

Book:	<i>Philippians</i>
Series:	<i>Rejoice in the Lord!</i>
Lesson 12:	<i>Characteristics of Christian Maturity</i>
Text:	Philippians 3:12-21
Date:	December 1, 2013
Next Lesson:	Philippians 4:1-9

INTRODUCTION

In the last 23 verses of Philippians, Paul has offered three examples to us—Timothy, Epaphroditus, and himself. The first two (2:19-30) modeled what it meant to consider the sanctification stakes and “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” in gospel partnership. In 3:1-11, Paul himself illustrated what it meant to “rejoice in the Lord” by repudiating one’s own performance and resting in a relationship with Christ.

Paul is a wise spiritual leader. As MacArthur writes,

[He understood that] some in Philippi might have mistakenly assumed that, having gained those marvelous benefits [in Christ—vv. 1-11], Paul had reached spiritual perfection....To counter such false ideas, Paul quickly added this passage, which is a forceful disclaimer of spiritual perfection.

In verse 15, Paul gives us our key phrase for this passage. He writes, “Let those of us who are mature think this way.” The word “mature” is the same word translated “perfect” in verse 12. Clearly, then, Paul indicates that there is a sense in which believers are not perfect (v. 12) and a sense in which they are (v. 15). Or, we could say, Paul uses this wordplay to demonstrate what true Christian maturity looks like. It doesn’t exist in one’s mere profession (v. 12), but in a mindset (v. 15), an attitude, a character that Paul describes throughout this passage. Like Paul, *you should embrace the characteristics of Christian maturity.* To help you do so, we’ll review them in this lesson.

HUMBLE _____ (vv. 12a-b, 13a, 15b)

1. "I have not _____" (vv. 12a, 13a).
2. "I want to _____" (v. 12b).
3. "I may be _____" (v. 15b).

Application:

FOCUSED _____ (vv. 13b-14, 16-19)

1. Forget the _____ (v. 13b).
2. _____ the goal (vv. 13c-14).
3. Ignore _____ (vv. 16-19).

a. Some distractions are _____ (v. 16).

b. Some distractions are _____ (vv. 17-19).

- *condemned* —
- *idolatrous* —
- *shameful* —
- *earthy* —

Application:

PROPER _____ (vv. 12c, 14, 20-21)

1. We have been _____ (v. 12c).
2. We have been _____ (v. 14).
3. We have been _____ (vv. 20-21).

Application: