

Pursuing Your Heavenly Citizenship

Philippians 3:12-21

Introduction

Our heavenly citizenship should control our earthly existence. Because we know that this world is not our home, we are to live our lives in light of our future permanent residence. This means pursuing the purpose for which God has saved us by aiming to honor Christ and to be like Him. Our actions and attitudes as well as our character and conduct should show that we are being conformed to His image. A person who is living in pursuit of their heavenly citizenship is also a person who is prioritizing spiritual maturity.

One of the ways in which we can prioritize spiritual maturity is to follow others that are setting good spiritual examples. This means to intentionally attach ourselves to people who are heavenly minded and live with their eternal future as high priority for how they live each day. Believers who are seeking to live with a heavenly focus need to be aware of the influence of the enemies of Christ in their lives, those who are earthly minded. They can keep us attached to the world in which we currently live, while we should focus on what is to come.

Another mark of the Christian focused on their heavenly citizenship is an attitude of expectation in anticipation of Christ's return. The believer should look forward to Christ's return and the glorified body which is promised to us for our future citizenship. (*Philippians 3:21*)

As believers, we will have a better experience on earth when we place a high value on spiritual maturity, intentionally surround ourselves with other spiritually mature believers and look forward with expectation to the return of the Savior. Our earthly experience is elevated when we keep our heavenly citizenship as a priority because we must see our lives on earth for what it is – a beautiful yet temporary experience that leads us to our permanent location in heaven.

Getting Started

1. Take a moment and share your concept of heaven with your group. What will heaven be like? What are you most looking forward to?
2. If you are truly honest with yourself, what are some earthly things you feel you may truly miss when you get to heaven. How do we work through uncertainties about losing relationships and experiences we may have here on earth but not in heaven?

Let's Get Personal

1. From either this week's sermon or your own knowledge of Christian living, what does prioritizing spiritual maturity look like in a practical sense?
2. Do you think you prioritize your spiritual maturity? Why or why not?
3. Would you describe yourself as being passionate about your spiritual growth? Why or why not?
4. Are you a good example for another Christian to follow as one who is pursuing your heavenly citizenship with anticipation? Why or why not? What steps can you take to realign your priorities so you too can say, "follow me as I follow Christ?" (*1 Corinthians 11:1*)

Take the Next Step

1. How do the truths you learned encourage you to change your priorities right now? What do you need to do in order to line up with the truth about your heavenly citizenship? Share with your group.
2. Want to dig deeper? Take a look at 2 Timothy 4:7-8; Romans 8:28-29; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, 1 John 3:2; Titus 2:13; Luke 9:62; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5

Renew Your Mind

"I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14
