



Have This Attitude

Coming out of an appeal to believers to press on toward the upward call of Christ, the Apostle Paul gives an exhortation for his readers to act with the same heart and mind he has, with a life focused on living for God.

Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained. Phil 3:15-16 NASB

The first thing to note is that the word **perfect** does not mean what you might think it means. No one is nor can be perfect in God's eyes (cf: Rom 3:10, 23), except His one and only begotten Son, Christ Jesus (cf: Heb 4:15). In fact, Paul just stated that he himself was not perfect (see verse 12) so it is best not to assume that he would be expecting or assuming perfection from others.

The Greek word used here for perfect is *teleios* and is more simply understood as *mature*. So, an easier way to grasp what Paul is getting at is to read this as "***as many as are mature.***" He is using those who are spiritually mature as a benchmark for his argument in this passage.

Paul continues that those are mature must ***have this attitude***. Which attitude? Looking back a few verses (vv 7-14) we see the context of what he is talking about:

- counting all we have as loss for the sake of Christ
- willingness to suffer for Christ
- not finding righteousness in ourselves, but only in Christ
- knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection
- forgetting what lies behind and pressing on in our faith
- always seeking to lay hold of the eternal prize that we have in Christ

That might seem like a big list, but for those who have fully committed their hearts and lives to Christ, many of these things will come naturally as the Holy Spirit leads us in the pursuit of God. We may waiver and fail sometimes, but the Lord carries us through those seasons and refines us as we continually seek Him.

Now, you may say we don't have to do all these things to be saved. True, salvation is by grace through faith. We've seen time and time again that we are not saved by works, see Matthew 7:16, Eph. 2:10, James 2:14, etc. Clearly there is both visible and spiritual evidence of salvation in the true Christian's life. The persistent lack of works or any fruits of the Spirit should be considered an extreme warning that one's salvation is not genuine.



Paul says, ***“and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you.”*** For those who might argue against having the mind and heart described here, Paul is gently but decisively rejecting this attitude as spiritual immaturity.

This speaks to a broader consideration each believer must reckon with. Are there scriptural truths that we toss away or dismiss because we don’t like them? Teachings that are difficult to bear or understand, so we mark them as irrelevant, outdated, or unimportant? We must guard against this.

We see in Ephesians 4:4-6 that ***“there is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”*** Just as there is one Lord Jesus Christ, One God the Father, one Spirit, one faith (and so forth), there is only one truth and one correct view on every biblical principle. God’s word does not contradict itself! It is therefore imperative that we do not hold to the doctrines of men, even if they are wise, learned, and persuasive, if their teaching contradicts what Scripture teaches.

Paul is insisting the same; there is one core attitude a genuine Christian possesses – the inward and outward pursuit of God and Christ – and he is saying that if our attitude about that is different, we need to ask the Lord to correct our thinking.

Closing this out, Paul says, ***“let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.”*** We’ve established none of us are perfect and many are not spiritually mature, so while the Lord works through these weak spots in our faith, be it in humility, service, trust, or belief, we are called to continue walking in the ways established in Scripture by the Lord and His apostles. Even if we are in a place of disagreement or inward denial of the importance of certain things we find in the Bible, we must press on in these things while God refines us.

Be encouraged by the truth we learned in Philippians 2:13: ***“for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”*** We don’t (can’t!) do this in our own power or might, but we should always be walking with a soft, teachable heart, open to what the Spirit is telling us as He leads us into all truth (cf: Psalm 25:5, John 16:13).

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