

EVERY MAN'S MISSION

Aim Higher

Philippians 3:13-21 | **Participant Guide** (September 20th, 2026)

Key Idea

Every mission has a goal and a target. Paul calls believers to examine the aim of their lives: where they are looking, what they are pursuing, who they are following, and where they are going. If our lives are aimed only at things that satisfy for a moment, our aim is too low. Because our citizenship is in heaven and our Savior is coming, we are called to aim higher.

Key Scripture

"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ." - Philippians 3:20 (NIV)

Opening Conversation

1. When you hear the phrase "aim higher," what kinds of goals or ambitions normally come to mind? How is Paul's idea of aiming higher different from simply becoming more successful?

Read Together - Philippians 3:13-21

Listen for the directional language in the passage: what is behind, what is ahead, the goal, the examples Paul tells us to watch, earthly things, and our citizenship in heaven.

I. Where Are You Looking? - Don't Live Your Life Looking in the Rearview Mirror.

"What direction are you moving in?"

2. What do the words "forgetting," "straining," and "press on" tell us about the direction of Paul's life?
3. How can past failures keep someone looking backward? How can past successes do the same thing?
4. Read Luke 9:62. What does Jesus' picture of putting a hand to the plow and looking back teach us about following Him?

II. What Are You Pursuing? - Pursue Christ and His Calling.

"One of the marks of spiritual maturity is realizing you haven't arrived yet."

5. Read Philippians 3:10 and 3:14-16. What is Paul ultimately pursuing?
6. Why can recognizing that we have not "arrived" be a mark of spiritual maturity rather than spiritual failure?
7. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. What is the difference between living intentionally for Christ and "running aimlessly"?

"Immaturity says, 'Look how far I've come.' Maturity says, 'Look how much further I have to go.'"

III. Who Are You Following? - Follow the Right People

"What you continually look at begins shaping what you aim at."

8. Why do you think Paul tells believers not only to follow Christ, but also to pay attention to godly human examples?

9. Read 1 Corinthians 11:1 and Proverbs 13:20. What qualities should we look for in the people we allow to influence us?
10. Read Psalm 1:1-2 and Romans 12:2. How can repeated exposure to certain voices, ideas, entertainment, or content shape the way we think and live?
11. What content are you consuming and what voices are you listening to? Are they helping aim your life toward Christ or toward “earthly things”?

IV. Where Are You Going? – Your Destiny Is Heaven... Now, Live Like It!

“Aiming higher means fixing your life on Christ, His calling, His kingdom, and ultimately His return.”

12. What contrast do you see between verse 19 and verses 20-21?
13. Read Colossians 3:1-4. What does it mean practically to “set your minds on things above” while still faithfully living our lives here?
14. How should knowing that Christ is returning and that our citizenship is in heaven change what we value, pursue, or worry about today?

Personal Application - What Am I Aiming At?

15. Looking at the four questions from this week – Where are you looking? What are you pursuing? Who are you following? Where are you going? – which one most challenges you right now, and why?

What is one specific adjustment you can make this week to aim your life more intentionally toward Christ?

Prayer

Jesus, help me leave behind what keeps me from moving forward, pursue You with greater purpose, choose my influences wisely, and live today in light of my citizenship in heaven. Help me aim higher.

Prepare for Next Week

Read Ahead

Philippians 4:1-9. As you read, notice Paul’s instructions about standing firm, relationships, rejoicing, anxiety, prayer, peace, and the things on which believers should set their minds. Mark one verse, phrase, or question to bring back next week.