

Week 8 Philippians 3.12-16, 3.17-4.1

*Chasing on to the Finish*

*Citizens of Heaven*

- I. Prayer
- II. Opening Questions
  - a. How has God helped you toward maturity through difficult places?
  - b. What does citizenship mean to you?
- III. Read N.T. Wright Commentary p. 121-128
- IV. Scan Aesthetic Commentary p.169-196
- V. Discussion Questions
  - a. *Read Philippians 3:12-16.* What is the goal of Paul's life?
  - b. What motivates him to keep pressing on toward the goal?
  - c. Based on Paul's words here and previously in Philippians, how would you define Christian maturity?
  - d. Paul kept pressing on toward maturity because Jesus had already grasped Paul and taken control of him (v. 12). In what areas of your life would you like Jesus to take hold of you?
  - e. What is the goal of "partnership with Christ" for you? Based on Plantinga's quote, are you expecting too much or too little from your faith?
  - f. How would you briefly define the "worldview" of Christ followers? What common Christian beliefs unite people of different cultures, conditions, and races in a single hope?
  - g. What do you think about when you have nothing you must think about? To what does your mind "default?" What do you do with your Selah moments?
  - h. Would you describe yourself as a hope-filled person? What gives/would give you hope?
  - i. If, as Becky Pippert suggests, human beings all want to be loved, how does belief in a resurrected but still intangible Savior fulfill these desires?
  - j. If, for some reason, Christ followers were to reject the biblical truth of the Resurrection, what difference would it make in the Christian witness to a pluralistic world?
  - k. *Read Philippians 3.17-4.1.* Paul boldly invites the Philippians to imitate his behavior (3.17). How have you been helped by the example of other believers?
    - l. What radical contrast does Paul draw between two different kinds of people?
    - m. Paul admits that he weeps at the behavior of people who are enemies of the cross (3.18). When have you been deeply affected by the actions of people who don't follow Christ?
    - n. What challenges does your church fellowship face from the world around you?
    - o. How will things be different when the Lord comes from heaven (3:20-21)?
    - p. No doubt some in the Philippian church were Roman citizens and some were not. Regardless, Paul wants his readers to think out what it means to give their primary allegiance not to Rome but to heaven, not to Caesar but to Jesus.
    - q. What would it mean for your church fellowship to live as a colony of heaven with the responsibility for bringing the life and rule of heaven to bear on earth?