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Sermon Notes

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## **God-Centered Hope Expels Godless Hedonism**

**Philippians 3:17-21**

Introduction: Two Great Drives in the Universe

Mentor: John Piper, *Desiring God*

Two overpowering drives in the universe

### **1) The personal drive to be happy**

Around us we see constantly the effects of a generation that is pleasure-crazed, that has no other answer to the internal drive for happiness than a life of a steady stream of sensual pleasures... a generation that tolerates the workweek and lives for the weekend... a generation that has more hobbies, more pastimes, more vacation packages, more recreational vehicles, more computer games, more leisure books and magazines, more available styles of music, more home entertainment systems, more exotic restaurants, more health spas, more cruises, more movies/videos/DVD's...

IN SHORT... more strategies for happiness through pleasure than any generation before us... MORE BY FAR!!!

Some of the strategies for happiness involve pleasures God has given, which are fine if used in the proper way... others involve illicit pleasures which God has condemned, and which are plastered all over our nightly news and daily newspapers

BUT the whole system of pleasure through the senses offers one of the greatest threats to our salvation in Christ that we will face in our pilgrimage to the Celestial City

### **2) The drive God has to be glorified by His creation**

The second great drive in the universe is the very reason the universe was created to begin with: God's burning desire to be exalted and glorified in and by His creation

Illus. Jonathan Edwards, "Dissertation Concerning the End for Which God Created the World."... asks the question, "Why did God create the universe?" The answer is clearly given: God created all things for the praise of His glory

We have already seen this in Philippians 1

***Philippians 1:11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ-- to the glory and praise of God.***

Two overpowering drives in the universe

- 1) The personal drive to be happy
- 2) The drive God has to be glorified by His creation

How does the overwhelming drive of every human being to be happy relate to God's overpowering drive to be glorified and praised in and by His creation? The resolution of these two things into one is the core of what John Piper calls "Christian Hedonism"

The basic thesis is that we are happiest when we are living for the praise and glory of God... we are happiest in God, and in God alone

**"God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him."**

Background: The devil is constantly attacking the church of Christ... attacking our well-being, especially with false doctrine

Two of the greatest false doctrines appear in one chapter, Philippians 3: legalism at the beginning of the chapter, license at the end

**Legalism**: a system of self-righteousness based on self-denial and lawkeeping

**License**: living for earthly fleshly appetites, somehow believing God's grace will cover all sins

Paul, the pastor, concerned about the spiritual condition of the Philippians, is fighting on BOTH these fronts

To that end, he has been describing his way of looking at the Christian life:

He rejects Phariseeism, legalism in the first half of the chapter... describing that his best attainments in self-discipline were WORTHLESS, He considered them rubbish in comparison with Christ's perfect righteousness

He has described His own PRESSING after Christ:

***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.***

Having done that, he presents his lifestyle and attitude as an example to follow in general:

**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.*

In verses 17-21, he presents his lifestyle and attitude as an example to follow concerning LICENSE, learned from godless hedonists:

Four Parts of this section:

- I. The Condemnation of Godless Hedonists
- II. The Compassion of Paul
- III. The Conduct of Citizens of Heaven
- IV. The Consummation of Salvation

## I. The Condemnation of Godless Hedonists

### A. The Beginning and End of Philippians 3: Equal and Opposite Errors

- 1. Self-righteous legalism

**Philippians 3:2** *Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh.*

- 2. Godless hedonism

**vs. 18-19** *many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.*

### B. Dual Warning from Paul: WATCH OUT

- 1. Both roads lead to hell by outwardly different but inwardly similar routes
- 2. Both are overwhelmingly self-focused
- 3. True salvation is overwhelming God-focused and Christ-focused

### C. “Whose god is their stomach???”

- 1. Stomach certainly represents food

2. BUT I believe it goes far deeper than food... it represents any fleshly drive, appetite, lust, desire... anything tied to the body and to an exclusively earthly lifestyle

3. If your stomach is your god, it means

- The center and focus of your existence is meeting your earthly drives and desires
- Your free time is spent on those drives
- The organizing theme of your life is those drives: it's why you get up in the morning; why you go to school, why you go to work, what you dream about, what you want the most
- Ultimately, in the end, you worship your body: you live only for what it demands, you serve its whims, you trust in it to make you happy and fulfilled

4. ULTIMATE BIBLICAL EXAMPLE: Esau

***Hebrews 12:16 See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.***

***Genesis 25:29-34 Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. 30 He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he was also called Edom.) 31 Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright." 32 "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?" 33 But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.***

D. Overpowering Drives of the Body... Opposite Human Strategies

1. Remarkable gift of the body: God's highest physical creation

***Psalms 139:14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.***

Amazing, intricate balance of bodily systems: of the nervous system, of the circulatory system, of the endocrine system, of the skeletal and muscular system, of the respiratory and digestive and reproductive systems... all of them balanced and harmonized just as God intended

2. Drives of the body

- a. **drive for food and drink** that is pleasing to the palate and nourishing to the body; epicurean delights of the highest order... culinary delicacies: Godiva chocolates, filet mignon steak of aged Angus beef, French cuisine with exquisite sauces

- b. **drive for sights** that are pleasing to the eye... sparkly and enticing: rare works of art, shiny jewelry of the highest quality; a house overlooking a spectacular vista of a mountain valley, facing eastward for the sunrise and westward for the sunset
- c. **drive for sexual pleasure**... some consider the strongest of all the fleshly drives; a drive many of you are familiar with and the details of which it is not seemly to describe... as though we needed to know again how strong that drive is
- d. **drive for sensory comfort:**
  - a soft, thick blanket on a cold winter night
  - a plush thick bath towel
  - the highest quality clothing, pleasing to the touch
  - skillfully designed furniture... beds that are specially designed for the needs of your aching back
- e. **drive for pleasing sounds:** music of whatever your favorite is, on the highest quality sound system

The drives are strong... sometimes it seems overpowering

Illus. It is like a massive magnetic pull... **Samarium cobalt** magnet, 5000 gauss, approximately 500 times more powerful than a refrigerator magnet

If we were made of wood or plastic, the magnetic attraction would not pull on us at all

If we had no internal sin nature, we would not be attracted to the fleshly system that surrounds us

## 2. Sinful Strategy #1: LICENSE... FREEDOM... "If it feels good, do it!!"

Many of these folks within the church

"Libertines"... Geneva during Calvin's era... "If I want to dance and get drunk and have fun with my life, what difference can it make to the law?"

Some even made it into a theology:

***Jude 1:4 They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.***

***2 Peter 2:18-19 For their mouth is empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. 19 They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity-- for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.***

They taught that God's grace in Christ meant you could sin as much as you want... God would forgive it all  
More of them outside the church, in the non-Christian world:

***Isaiah 22:13 Instead, there is gaiety and gladness, Killing of cattle and slaughtering of sheep, Eating of meat and drinking of wine: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die."***

3. Sinful Strategy #2: LEGALISM... ASCETICISM... "If it feels good, tastes good, looks good, makes you happy, it's of the devil. Save yourself by denying yourself every pleasure."

Desert-dwelling ascetics: monks who escaped the temptations of the world by living in the desert

Illus. Symeon the Stylite, 5<sup>th</sup> century after Christ: tried to escape crowds of admirers by living on top of a pillar in the desert... the first pillar he made was six to eight feet high... his last pillar was over eighty!!! Abstained from food for forty days, praying while standing for twenty and while sitting for twenty

Pharisees like Saul of Tarsus and the others... boasting about their grim determination to obey ALL the Law of Moses, fasting twice a week and giving a tenth of their spices

The essence of legalism's failure: too high an opinion of one's own righteousness AND one's own ability to kill the lust of the flesh

The greatest problem is... asceticism DOESN'T WORK... it doesn't change the heart drive itself; therefore, the people who try this approach end up self-deceived concerning their salvation

***Colossians 2:20-23 Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 21 "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? 22 These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. 23 Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.***

The second problem with asceticism is that it leads to harsh thoughts of God and judgmental attitudes toward others

- 1) Harsh thoughts toward God:

Illus. Martin Luther

He fasted till his cheeks caved in; in freezing winter he slept without a blanket; he would confess his sins for six hours at a stretch. Years later he recalled, "I kept the rule so strictly that I may say that if ever a monk got to heaven by his sheer monkery, it was I. If I had kept on any longer, I should have killed myself with vigils, prayers, reading and other work." No amount of penance, no soothing advice from his superiors could overcome Luther's conviction that he was a miserable, doomed sinner. Although his confessor counseled him to simply love God, Luther one day burst out, "I do NOT love God! I HATE Him."

## 2) Judgmental attitudes toward others

One of the great dangers of a life of unusual self-discipline... careful self-control over all appetites is that it can lead by a short route to arrogant feelings of superiority toward others and a judgmental spirit toward people who don't live up to the same standard

***Luke 18:11-12 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men-- robbers, evildoers, adulterers-- or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'***

Example: If someone feels God leading them to give up some aspect of modern life... perhaps all videos, TV, and any form of entertainment, they may make extraordinary strides in Christian growth... but they are also strongly tempted to look down on others who do not also make the same sacrifices

### E. Here: Godless Hedonism

#### 1. Hedonism defined

(*hedoné*, pleasure). “Whatever most increases pleasure is right”

#### 2. Hedonism and Greek paganism

- a. Greece was the center of philosophical schools centered on hedonism... like the school of Epicurus
- b. BUT whether the Greeks who surrounded the Philippian Christians followed this or that school of formal hedonism, the drive for a life of earthly sensual pleasures is strong at all times
- c. pagan temple worship involved meat sacrificed to idols, temple prostitution, and drunkenness

### F. Paul's Four-fold Assessment of Godless Hedonism

***18 For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.***

#### 1. Enemies of the cross of Christ

The center of Christ's life is the cross: out of love for the glory of God and for sinful humanity, Christ was willing to suffer hell on the cross to bring about eternal joy for the saved

All who would follow Him must live the same kind of life:

***Luke 9:23-25 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses***

*his life for me will save it. 25 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?*

“Deny yourself”???? This is the very OPPOSITE of the lifestyle of Esau... of feeding whatever fleshly urge comes along next

These people HATED the message of the cross, and refused to live it

2. “End” (not “destiny” in NIV) is destruction... that road leads to hell

Greek word is related to “Apollyon” the destroyer

***Matthew 7:13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.***

Some say “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.” Paul says here “The road to hell is paved with good times”... one party after another, one feast after another, one bowing at the shrine of the stomach god after another... godless hedonism ends in eternal destruction

3. Glory in shame

**Thomas Manton: “First we practice sin, then we defend it, then we boast of it.”**

- a. what they boast about the most is what they will in the end be most ashamed of
- b. who can drink the most wine, who can be the most immoral, who can live the most hedonistic lifestyle

4. Mind on earthly matters

- a. the real issue is what is happening in their MIND

John Piper: “The human heart is a desire factory. It produces desires as fire produces heat. As surely as the sparks fly upward, the heart pumps out desire after desire for a happier future. The condition of the heart is to be appraised by the kinds of desires that hold sway. Or to put it another way, the state of the heart is shown by the things that satisfy its desires. If it is satisfied with mean and ugly things, it is a mean and ugly heart. If it is satisfied with God, it is a godly heart. As Henry Scougal put it, “The worth and excellency of a soul is to be measured by the object of its desire.” [Piper, Future Grace, p. 277-278]

- b. godless hedonists are constantly thinking about their next earthly pleasure

An exciting ballgame

A sensuous night

A great meal



Something earthly

***Romans 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace***

These are the people that Paul is warning the Philippians against

BUT let's not miss an aspect of Paul's character here

## II. The Compassion of Paul

***vs. 18 For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.***

- A. These People Are Enemies of the Cross
- B. BUT Paul WEEPS for them
- C. Paul's Compassion is Overwhelming... and seen two places
  - 1. Here, compassion for the godless hedonist pagans
  - 2. Elsewhere for the Christless Jews, his own people

***Romans 9:1-4 I speak the truth in Christ-- I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit-- 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel.***

- 3. And compassion for sinners in Corinth

***2 Corinthians 2:4 For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.***

- 4. Regular pattern of ministry

***Acts 20:31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.***

- D. Imitation of Christ

***Luke 19:41-42 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace-- but now it is hidden from your eyes.***

- E. Imitation of Other Godly Men

**David: *Psalm 119:136 Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed.***

**Lot: 2 Peter 2:8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)**

**Moses: (Deut. 9:18-19) Lay on the ground fasting and praying for forty days for his sinful people**

**Ezra: (Ezra 9:3,4) tore his hair out and grieved all day over the sin of his people**

A Strong mark of godliness is a deep grief over sin wherever it is found... weeping for the condition of others

#### F. Ultimate Compassion on Christians

Here, Paul has compassion not only for the lost pagans, but for the Philippian Christians who might get swept into their habits... that is why he warns them so clearly here

**vs. 18 *For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.***

NEVER FORGET Paul's tenderhearted tears over the plight of the lost, over the empty life of the godless hedonists of his day, who wasted their lives in a headlong search for earthly pleasures

### III. The Conduct of Citizens of Heaven

**vs. 20-21 *But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 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.***

#### A. Strong Contrast with Christians

1. Their god is their stomach: OUR God is the Eternal, Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth
2. They are enemies of the cross of Christ: we embrace and kiss the cross of Christ as SALVATION, first from the wrath of God by atonement, then from a godless lifestyle by example and power
3. Their end is destruction, BUT our end is eternal heavenly glory with Christ
4. Their mind is chained to earth, BUT our mind is free to soar to eternity

#### B. Citizens of Heaven

1. Paul chooses a strong word here, a technical word relating to the connection with a city-state
2. The Philippians were inordinately proud of their status as full citizens of Rome
3. Paul picks up on that concept and elevates it even higher

“You Philippians are citizens of an even higher and greater city than Rome: the eternal City of God!! You Philippians can boast of citizenship in a far greater empire than the mighty Roman empire, for the empire of Christ the King is eternal and will swallow all human empires.”

4. Strong limitation on human patriotism and earthly allegiance

Illus. “Power of pride” bumper stickers with American flag on it appeared shortly after 9-11. Christians should mediate long and hard on Philippians 3:20

**“Our citizenship is in heaven”**

5. “Heaven” is the place where God dwells, and our future dwelling with God in the heavenlies is depicted most accurately in the book of Revelation:

***Revelation 4:1-2 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." 2 At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.***

***Revelation 7:9-10 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."***

***Revelation 7:13-15 Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes-- who are they, and where did they come from?" 14 I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them.***

God’s temple is in heaven (Revelation 11:19, 14:17), and thus are the saved from every tribe and language and people and nation going to be rescued OUT of earthly tribulation and INTO heavenly dwellings

NOW we must admit some mystery here, for Revelation depicts the New Jerusalem coming down OUT OF heaven as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband; and depicts also a new heaven and new earth the home of righteousness

The heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, is measured mysteriously as being a cube 1500 miles on a side and 1500 miles HIGH!!! This is a mystery... somehow a mixing of earthly and heavenly dwellings in which God Himself with dwell with His people eternally

This is OUR citizenship...

Paul’s point here is ethical... if our citizenship is in heaven, how shall we then live?

C. How Shall Citizens of Heaven Live?

1. Not in lust and wickedness, drunkenness and orgies

***Romans 13:13-14 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.***

2. BUT in holiness and expectant hope of our future perfection

**WE EAGERLY AWAIT A SAVIOR FROM HEAVEN!!!!**

Eager expectation is the mindset of the Christian

WAITING FOR CHRIST, more than anything

***1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead-- Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.***

**WAITING ALSO FOR THE END OF OUR SALVATION**

***Galatians 5:5 But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.***

Waiting that results in a holy life and an evangelistic life

Internal journey of holiness, external journey of evangelism:

***2 Peter 3:11-14 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. 14 So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.***

#### IV. The Consummation of Salvation

***vs. 20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 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.***

##### A. The Second Coming of Christ

1. Christ will descend with the clouds
2. Christ will come back with the armies of heaven

3. Christ will come back as our final Savior from this vile world and its temptations and attacks

## B. Everything Brought Under Control

1. At present we do not see everything subject to Christ
  - a. politicians speak of a sacred right to murder babies and for same gender people to get married
  - b. dictators use their positions to strip their people of possessions, freedom, and hope
  - c. massive cities around the world are cesspools of immorality and deserts of poverty, where orphans roam the streets looking for crusts of bread
  - d. terrorist cells plan and carry out their latest crimes against humanity
2. The world seems to be out of control... but it is just a matter of time
3. All authority in heaven and on earth is Christ's BY RIGHT, by His ROYAL POSITION, and BY CONQUEST
4. And God said

***“Sit at my right hand until I make your enemy a footstool under your feet.”***

The entire world will be made subject to Christ... Greek word in verse 21 is to arrange in good order everything under His authority

***21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control***

BY THAT SAME POWER, He will answer at last the cry of our hearts:

***Romans 7:24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?***

## C. Glorified Bodies... the Perfection of Salvation

***21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control will transform our lowly bodies so they will be like His glorious body***

1. The same power that allows Christ to subject Satan and all the rebellious world kingdoms
2. WILL ALSO transform our lowly bodies (literally “lowly, humble, contemptible”... certainly NOT FIT FOR HEAVEN)
3. “Transform” = strong Greek word... made completely like Christ, transformed externally as we have already been transformed internally

#### 4. Our bodies will be perfectly conformed to Christ's resurrection body

BY THAT SAME POWER, He will answer at last the cry of our hearts:

***Romans 7:24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?***

This "body of death" is the seat of lusts and passions and desires... the stomach acts like a god for us too, with all of its demands. The fleshly drives are a constant battleground for the holy man and woman... when at last will the vicious struggle be over??

The "body of sin" will at last be done away with

The "body of death" will be transformed

The "mortal body" or "corruptible body" will be made glorious, a resurrection body **JUST LIKE CHRIST!!**

Why?

Our salvation is not complete until we are totally conformed to Christ

***Romans 8:29-30 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.***

THAT INCLUDES OUR WRETCHED BODIES

Why? Because nothing less than this can be fit for eternity:

***1 Corinthians 15:50-53 I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.***

This body will be perfectly patterned after Christ's resurrection body

***vs. 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control will transform our lowly bodies so they will be like His glorious body***

***1 Corinthians 15:42-49 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. 46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. 48 As was the***

*earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.*

Resurrection bodies, gloriously perfect just like Christ's... that is our destiny in Christ

Our salvation will not be complete until this verse is fulfilled

No more lusts of the flesh or passionate drives which lead us astray from God

No more corruption, decay, or disease

No more death, mourning, crying, pain

**Glory, bright shining perfect radiant glory, patterned after our Savior, Jesus Christ, that is our future!!!**

## V. Applications

### 1. A Balanced Life

Internal Journey: A Balanced Life of Lawful Pleasures and Self-control: Rejecting both self-righteous legalism and godless hedonism

OBVIOUSLY Christians must reject all immoral pleasures... lust, drunkenness, covetousness, worldly ambition... these are rejected out of hand... if they are in your heart now, plead with God for forgiveness and beg Him to set you free

BUT what about acceptable pleasures... the beauties of nature, the pleasures of food, the joy of marital love, the enjoyment of hobbies and other earthly pleasures that are NOT IMMORAL

Reject extreme asceticism: "do not taste, do not handle, do not touch"... Christ did not live this kind of life, and neither did Paul

BUT: Reject undisciplined enslavement to them on the other hand

How to use the things of the world without being enslaved by them:

*1 Corinthians 7:29-31 What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; 30 those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; 31 those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.*

The word in 1 Corinthians 7:31 says we should use the things of the world as if we did not use them to their fullest... use them lightly and move on

***1 Corinthians 6:12 "Everything is permissible for me"-- but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"-- but I will not be mastered by anything.***

Ask always, "Am I mastered by this thing?" Am I mastered by food? Am I mastered by fun and pleasure? Am I mastered by spectator sports? Am I mastered by hobbies?

Surest test: regular and periodic fasting from food or from entertainment or from hobbies or from any other moral pleasure, to be sure it has not become too important in your life

**HOWEVER:** If something is regularly dragging you into sin, cut it out of your life

***Matthew 5:30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.***

**BUT** if God leads you to some kind of extreme self-discipline, don't let it show to others... keep it between yourself and God; and for God's glory, **DON'T** judge other people who **DON'T** feel led to make a similar sacrifice

## 2. A Compassionate Heart

External Journey: Deep compassion for the lost

Paul wept for the lost

Christ wept for the lost

William Carey wept for the lost as he held his homely little leather globe and wept aloud with strong cries to his students: "These are all pagans! Pagans!!"

Hudson Taylor wept for the lost when he threw himself down before God and said "Give me China or I'll die."

If you don't have this kind of compassion, then labor on your own heart... get closer to Christ, love more and more of what He loves; hate the sin He hates; ask Him to give you His heart for the lost... meditate on the destruction that awaits all godless pleasure-seekers of America and the world

Pray and labor for them until you do begin to weep regularly

## 3. A Consuming Godward Hope

Desiring God: "Christian Hedonism"... feeding the mind on God and not on the fleshly drives

Finding pleasure in God, His Kingdom, His glory



The basic thesis is that we are happiest when we are living for the praise and glory of God... we are happiest in God, and in God alone

**“God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.”**