

Philippians 3:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

Analysis

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample (Συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε, ἀδελφοί, καὶ σκοπεῖτε τοὺς οὗτως περιπατοῦντας καθὼς ἔχετε τύπον ἡμᾶς, Symmimētai mou ginesthe, adelphoi, kai skopeite tous houtōs peripatountas kathōs echete typon hēmas)—Symmimētai mou ginesthe ("become fellow-imitators with me")—symmimētai (compound: syn, "together" + mimētēs, "imitator") calls for corporate imitation. Skopeite ("observe, mark") means careful attention. Tous houtōs peripatountas ("those who walk thus")—identify faithful examples. Typon hēmas ("us as pattern/example")—typos ("type, pattern, model") is blueprint to follow. Paul boldly offers himself as model (1 Cor 4:16, 11:1; 1 Thess 1:6). This isn't arrogance but pastoral responsibility—he embodies Christ-pursuit (vv. 12-14) visibly.

Historical Context

Ancient education emphasized imitation of teachers/heroes. Philosophers modeled virtue; disciples imitated. Paul Christianizes this: imitate me as I imitate Christ (1 Cor 11:1). Personal example was primary pedagogy in orality-based culture with limited literacy. Timothy and Epaphroditus (ch. 2) exemplified Christ-hymn values; Paul now calls Philippians to imitate his Christ-pursuit. Moral formation required visible, embodied examples, not just abstract teaching.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Can you say 'be imitators of me' without arrogance—and if not, why not?
2. Who are the faithful examples you 'mark' (skopeite) and imitate in your church?
3. How are you living as a 'pattern' (typos) worthy of others' imitation?

Interlinear Text

Συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε ἀδελφοί καὶ σκοπεῖτε τοὺς
followers together of me be Brethren and mark G3588
G4831 G3450 G1096 G80 G2532 G4648

οὕτως περιπατοῦντας καθὼς ἔχετε τύπον ἡμᾶς
so them which walk as ye have for an ensample us
G3779 G4043 G2531 G2192 G5179 G2248

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 4:16 (Parallel theme): Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

Philippians 4:9 (Parallel theme): Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

1 Peter 5:3 (Parallel theme): Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

2 Thessalonians 3:9 (Parallel theme): Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

Hebrews 13:7 (Parallel theme): Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

1 Timothy 4:12 (Parallel theme): Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

2 Thessalonians 3:7 (Parallel theme): For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

Romans 16:17 (Parallel theme): Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

1 Thessalonians 1:6 (Parallel theme): And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

2 Thessalonians 3:14 (Parallel theme): And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.