

# The Character of Paul an Example to Christians

by Jonathan Edwards

---

*The sermon emphasizes the importance of following the Apostle Paul's example in pursuing salvation and living a life dedicated to Christ.*

**Scripture:** Acts 20:24, Acts 20:35, Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 9:22, 2 Corinthians 12:15, Philippians 3:17, 1 Thessalonians 2:8, 1 Thessalonians 3:9, 2 Timothy 4:7

**Topics:** "Christian Living", "Discipleship"

---

## Description

Jonathan Edwards preaches about the exemplary character of the Apostle Paul, emphasizing the importance of following his good example. Edwards highlights Paul's selflessness, humility, faith, love for Christ, compassion for others, and diligence in doing good. He points out how Paul's life was a reflection of his deep commitment to advancing the kingdom of God and serving others, even amidst great opposition and challenges. Edwards challenges the audience to reflect on their own lives and consider if they are truly living in a manner that glorifies God and benefits others, urging them to emulate Paul's dedication and sacrificial service.

---

## Transcript

The Character Of Paul An Example To Christians

Dated February 1739/1740. Four sermons.

Philippians 3:17

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

Subject: We ought to follow the good example of the Apostle Paul.

THE apostle in the foregoing part of the chapter, had been telling how he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and in the text he urges that his example should be followed.

He does this in two ways.

I. He exhorts the Philippian Christians to follow his example. "Brethren be followers together of me." He exhorts them to be followers of him together; that is, that they should all follow his example with one heart

and soul, agreeing in it, and that all, as much as in them lay, should help and assist each other in it.

II. That they should take particular notice of others that did so, and put peculiar honor on them, which is implied in the expression in the latter part of the verse, "mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."

## DOCTRINE

We ought to follow the good examples of the apostle Paul. We are to consider that the apostle did not say this of himself from an ambitious spirit, from a desire of being set up as a pattern, and eyed and imitated as an example to other Christians. His writings are not of any private interpretation, but he spoke as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost directed that the good examples of the apostle Paul should be noticed by other Christians and imitated. And we are also to consider that this is not a command to the Philippians only, to whom the epistle was more immediately directed, but to all those for whose use this epistle was written, for all Christians to the end of the world.

For though God so ordered it, that the epistles of the apostles were mostly written on particular occasions and directed to particular churches, yet they were written to be of universal use. And those occasions were so ordered in the wisdom of Divine Providence that they are a part of that infallible rule of faith and manners which God has given to the Christian church to be their rule in all ages. And the precepts that we find in those epistles are no more to be regarded as precepts intended only for those to whom the epistle was sent than the ten commandments that were spoken from mount Sinai to the children of Israel are to be regarded as commands intended only for that people.

And when we are directed to follow the good examples of the apostle Paul by the Holy Ghost, it is not merely as we are to imitate whatever we see that is good in anyone, let him be how he may. But there are spiritual obligations that lie on Christians to follow the good examples of this great apostle. And it has pleased the Holy Ghost in an especial manner to set up the apostle Paul, not only as a teacher of the Christian church, but as a pattern to other Christians. The greatest example of all, that is set before us in Scripture to imitate, is the example of Jesus Christ, which he set us in his human nature, and when in his state of humiliation.

This is presented to us not only as a great pattern, but as a perfect rule. And the example of no man is set forth, as our rule, but the example of Christ. We are commanded to follow the examples which God himself set us, or the acts of the divine nature. Eph. 5:1, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children." And Mat. 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." But the example of Christ Jesus, when on earth, is more especially our pattern.

For though the acts of the divine nature have the highest possible perfection, and though his perfection is our best example, yet God is so much above us, his nature is infinitely different from ours, that it is not possible that his acts should be so accommodated to our nature and circumstances, as to be an example of so great and general use, as the perfect example in our nature which Christ has set us. Christ, though a divine person, was man, as we are men. And not only so, but he was, in many respects, a partaker of our circumstances.

He dwelt among men. He depended on food and raiment, and such outward supports of life, as we do. He was subject to the changes of time, and the afflictions and calamities of this evil world, and to abuse from men's corruptions, and to temptations from Satan, as we are; was subject to the same law and rule that

we are, sued the same ordinances, and had many of our trials, and greater trials than we. So that Christ's example is the example that is chiefly offered in Scripture for our imitation.

But yet the example of some that are fallen creatures, as we are, may in some respects be more accommodated to our circumstances, and more fitted for our instructions, than the example of Jesus Christ. For though he became man as we are, and was like us, and was in our circumstances in so many respects, yet in other things there was a vast difference. He was the head of the church, and we are the members. He is Lord of all, we are his subjects and disciples. And we need an example, that shall teach and direct us how to behave towards Christ our Lord and head.

And this we may have better in some, that have Christ for their Lord as well as we, than in Christ himself. But the greatest difference lies in this, that Christ had no sin, and we all are sinful creatures, all carry about with us a body of sin and death. It is said that Christ was made like to us in all things, sin only excepted. But this was excepted, and therefore there were many things required of us, of which Christ could to give us an example. Such as repentance for sin, brokenness of spirit of sin, mortification of lust, warring against sin.

And the excellent example of some, that are naturally as sinful as we has this advantage, that we may regard it as the example of those, who were naturally every way in our circumstances, and labored under the same natural difficulties, and the same opposition of heart to that which is good, as ourselves; which tends to engage us to give more heed to their example, and the more to encourage and animate us to strive to follow it. And therefore we find that the Scripture does not only recommend the example of Christ, but does also exhibit some mere men, that are of like passions with ourselves, as patterns for us to follow.

So it exhibits the eminent saints of the Old Testament, of whom we read in the Scripture, that they inherit the promises. Heb. 6:12, "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews (Heb. 11), a great number of eminent saints are mentioned as patterns for us to follow. Abraham is, in a particular manner, set forth as an example of his faith, and as the pattern of believers. Rom. 4:12, "And the father of circumcision to them, that are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised."

And so the prophets of the Old Testament are also recommended as patterns. Jam. 5:10, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." And so eminently holy men under the New Testament, apostles and others, that God sent forth to preach the gospel, are also examples for Christians to follow. Heb. 13:7, "Remember them that have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the Word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

But of all mere men, no one is so often particularly set forth in the Scripture, as a pattern for Christians to follow, as the apostle Paul. Our observing his holy conversation as our example, is not only insisted on in the text, but also 1 Cor. 4:16, "Wherefore I beseech you, be followers of me." And chap. 11:1, "Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ." And 1 Thes. 1:6. Where the apostle commends the Christian Thessalonians for imitating his example; "and ye became followers of us." And 2 Thes. 3:7, he insists on this as their duty, "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us."

For the more full treatment of this subject I shall,

I. Particularly mention many of the good examples of the apostle Paul that we ought to imitate. Which I shall treat of not merely as a doctrine, but also in the way of application.

II. I shall show under what strict obligation we are to follow the good examples of this apostle

I. I shall particularly mention many of those good examples of the apostle Paul that we ought to imitate. And that I may be more distinct, I shall,

First, mention those things that respect his watchfulness for the good of his own soul.

Second, those virtues in him that more immediately respected God and Christ.

Third, those that more immediately respect men.

Fourth, those that were exercised in his behavior, both towards God and men.

First, we ought to follow the good example that the apostle Paul has set us in his seeking the good of his own soul.

1. We should follow him in his earnestness in seeking his own salvation. He was not careless and indifferent in this matter; but the kingdom of heaven suffered violence from him. He did not halt between two opinions, or seek with a wavering, unsteady mind, but with the most full determination and strong resolution. He resolved, if it could by any means be possible, that he would attain to the resurrection of the dead. He does not say that he was determined to attain it, if he could, by means that were not very costly or difficult, or by laboring for it a little time, or only now and then, or without any great degree of suffering, or without great loss in his temporal interest.

But if by any means he could do it, he would, let the means be easy or difficult. Let it be a short labor and trial, or a long one; let the cross be light or heavy; it was all one to his resolution. Let the requisite means be what they would, if it were possible, he would obtain it. He did not hesitate at worldly losses, for he tells us that he readily suffered the loss of all things, that he might win Christ, and be found in him, and in his righteousness. Phil. 3:8, 9. It was not with him as it was with the young man, that came kneeling to Christ to inquire of him what he should do to inherit eternal life, and when Christ said, Go and sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, he went away sorrowful.

He was not willing to part with all. If Christ had bid him sell half, it may be he would have complied with it. He had a great desire to secure salvation. But the apostle Paul did not content himself with wishing. He was resolved, if it were possible, that he would obtain it. And when it was needful that he should lose worldly good, or when any great suffering was in his way, it was no cause of hesitation to him. He had been in very comfortable and honorable circumstances among the Jews.

He had received the best education that was to be had among them, being brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and was regarded as a very learned young man. His own nation, the Jews, had a high esteem of him, and he was esteemed for his moral and religious qualifications among them. But when he could not hold the outward benefit of these things and win Christ, he despised them totally, he parted with all his credit and honor. He made nothing of them, that he might win Christ. And instead of being honored and loved, and living in credit, as before among his own nation, he made himself the object of their universal hatred.

He lost all, and the Jews hated him, and persecuted him everywhere. And when great sufferings were in the way, he willingly made himself conformable to Christ's death, that he might have a part in his resurrection. He parted with his honor, his ease, his former friends and former acquaintance, his worldly goods and everything else, and plunged himself into a state of extreme labor, contempt, and suffering. And in this way he sought the kingdom of heaven. He acted in this matter very much as one that is running a race for some great prize, who makes running his great and only business, till he has reached the end of the race, and strains every nerve and sinew, and suffers nothing to divert him, and will not stand to listen to what anyone says to him, but presses forward.

Or as a man that is engaged in battle, sword in hand, with strong and violent enemies, that seek his life, who exerts himself to his utmost, as for his life. 1 Cor. 9:26, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." When fleshly appetites stood in the way, however importunate they were, he utterly denied them and renounced them. They were no impediment in the way of his thorough pursuit of salvation. He would not be subject to the appetites of his body, but made them subject to his soul. 1 Cor. 9:27, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."

Probably there never was a soldier, when he bore his part in storming a city, that acted with greater resolution and violence, as it were forcing his way through all that opposed him, than the apostle Paul in seeking the kingdom of heaven. We have not only his own word for it; the history we have of his life, written by St. Luke, shows the same. Now those who seek their salvation ought to follow this example. Persons who are concerned for their salvation, sometimes inquire what they shall do.

Let them do as did the apostle Paul, seek salvation in the way he did, with the like violence and resolution. Those that make this inquiry, who are somewhat anxious year after year, and complain that they have not obtained any comfort, would do well to ask themselves whether they seek salvation in any measure in this way, with that resolution and violence of which he set them an example. Alas, are they not very far indeed from it? Can it in any proper sense be said, that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence at their hands?

2. The apostle did not only thus earnestly seek salvation before his conversion and hope, but afterwards also. What he says in the 3rd chapter of Philippians (Phil. 3) of his suffering the loss of all things, that he might be found in Christ, and its being the one thing that he did to seek salvation. And also what he says of his so running as not in vain, but as resolving to win the prize of salvation, and keeping under his body that he might not be a castaway were long after his conviction, and after he had renounced all hope of his own good estate by nature.

If being a convinced sinner excuses a man from seeking salvation any more, or makes it reasonable that he should cease his earnest care and labor for it, certainly the apostle might have been excused, when he had not only already attained true grace, but such eminent degrees of it. To see one of the most eminent saints that ever lived, if not the most eminent of all, so exceedingly engaged in seeking his own salvation, ought forever to put to shame those who are a thousand degrees below him, and are but mere infants to him, if they have any grace at all, who yet excuse themselves from using any violence after the kingdom of heaven now because they have attained already, who free themselves from the burden of going on earnestly to seek salvation with this, that they have finished the work, they have obtained a hope.

The apostle, as eminent as he was, did not say within himself, "I am converted, and so am sure of salvation. Christ has promised it me. Why need I labor any more to secure it? Yea, I am not only converted, but I have obtained great degrees of grace." But still he is violent after salvation. He did not

keep looking back on the extraordinary discoveries he enjoyed at his first conversion, and the past great experience he had had from time to time. He did not content himself with the thought that he possessed the most wonderful testimonies of God's favor, and of the love of Christ, already, that ever any enjoyed, even to his being caught up to the third heavens.

But he forgot the things that were behind. He acted as though he did not consider that he had yet attained an interest in Christ. Phil. 3:11, 12, 13, 14, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before.

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The apostle still sought that he might win Christ and his righteousness, and attain to his resurrection, not as though he had attained it already, or had already obtained a title to the crown. And this is especially the thing in which he calls on us to imitate his example in the text. It was not because Paul was at a loss whether he was truly converted or not, that he was still so earnest in seeking salvation.

He not only thought that he was converted, and should go to heaven when he died, but he knew and spoke particularly about it in this very epistle, in the twenty-first verse of the first chapter (Phil. 1:21), "For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain." And in the foregoing verse he says, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death."

The apostle knew that though he was converted, yet there remained a great work that he must do in order to his salvation. There was a narrow way to eternal glory, through which he must pass, and never could come to heaven in any other way. He knew it was absolutely necessary for him earnestly to seek salvation still. He knew there was no going to heaven in a slothful way. And therefore he did not seek salvation the less earnestly, for his having hope and assurance, but a great deal more.

We nowhere read so much of his earnestness and violence for the kingdom of heaven before he was converted, as afterwards. The apostle's hope was not of a nature to make him slothful. It had a contrary effect. The assurance he had of victory, together with the necessity there was of fighting, engaged him to fight not as one that beat the air, but as one that wrestled with principalities and powers. Now this example the apostle does especially insist in the text that we ought to follow.

And this should induce all present who think themselves converted, to inquire whether they seek salvation never the less earnestly, because they think it is well with them, and that they are now sure of heaven. Most certainly if the apostle was in the right way of acting, we in this place are generally in the wrong. For nothing is more apparent than that it is not thus with the generality of professors here, but that it is a common thing after they think they are safe, to be far less diligent and earnest in religion than before.

3. The apostle did not only diligently seek heaven after he knew he was converted, but was earnestly cautious lest he should be damned, as appears by the passage already cited. "But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Here you see the apostle is very careful lest he should be a castaway, and denies his carnal appetites, and mortifies his flesh, for that reason. He did not say, "I am safe, I am sure I shall never be lost; why need I take any further care respecting it?"

Many think because they suppose themselves converted, and so safe, that they have nothing to do with the awful threatenings of God's Word, and those terrible denunciations of damnation that are contained in it. When they hear them, they hear them as things which belong only to others, and not at all to themselves, as though there were no application of what is revealed in the Scripture respecting hell, to the godly. And therefore, when they hear awakening sermons about the awful things that God has threatened to the wicked, they do not hear them for themselves, but only for others.

But it was not thus with this holy apostle, who certainly was as safe from hell, and as far from a damnable state, as any of us. He looked upon himself as still nearly concerned in God's threatenings of eternal damnation, notwithstanding all his hope, and all his eminent holiness, and therefore gave great diligence, that he might avoid eternal damnation. For he considered that eternal misery was as certainly connected with a wicked life as ever it was, and that it was absolutely necessary that he should still keep under his body, and bring it into subjection, in order that he might not be damned, because indulging the lusts of the body and being damned were more surely connected together.

The apostle knew that this conditional proposition was true concerning him, as ever it was. "If I live wickedly, or do not live in a way of universal obedience to God's commands, I shall certainly be a castaway." This is evident because the apostle mentions a proposition of this nature concerning himself in that very chapter where he says, he kept under his body lest he should be a castaway. 1 Cor. 9:16, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."

What necessity was there upon the apostle to preach the gospel, though God had commanded him, for he was already converted, and was safe. And if he had neglected to preach the gospel, how could he have perished after he was converted? But yet this conditional proposition was still true. If he did not live a life of obedience to God, woe would be to him; woe to him, if he did not preach the gospel. The connection still held. It is impossible a man should go anywhere else than to hell in a way of disobedience to God.

And therefore he deemed it necessary for him to preach the gospel on that account, and on the same account he deemed it necessary to keep under his body, lest he should be a castaway. The connection between a wicked life and damnation is so certain, that if a man lives a wicked life, it proves that all his supposed experiences are nothing. If a man at the last day be found a worker of iniquity, nothing else will be inquired of about him. Let him pretend what he will, Christ will say to him and all others like him, "Depart from me, I know you not, ye that work iniquity."

And God has revealed these threatenings and this connection, not only to deter wicked men, but also godly men, from sin. And though God will keep men that are converted from damnation, yet this is the means by which he will keep them from it; viz. he will keep them from a wicked life. And though he will keep them from a wicked life, yet this is one means by which he will keep them from it, viz. by their own caution to avoid damnation, and by his threatenings of damnation if they should live a wicked life.

We have another remarkable instance in Job, who was an eminently holy man, yet avoided sin with the utmost care, because he would avoid destruction from God. Job 31. Surely we have as much cause to be cautious, that we do not expose ourselves to destruction from God, as holy Job had. We have not a greater stock of goodness than he. The apostle directs Christians to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Phil. 2:12. And it is spoken of as the character of a true saint, that he trembles at God's Word; Isa. 66:2, which is to tremble especially at the awful threatenings of it, as Job did.

Whereas the manner of many now is, whenever they think they are converted, to throw by those threatenings of God's Word, as if they had no more to do with them, because they suppose they are converted, and out of danger. Christ gave his disciples, even those of them that were converted, as well as others, directions to strive for salvation because broad was the way that leads to destruction, and men are so apt to walk in that way and be damned. Mat. 7:13, 14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

4. The apostle did not seek salvation by his own righteousness. Though his sufferings were so very great, his labors so exceedingly abundant, yet he never accounted them as righteousness. He trod it under his feet, as utterly insufficient to recommend him to God. He gave diligence that he might be found in Christ, not having on his own righteousness, which is of God, through faith, as in the foregoing part of the chapter from which the text is taken, beginning with the fourth verse (Phil. 3:4), "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more; circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having on mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

5.. In those earnest labors which he performed, he had respect to the recompense of the reward. He did it for an incorruptible crown. 1 Cor 9:25. He sought a high degree of glory, for he knew the more he labored the more he should be rewarded, as appears from what he tells the Corinthians. "He that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." And 1 Cor. 3:8, "Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour." That he had respect to that crown of glory, which is Master had promised, in those great labors and sufferings, is evident from what he says to Timothy, a little before his death. 2 Tim. 4:7, 8, " I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." All Christians should follow his example in this also. They should not content themselves with the thought that they have goodness enough to carry them to heaven, but should earnestly seek high degrees of glory. For the higher degrees of glory are promised to extraordinary labors for God, for no other reason, but that we should seek them.

Second, I proceed to mention some of the virtues of Paul, that more immediately respect God and Christ, in which we ought to follow his example.

1. He was strong in faith. It may be truly said of him that he lived by faith. His faith seemed to be even without the least appearance of diffidence or doubt in his words or actions, but all seemed to proclaim, that he had God and Christ and the invisible world continually in view. Such a faith, that was in continual exercise in him, he professes in 2 Cor. 5:6, 7, 8, "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are

confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." He always speaks of God and Christ and things invisible and future, as if he certainly knew them, and then saw them as fully and certainly as we see anything that is immediately before our bodily eyes. He spoke as though he certainly knew that God's promise of eternal life should be accomplished, and gives this as the reason why he labored so abundantly, and endured all manner of temporal sufferings and death, and was always delivered unto death for Christ's sake. 2 Cor. 4:11, etc. "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." He speaks of his earnest expectation and hope of the fulfillment of God's promises. And a little before his death, when he was a prisoner, and when he knew that he was like to bear the trial of martyrdom, which is the greatest trial of faith, he expresses his faith in Christ in the strongest terms. 2 Tim. 1:12, "For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Such an example may well make us ashamed; for how weak and unsteady is the faith of most Christians! If now and then there seems to be a lively exercise of faith, giving the person at that time a firm persuasion and confidence; yet how short are such exercises, how soon do they vanish! How often is faith shaken with one temptation. How often are the exercises of it interrupted with doubting, and how much is exhibited of a diffident, vibrating spirit! How little does our faith accomplish in times of trial. How often and how easily is our confidence in God shaken and interrupted, and how frequently does unbelief prevail! This is much to the dishonor of our Savior Jesus Christ, as well as very painful to us. What a happy and glorious lot it is to live such a life of faith, as Paul lived! How far did he soar on the wings of his strong faith above those little difficulties, that continually molest us, and are ready to overcome us! Seeing we have such a blessed example set before us in the Scriptures, let it prompt us earnestly to seek, that we may soar higher also.

2. Another virtue in which we should follow his example is his great love to Christ. The Corinthians, who saw how the apostle acted, how he labored, and how he suffered, and could see no worldly motive, were astonished. They wondered what it was that so wonderfully influenced and actuated the man. The apostle says that he was a spectacle to the world. But this was the immediate principle that moved him: His strong, his intense love to his glorious Lord and Master. This love constrained him, that he could do nothing else than strive and labor and seek for his salvation. This account he gives of it himself. 2 Cor. 5:14, "The love of Christ constraineth us." He had such a delight in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the knowledge and contemplation of him, that he tells us, he "counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." He speaks in very positive terms. He does not say merely that he hopes he loves Christ, so as to despise other things in comparison of the knowledge of him. But "yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." And he assigns this reason why he even gloried in his sufferings for Christ's sake, because the love of God was shed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Ghost. Rom. 5:5. This expression seems to imply that he sensibly felt that holy affection, sweetly and powerfully diffused in his soul, like some precious, fragrant ointment. And how does he triumph in his love to Christ in the midst of his sufferings! Rom. 8:35, 36, 37, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that hath loved us." May not this make us ashamed of our cold, dead hearts that we hear so often of Christ, and of his glorious excellencies and his wonderful love, with so little emotion, our hearts, being very commonly frozen up like a clod of earth by worldly affections. And it may be that now and then with much difficulty we persuade ourselves to do a little or expend a little for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. And then are ready to boast of it, that we have done so nobly. Such superior examples as we have are enough to make us

forever blush for our own attainments in the love of Christ, and rouse us earnestly to follow after those who have gone so far beyond us.

3. The apostle lived in a day when Christianity was greatly despised. Yet he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Christians were everywhere despised by the great men of the world. Almost all those that made any figure in the world, men in honorable stations, men of learning, and men of wealth, despised Christianity, and accounted it a mean, contemptible thing to be a Christian, a follower and worshipper of a poor, crucified man. To be a Christian was regarded as what ruined a man's reputation.

Christians were everywhere looked upon as fools, and were derided and mocked. They were the meanest of mankind, the offscouring of the world. This was a great temptation to Christians to be ashamed of the gospel. And the apostle Paul was more especially in such circumstances, as exposed him to this temptation. For before he was a Christian, he was in great reputation among his own countrymen. He was esteemed a young man of more than ordinary proficiency in learning, and was a man of high distinction among the Pharisees, a class of men of the first standing among the Jews.

In times when religion is much despised, great men are more ready to be ashamed of it than others. Many of the great seem to think that to appear religious men would make them look little. They do not know how to comply with showing a devout spirit, a spirit of supreme love to God, and a strict regard to God's commands. But yet the apostle was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ anywhere, or before any person. He was not ashamed of it among his own countrymen, the Jews, before their rulers, and scribes, and great men, but ever boldly professed it, and confronted them in their opposition.

When he was at Athens, the chief seat of learning and of learned men in the world, though the learned men and philosophers there despised his doctrine, and called him a babbler for preaching the gospel. Yet he felt no shame, but boldly disputed with and confounded those great philosophers, and converted some of them. And when he came to Rome, the metropolis and mistress of the world, where resided the emperor, and senators, and the chief rulers of the world, he was not ashamed of the gospel there.

He tells the Romans; "I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The apostle was greatly derided and despised for preaching a crucified Jesus. 1 Cor. 4:13, "We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." And in the tenth verse he says, "We are fools for Christ's sake." They were where every accounted and called fools.

Yet the apostle was so far from being ashamed of the crucified Jesus, that he gloried in him above all things. Gal. 6:14, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here is an example for us to follow, if at any time we fall in among those who hold religion in contempt, and will despise us for our pretensions to religion, and will be ready to deride us for being so precise, and look upon us as fools; that we may not be ashamed of religion, and yield to sinful compliances with vain and loose persons, lest we should appear singular, and be looked upon as ridiculous. Such a meanness of spirit possesses many persons who are not worthy to be called Christians; and are such as Christ will be ashamed of when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

4. Another virtue in which we ought to follow the apostle was his contempt of the world, and his heavenly-mindedness. He contemned all the vain enjoyments of the world. He despised its riches. Acts. 20:33, "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel." He despised the pleasures of the world. "I keep under my body." The apostle's pleasures were in the sufferings of his body, instead of the

gratification of its carnal appetites. 2 Cor. 12:10, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake." He despised the honors of the world. 1 Thes. 2:6, "Nor of men sought we glory; neither of you, nor yet of others." He declares that the world was crucified unto him, and he unto the world. These were not the things that the apostle sought, but the things that were above, that were out of sight to other men. 2 Cor. 4:18, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." He longed greatly after heaven. 2 Cor. 5:4, "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up in life." And he tells us that he knew no man after the flesh. That is, he did not look upon the men or things of this world, or regard them as related to the world, or as they respected the present life. But he considered all men and all things as they had relation to a spiritual nature, and to another world. In this the apostle acted as becomes a Christian. For Christians, those that are indeed so, are people that belong not to this world, and therefore, it is very unbecoming in them to have their minds taken up about these things. The example of Paul may make all such persons ashamed, who have their minds chiefly occupied about the things of the world, about gaining estates, or acquiring honors. And yet would be accounted fellow-disciples with the apostle, partakers of the same labors, and fellow-heirs of the same heavenly inheritance. And it should prompt us to strive for more indifference to the world, and for more heavenly-mindedness.

5. We ought also to follow the example of the apostle in his abounding in prayer and praise. He was very earnest, and greatly engaged in those duties, and continued in them, as appears from many passages. Rom. 1:8, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." Eph. 1:15, 16, "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers." Col. 1:3, "We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you." 1 Thes. 1:2, 3, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father." And 1 Thes. 3:9, 10, "For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; night and day praying exceedingly, that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?" 2 Tim. 1:3, "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers, night and day."

6. We ought to follow him in his contentment under the allotments of Divine Providence. He was the subject of a vast variety of dispensations of Providence. He went through a great many changes, and was almost continually in suffering circumstances, sometimes in one respect, sometimes in another, and sometimes the subject of a great many kinds of suffering together. But yet he had attained to such a degree of submission to the will of God, as to be contented in every condition, and under all dispensations towards him. Phil. 4:11, 12, 13, "Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Every where, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." What a blessed temper and disposition of mind was this to which Paul had arrived. And how happy is that man of whom it can now be said with truth! He is, as it were, out the reach of every evil. Nothing can touch him so as to disturb his rest, for he rests in everything that God orders.

7. We should follow the apostle in his great caution in giving an account of his experience, not to represent more of himself in his words, than men should see in his deeds. In 2 Corinthians he gives somewhat of an account how he had been favored with visions and revelations, and had been caught up to the third heavens. And in the sixth verse (2 Cor. 12:6), intimating that he could relate more, he breaks off, and forbears to say anything further respecting his experience. And he gives this reason for it; viz. that he would avoid, in what he relates of himself, giving occasion for anyone to be disappointed in him, in expecting more from him, by his own account of his experience and revelations, than he should see or hear of him in his conversation. His words are, "for though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth; but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be; or that he heareth of me." Some may wonder at this in such a man as the apostle, and may say, Why should a man so eminent in his conversation, be so cautious in this matter? Why need he be afraid to declare all the extraordinary things that he had witnessed, since his life was so agreeable, so eminently answerable to his experience? But yet you see the apostle forbore upon this very account. He knew there was great need of caution in this matter. He knew that if in giving an account of his extraordinary revelations, he should give rise to an expectation of too great things in his conversation, and should not live answerably to that expectation, it would greatly wound religion. He knew that its enemies would be ready to say presently, "Who is this? The man that gives so extraordinary an account of his visions and revelations, and peculiar tokens of God's favor to him, does he live no more conformably to it?" But if such a man as the apostle, so eminent in his life, was so cautious in this respect; surely we have need to be cautious, who fail so much more in our example than he did, and in whose conversation the enemy may find so much more occasion to speak reproachfully of religion. This teaches us that it would be better to refrain wholly from boasting of our experience than to represent ourselves as better than our deeds and conversation represent us. For men will compare one with the other. And if they do not see a correspondence between them, this will be much more to the dishonor of God than our account will be to his honor. Let Christians, therefore, be warned to be ever cautious in this respect, after the great example of the apostle.

Third, I shall mention some of those virtues of the apostle that more immediately respected men, in which we ought to follow his example.

1. His meekness under abuses and his love to his enemies. There were multitudes that hated him, but there is no appearance of his hating any. The greater part of the world where he went were his enemies. But he was the friend of everyone and labored and prayed earnestly for the good of all. And when he was reproached and derided and buffeted, still it was with meekness and gentleness of spirit that he bore all, and wished well to them none the less, and sought their good. 1 Cor. 4:12, 13, "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat."

In that period of his great sufferings when he went up to Jerusalem, and there was such an uproar about him, and the people were in so furious a rage against him, eagerly thirsting for his blood; he discovered no anger or ill will towards his persecutors. At that time when he was a prisoner through their malice, and stood before king Agrippa, and Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian;" and his blood-thirsty enemies were standing by; he replied, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

He wished that his accusers, and those who had bound themselves with an oath that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed him, had all of them as great privileges and as much of the favor of heaven as himself. And that they were altogether as he was, except his bonds and imprisonment, and those

afflictions which they had brought upon him. He did not desire that they should be like him in that affliction, though it was the fruit of their own cruelty. And when some of the Corinthians, whom he had instructed and converted from heathenism, had dealt ill by him, had hearkened to some false teachers, that had been among them, who hated and reproached the apostle, he tells them, in 2 Cor. 12:15, notwithstanding these abuses, that still he would very gladly spend and be spent for them, though the more abundantly he loved them, the less he should be loved by them.

If they returned him no thanks for his love, but only ill will and ill treatment, still he stood ready to spend and be spent for them. And though the apostle was so hated, and had suffered so many abuses from the unbelieving Jews, yet how does he express his love to them? He prayed earnestly for them. Rom. 10:1, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." And he went mourning for them. He went about with a heavy heart, and with continual grief and sorrow, from compassion for them, under the calamities of which they were the subjects.

And he declares in the most solemn manner, that he had so great desire for their salvation, that he could find it in his heart to wish himself accursed from Christ for them, and to be offered up a sacrifice, if that might be a means of their salvation. Rom. 9:1, 2, 3. We are to understand it of a temporal curse. He could be willing to die an accursed death, and so be made a curse for a time, as Christ was, if that might be a means of salvation to them. How are those reproved by this, who, when they are abused and suffer reproach or injury, have thereby indulged a spirit of hatred against their neighbor, a prejudice whereby they are always apt to entertain a distrust, and to seek and embrace opportunities against them, and to be sorry for their prosperity, and glad at their disappointments.

2. He delighted in peace. When any contention happened among Christians, he was exceedingly grieved by it. As when he heard of the contentions that broke out in the Corinthian church. He intimates to the Philippians, how he should rejoice at their living in love and peace, and therefore earnestly entreats them that they should so live. Phil. 2:1, 2, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, the ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." And he studied those things that should make for peace. To that end he yielded to everyone as much as possible in those things that were lawful, and complied with the weakness and humors of others oftentimes, for the sake of peace. He declares that though he was free from all men, yet he had made himself servant of all. To the Jews he became as a Jew; to them that were under the law, as under the law; to them that were without law, as without law; to the weak he became as weak. He rather chose to please others than himself, for the sake of peace, and the good of their souls. 1 Cor. 10:33, "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

3. He was of a most tender compassionate spirit towards any that were in affliction. He showed such a spirit especially in the case of the incestuous Corinthian. The crime was very great, and the fault of the church was great in suffering such wickedness among them, and this occasioned the apostle to write with some sharpness to them respecting it. But when the apostle perceived that his reproof was laid to heart by the Corinthian Christians, and that they repented and their hearts were filled with sorrow, though he rejoiced at it, yet he was so affected with their sorrow, that his heart yearned towards them, and he was almost ready to repent that he had written so severely to them. He was full of concern about it, lest his former letter should have filled them with overmuch sorrow. "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent; for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season." So he had compassion for the incestuous man, though he had been guilty of so vile a

crime, and was greatly concerned that he should be comforted. Whenever any Christian suffered or was hurt, the apostle says he felt it and suffered himself. 2 Cor. 11:29, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?"

4. He rejoiced at others' prosperity and joy. When he saw the soul of anyone comforted, the apostle was a sharer with him. His soul was comforted also. When he saw any Christian refreshed in his spirit, his own spirit was refreshed. 2 Cor. 7:6, 7, "Nevertheless, God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me, so that I rejoiced the more." "Therefore we were comforted in your comfort; yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all."

5. He delighted in the fellowship of God's people. He longed after them when absent. Phil. 1:8, "For God is my record how greatly I long after you in the bowels of Christ." And also, "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown." So Rom. 1:11, 12, "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."

6. He was truly courteous in his behavior towards others. Though he was so great a man, and had so much honor put upon him of God, yet he was full of courtesy towards all men, rendering to all suitable respect. Thus when he was called before Jewish or heathen magistrates, he treated them with the honor and respect due to their places. When the Jews took him in the temple, though they behaved themselves more like devils than men, yet he addressed them in terms of high respect, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence:" calling the common Jews his brethren, and saluting the elders and scribes with the title of fathers, though they were a body of infidels. So when he pleads his cause before Festus, a heathen governor, he gives him the title that belonged to him in his station; calling him, "Most noble Festus." His courtesy also appears in his salutations in his epistles. He is particularly careful to mention many persons, directing that his salutations should be given to them. Such a degree of courtesy, in so great a person as this apostle, reproveth all those professing Christians, who, though far below him, are not courteous and respectful in their behavior to their neighbors, and especially to their superiors. Incivility is here reproveth, and the too common neglect of Christians is reproveth, who do not take strict care, that their children are taught good manners, and politeness, and brought up in a respectful and courteous behavior towards others.

Fourth, I shall mention those virtues of the apostle that respected both God and men, in which we should imitate his example.

1. He was a man of a most public spirit. He was greatly concerned for the prosperity of Christ's kingdom, and the good of his church. We see a great many men wholly engaged in pursuit of their worldly interests. Many who are earnest in the pursuit of the carnal pleasures, many who are eager in the pursuit of honors, and many who are violent in the pursuit of gain. But we probably never saw any man more engaged to advance his estate, nor more taken up with his pleasures, nor more greedy of honor, than the apostle Paul was about the flourishing of Christ's kingdom, and the good of the souls of men.

The things that grieve other men are outward crosses: losses in estates, or falling under contempt, or bodily sufferings. But these things grieved not him. He made little account of them. The things that grieved him were those that hurt the interests of religion. And about those his tears were shed. Thus he was

exceedingly grieved, and wept greatly, for the corruptions that had crept into the church of Corinth, which was the occasion of his writing his first epistle to them. 2 Cor. 2:4, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you, with many tears."

The things about which other men are jealous, are their worldly advantages and pleasures. If these are threatened, their jealousy is excited, since they are above all things, dear to them. But the things that kindled the apostle's jealousy, were those that seemed to threaten the interests of religion, and the good of the church: 2 Cor. 11:2, 3, "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." The things at which other men rejoice are their amassing earthly treasures, their being advanced to honors, their being possessed of outward pleasures and delights. But these excited not the apostle's joy; but when he saw or heard of anything by which the interests of religion were promoted, and the church of Christ prospered, then he rejoiced: 1 Thes. 1:3, "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."

And chapter 2:20, "Ye are our glory and joy." He rejoiced at those things, however dear they cost him, how much soever he lost by them in his temporal interest, if the welfare of religion and the good of souls were promoted. Phil. 2:16, 17, "Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." He rejoiced at the steadfastness of saints: Col. 2:5, "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ."

And he rejoiced at the conviction of sinners, and in whatever tended to it. He rejoiced at any good which was done, though by others, and though it was done accidentally by his enemies. Phil. 1:15, 16, 17, 18, "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds. But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

When the apostle heard anything of this nature, it was good news to him: 1 Thes. 3:6, 7, "But now, when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also you; therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith." When he heard such tidings, his heart was wont to be enlarged in the praises of God: Col. 1:3, 4, "We give thanks to God and the Father or our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints."

He was not only wont to praise God when he first heard such tidings, but as often as he thought of such things, they were so joyful to him, that he readily praised God. Phil. 1:3, 4, 5, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now." Let us compare ourselves with such an example, and examine how far we are of such spirit. Let those on this occasion reflect upon themselves, whose hearts are chiefly engaged in their own private temporal concerns, and are not much concerned respecting the

interests of religion and the church of Christ, if they can obtain their private aims; who are greatly grieved when things go contrary to their worldly prosperity, who see religion, as it were, weltering in its blood, without much sorrow of heart.

It may be, that they will say; It is greatly to be lamented that there is such declension, and it is a sorrowful thing that sin so much prevails. But if we would look into their hearts, how cold and careless should we see them. Those words are words of course. They express themselves thus chiefly, because they think it creditable to lament the decay of religion. But they are ten times as much concerned about other things as these, about their own private interest, or some secular affairs of the town.

If anything seems to threaten their being disappointed in these things, how readily are they excited and alarmed. But how quiet and easy in their spirit, notwithstanding all the dark clouds that appear over the cause and kingdom of Christ, and the salvation of those around them! How quick and how high is their zeal against those, who, they think, unjustly oppose them in their temporal interests. But how low is their zeal, comparatively, against those things that are exceedingly pernicious of the interests of religion!

If their own credit is touched, how are they awakened! But they can see the credit of religion wounded, and bleeding, and dying, with little hearty concern. Most men are of a private, narrow spirit. They are not of the spirit of the apostle Paul, nor of the psalmist, who preferred Jerusalem before his chief joy. Psa. 137:6.

2. We ought to follow the apostle in his diligent and laborious endeavors to do good. We see multitudes incessantly laboring and striving after the world. But not more than the apostle labored to advance the kingdom of his dear Master and the good of his fellow-creatures. His work was very great, and attended with great difficulties and opposition. And his labor was answerably great. He labored abundantly more than any of the apostles: 1 Cor. 15:10, "I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

How great were the pains he took in preaching and in traveling from place to place over so great part of the world, by sea and land, and probably for the most part on foot, when he traveled by land: instructing and converting the heathen, disputing with gainsayers, and heathen Jews, and heretics, strenuously opposing and fighting against the enemies of the church of Christ, wrestling not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places; acting the part of a good soldier, as one that goes a warfare, putting on Christ and using the whole armor of God, laboring to establish and confirm and build up the saints, reclaiming those that were wandering, delivering those that were ensnared, enlightening the dark, comforting the disconsolate, and succoring the tempted, rectifying disorders that had happened in churches, exercising ecclesiastical discipline towards offenders, and admonishing the saints of the covenant of grace, opening and applying the Scriptures, ordaining persons and giving them directions, and assisting those that were ordained, and writing epistles, and sending messengers to one and another part of the church of Christ!

He had the care of the churches lying continually upon him. 2 Cor. 11:28, "Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." These things occasioned him to be continually engaged in earnest labor. He continued in it night and day, sometimes almost the whole night, preaching and admonishing, as appears by Acts 20:7,11, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight.

When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed." And he did all freely, without any view to any temporal gain. He tells the Corinthians that he would gladly spend and be spent for them. Besides his laboring in the work of the gospel, he labored very much, yea, sometimes night and day, in a handicraft trade to procure subsistence, that he might not be chargeable to others, and so hinder the gospel of Christ: 1 Thes. 2:9, "For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail, for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God."

And he continued this course of labor as long as he lived. He never was weary in well-doing; and though he met with continual opposition, and thousands of difficulties, yet nothing discouraged him. But he kept on, pressing forward in this course of hard, constant labor to the end of his life, as appears by what he says just before his death, 2 Tim. 4:6, 7, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

And the effects and fruits of the apostle's labors witnessed for him. The world was blessed by the good he did; not one nation only, but multitudes of nations. The effects of his labors were so great in so many nations before he had labored twenty years that the heathens called it his turning the world upside down. Acts 27:6. This very man was the chief instrument in that great work of God, the calling of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Roman world. And he seems to have done more good, far more good, than any other man ever did from the beginning of the world to this day.

He lived after his conversion not much more than thirty years. And in those thirty years he did more than a thousand men commonly do in an age. This example may well make us reflect upon ourselves, and consider how little we do for Christ, and for our fellow-creatures. We profess to be Christians as well as the apostle Paul, and Christ is worthy that we should serve him as Paul did. But how small are our labors for God and Christ and our fellow creatures! Though many of us keep ourselves busy, how are our labor and strength spent, and with what is our time filled up?

Let us consider ourselves a little, and the manner of spending our time. We labor to provide for ourselves and families, to maintain ourselves in credit, and to make our part good among men. But is that all for which we are sent into the world? Did he who made us and gave us our powers of mind and strength of body, and who gives us our time and our talents, give them to us chiefly to be spent in this manner; or in serving him? Many years have rolled over the heads of some of us, and what have we lived for?

What have we been doing all this time? How much is the world the better for us? Were we here only to eat and to drink, and to devour the good which the earth produces? Many of the blessings of Providence have been conferred upon us. And where is the good that we have done in return? If we had never been born, or if we had died in infancy, of how much good would the world have been deprived of? Such reflectio

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jonathan-edwards/the-character-of-paul-an-example-to-christians/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**