tongue, using it only as a fountain of blessing
  - how to handle lust and worldly temptations
  - how to live a disciplined life in eating and earthly pleasures
  - how to work hard with your own hands and provide for your families
  - how to maintain a good reputation with outsiders
  - how to care for the poor, both inside the church and outside
  - how to suffer persecution with eternal joy
  - perhaps even how to die with dignity and for the greater glory of Christ

Where are the role model disciplers? I don't just mean godly people who are doing well in their Christian lives... I mean men who will become fully trained themselves, and pass on their knowledge and godly lifestyle to a disciple; I mean women who will become fully trained themselves and pass on their knowledge and godly lifestyle to a disciple?

We desperately need this... there is too wide a division between the soaking in of knowledge from good teachers and the translation to a healthy Christian way of life

### C. The Role of the Community of Faith

1. Discipleship is meant to be done in the context of a community of faith... a local church
2. It isn't meant to be just one man and one younger man; or one woman and one younger woman
3. All of us must take a responsibility for the Christian lifestyles of our brothers and sisters
4. Spiritual gifts come into play: exhortation, giving, service, teaching, prayer
5. Harder aspects come in as well: correct, reprove, rebuke, with great patience and careful instruction (2 Timothy 3)

### D. Modern Lifestyle: The Enemy of Biblical Discipleship

1. TOO BUSY!!!!
  - a. way of life discipleship takes a great deal of time and commitment
  - b. people have to hold down jobs
  - c.
2. How to relate to the family

Illus. My discipleship time with Tim Schuman

2. Too much like Esau
3. Too lazy
3. Personal sin... skeletons in the closet

### E. Assessing First Baptist Church

## IV. Suggesting a Remedy

A.