

# “LET US WALK BY THE SAME RULE”

Phil.3:12-19

Ed Dye

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. In our text (Phil.3:12-19) Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, first of all, sets forth his own aspirations, not only as an apostle of Jesus Christ, but also as a Christian.
  - a. In Vv.12-14, his own aspiration and effort to attain what he as yet had not attained are declared.
2. Secondly, in Vv.15-17a, he urges all, i.e., as many as “be perfect” (relative perfection, mature Christians, mature in the faith):
  - a. To “be thus minded,” V.15.
    - (1) To be just what he has been saying in the preceding verses about himself.
    - (2) “Nevertheless...let us walk by the same rule (same standard), let us mind the same thing (keep minding the same thing),” V.16.
    - (3) To “be followers (imitators) together of me,” V.17a. Cf. 1Cor.11:1; Phil.4:9.
3. Thirdly, in Vv.17b-19 note this:
  - a. In V.17b he tells them what to do about those who walk otherwise.
  - b. In V.18 he explains the extent of the problem, reminds the brethren of who they are, as they have been told, and what they are with reference to Christ.
  - c. Then in V.19 he declares and describes what will happen to them. ... i.e., those who fail to “walk by the same rule, and do the same thing.”
4. Without a doubt, we should be able to see what it is absolutely necessary that we all “walk by the same rule” and that we “mind the same thing (things).”
  - a. Rule is from the Greek *kanwn* meaning:
  - b. According to Strong's' Exhaustive Concordance, #2583: “(lit. a straight reed , i.e., rod): a rule (“canon”), i.e., (fig.) a standard (of faith and practice);”
  - c. According to W.E. Vine, Vol.III, pgs 306,227,228: “It originally denoted a straight rod, used as a ruler or measuring instrument...In general the word thus came to serve for anything regulating the actions of men, as a standard or principle.” See Gal.6:16.
  - d. In view of this cf. 1Cor.1:10; Gal.1:6-9; Eph.4:4-6; Jno.17:20,21.
5. Therefore, our study will emphasize the need for all to “walk by the same rule” and “mind the same thing (things),” in order to have the unity for which Jesus prayed, and in order to be pleasing in God’s sight.

## II. DISCUSSION

**A. BUT WHO ESTABLISHES THE RULE BY WHICH WE ARE TO WALK AND REVEALS THE THINGS WE ARE TO “KEEP MINDNG”?**

1. Of course the Lord does, because:
  - a. He has all authority in heaven and in earth, Mt.28:18.
  - b. “Whatsoever ye do in word of deed” must be done “in the name of the Lord Jesus,” Col.3:17.
  - c. We will be judged by him and by his word, Jno.12:48.

**B. HOW DO WE ESTABLISH THIS RULE AND THE BIBLE AUTHORITY FOR THE RULE, TO KNOW HOW TO ACT IN WALKING BY THE SAME RULE AND MINDING THE SAME THINGS?**

1. By one or more of three things or principles:
  - a. By direct statement or command: Mk.16:16; Lk.22:19: “This do in remembrance of me (when he instituted the Lord’s Supper).” Cf. 1Cor.11:23-25.
  - b. By apostolic example: Ac.20:7: “And upon the first day of the week, **when** the disciples came together to break bread,” (emp. mine). See Ac.2:42; Mt.18:18; 2Cor.5:20.
    - (1) Cf. Ac.20:7-11 to see the difference between the expression breaking bread in observance of the Lord’s Supper and that of breaking bread in eating a common mean.
    - (2) Note and compare V.7a and V.7b (“on the morrow”) and V.11.
  - c. By necessary inference (implication). Cf. the language of Ac.20:7 with that of Exo.20:8 to see the necessary implication of each.
  - d. Illustrated by the authority for the Lord’s Supper.
    - (1) The **observance** of the Lord’s Supper is authorized by precept or direct statement or command: “This do in remembrance of me,” Lk.22:19; 1Cor.11:23-25.
      - (a) But there is no direct statement or command telling us **when** to eat the Lord’s Supper. We must look elsewhere for that. And it does make a difference!
    - (2) The **time** of the observance or **when** to eat the Lord’s Supper is authorized by apostolic approved example: Ac.20:7.
      - (a) That is the only reference to the time when or the day of the week on which the disciples met to break bread.
      - (b) We know we have Bible authority for it on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week, but for no other day. If so, where?
    - (3) The **frequency** of observing the Lord’s Supper, or how **often** it is to be observed, is authorized by necessary implication or inference: Ac.20:7; Cf. Exo.20:8 – each Sabbath (7<sup>th</sup> day of the week); each 1<sup>st</sup> day.
      - (a) If it doesn’t mean “every 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week,” which “1<sup>st</sup> day” does it mean?

- (b) When something is to be observed only on time per year, the month and the day of the month must be specified. Example:
  - (1) One's birthday.
  - (2) One's wedding anniversary.
  - (3) American Independence Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>.
- (c) Things to be observed one time each month must be specified by the day of the month. Examples:
  - (1) Rent day; house or car payment (1<sup>st</sup>, or 15<sup>th</sup>)
- (d) For a weekly observance, only the day of the week need be specified. Examples:
  - (1) "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God," Exo.20:10
  - (2) The Lord's supper: "the first day of the week," Ac.20:7.
  - (3) Lay by in store or give of one's means: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him," 1Cor.16:2.
- (e) The hour on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week when the Lord's Supper is to be observed is by expediency.
  - (1) But for something to be expedient it must first be lawful. See 1Cor.6:12.

**C. BEING THE "PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH," THE WORK ORDAINED FOR EACH LOCAL CHURCH IS THREE-FOLD.**

1. The work of EVANGELISM, or preaching the gospel to save the lost. Note the rule by which to walk in doing so.
  - a. The gospel was preached in and by the local church as is supported its own preachers according to its own means. Three examples:
    - (1) For three years Paul worked with the Ephesian church, Ac.20:31.
    - (2) Timothy later worked as an evangelist at the church in Ephesus, 1Tim.1:3.
    - (3) The example of Titus in Crete, Tit.1:5.
  - b. Also preachers were sent to do evangelistic work outside of and beyond the immediate realm of the local church.
    - (1) Ac.8:14-17.
      - (a) Who was sent on this occasion and why? 2 apostles
      - (b) Who (what organization) sent them? Not some human Missionary Society or Sp. Church arrangement.
      - (c) No! It was the apostles who were at Jerusalem.
    - (2) Ac.13:1-5; 14:51-28 (esp.Vv.26,27).
      - (a) Who was sent? Barnabas, Saul, and John, 13:2,5.
      - (b) Who sent them?

- (c) Not some human agency or Sp.Church. But the church at Antioch, being called and sent by the Holy Spirit, Ac.13:1-3; 14:26,27.
- 2. The work of edification, or teaching the saved to saved to bring them to maturity in the faith.
  - a. Note some passages where the brethren in the local church are charged with this work, Ac.9:31; 14:21,22; 20:32; Rom.14:19; 1Cor.14:4,5,16,17; 1Th.5:11; Cf. Heb.5:11-14.
  - b. Did they depend on or was there some human Edification Society or secular Bible College used for this work?
  - c. Absolutely not! Just the local church, which was and is qualified and able to do it – has everything it needs, Eph.4:11-16.
- 3. The work of benevolence, or providing for the poor saints, or the needy among them.
  - a. Among whom? The local churches. The members of the local church who became the responsibility of the local church or qualified for benevolent help by the local church. See 1Tim.5:15,16; Cf. 2Th.3:10.
- 4. There is no other work, i.e., other than these four specified works ordained by God for each local church to do collectively;
  - a. Thus there is no divine authority for the local church to engage in or in supporting any other work of any kind.
- 5. Of course, there is the collective work of local churches engaged in scriptural congregational cooperation in both evangelism and benevolence.
  - a. In evangelism the pattern reveals a plurality of local churches practiced congregational cooperation by sending their own financial support directly to the preacher in the field. They never sent their help or “wages” to another eldership for this work!
    - (1) 2Cor.11:8,9.
      - (a) Who (what organization) supported Paul while he preached the gospel at Corinth and how was he supported?
      - (b) The churches of Macedonia sent “wages” to Paul and they sent them directly to him by means of their own brethren as their messengers, Vv.8,9.
      - (c) No M.S.; No Sp. Church.
    - (2) Phil.1:3-5; 4:10-18.
      - (a) Who (what organization) supported Paul while he preached the gospel in Thessalonica , et. al., and how was he supported during this time?
      - (b) The local church at Philippi did it. And they only, Vv.15,16.
      - (c) No M.S.; No Sp. Church.
  - b. In benevolence involving the needy saints, Christians, in sister churches beyond the support of their own need.

- (1) Each church cooperated by sending their own contribution directly to the elders of the local churches where the need existed, which means there was no in-between human B.S. or Sp. Church arrangement involved or authorized. Examples:
    - (2) Ac.2:44,45 – Who was relieved or had their physical needs supplied?
      - (a) Saints or Christians – members of the church.
    - (3) Ac.6:1-6. Who was relieved?
      - (a) Widows who were saints and members of the local church.
      - (b) Who (what organization) did the relieving? The local church in its congregational capacity.
      - (c) No M.S., or No Sp. Church was organized and supported through which or by which this work was done.
    - (4) Ac.11:27-30. Who was relieved?
      - (a) Saints, Christians. No one else.
      - (b) Who (what organization) did the relieving?
      - (c) The local church at Antioch in its local capacity sent directly to the elders of the church where the brethren in Judea dwelt, and sent it “by the hands of Barnabas and Saul,” Vv.29,30
      - (d) Again, there was no Sp. Church arrangement, or B.S. involved.
    - (5) At a later time, Rom.15:25-31; 1Cor.16:1-3; 2Cor.8:1-5; 9:1-5. Who was relieved?
      - (a) Poor saints at Jerusalem, Rom.15:26; 1Cor.16:1.
      - (b) Who (what organization) did the relieving?
      - (c) Just the local churches in different parts of the country.
    - (6) 1Tim.5:8-16, Who was to be relieved?
      - (a) “Widows indeed,” needy Christian widows, who became the responsibility of the local church, which were and are to “be taken into the number,” or enrolled as a permanent responsibility of the local church, Vv.3,5,9. Cf. Vv.4,16.
      - (b) There was no human B.S. involved.
6. The local churches in N.T times were responsible for and faithfully carried out what God ordained in the field of evangelism, edification, and benevolence, without the aid of human organizations through which to do it, because they were divinely organized and qualified – fully capable – of doing so in their congregational capacity.

### III. CONCLUSION

1. As you can see, we, on the basis of Bible teaching, under the authority of Jesus Christ, with specific commands not to add to, subtract from, or substitute for that which is written (Deut.4:2; 1Cor.4:6; 1Pet.4:11; Rev.22:18,19), are demanding “Book, Chapter, and Verse” for all we believe and practice; and refuse, by the authority of Jesus, to fellowship any and all who do not so teach and practice. See 2Jno.9.
2. Who would dare take issue with that Bible premise?
3. Of course, I’m aware that good brethren who disagree with us in what we believe and practice also believe they are acting by Bible authority, and claim to have “Book, Chapter, and Verse for what they believe and practice.
4. Where we disagree involves the manner in how or by what manner we establish Bible authority for what we believe and practice.
5. But in the final issue, the difference between us in our differences is that the authority for what we believe and practice is definitely found taught in the Bible and what those who believe and practice otherwise are not; thus they are not “walking by the same rule,” nor minding “the same thing,” which Paul requires in Phil.3:16 and 1Cor.1:10.
6. You “better check” whether or not you are walking by that rule – the Bible rule of faith and practice! It takes study and conviction to do it! No prejudice!