

**Good morning!**

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. My name is Douglas Humphrey, and I **get to** serve as the lead pastor of Bridge Fellowship Church. I'm so glad you're here today.

We're in **week nine** of our twelve-week series, "**Unlocking Joy**," walking through the book of Philippians. And today, we're tackling a doctrine that most of us don't spend much time thinking about—**glorification**.

Paul uses two words to describe it: **goal** and **perfect**. **Glorification** is the final step in our sanctification—the moment we are **made completely holy** in God's presence. It's something we **hope for**, something we **pursue**, but ultimately, it's a gift **God gives us** when we step into eternity.

And if we truly understand it, it **changes the way we live today**.

In order to understand **glorification**, we have to start at the beginning—because it's actually the final step of a process we're all in right now.

(Sanctification process slide.)

Before Christ, we were **slaves to sin**—powerless to resist it. But then, **Jesus stepped in**. He opened our ears to the Gospel, and when we chose to follow Him, **our souls were transformed**. We were regenerated, made spiritually alive in Christ. IOW "Born again"/

That's when **sanctification** began—the lifelong process of becoming more like Jesus. Sinning less. Loving more. Growing in holiness. That journey continues until one of two things happens: 1) **We die** and enter God's glory. or 2) **Jesus returns** and calls us home.

Then comes **glorification**—when we are **made perfect, holy, and whole**. No longer wrestling with sin. No longer struggling to survive. No longer guarding ourselves from evil — because there will be **none in heaven**.

This matters **Because it gives us hope**:

- Hope that our **struggles will end**.
- Hope that our **sacrifices were worth it**.
- Hope that we will have **direct, unfettered access to God**.

If you've ever felt weary, if you've ever wondered, "*Is this Christian life really worth it?*"—this is your answer.

Yessss... next to the Gospel itself, **glorification is the best news we could ever receive**.

That's why Paul says, "**I make every effort to take hold of it**."

He longed for heaven, b/c he knew perfection awaited him there. But he also knew—it **wasn't His time yet**.

And that's exactly where we are. Like Paul, **we're in the "already but not yet" season of life**.

Our **fare has been paid**.

Our **departure date is set**.

We've **notified our family**.

We **hope to see them there**.

We're packing our **bags**.

We're **in the terminal**.

We're **ready to go... but it's not time for us to depart**.

So **what do we do while we wait?**

I want to share with you eight characteristics of a Christian's who now how to make best use of their time during their 'already but not yet' season.

Beginning with they...

## 1. Prioritize Spiritual Perfection (v.12b)

The end goal is to be made perfect like Jesus. That won't happen in this life, but that doesn't mean we sit back and wait. Paul says, **"I make every effort to take hold of it."** That's our calling—to **actively pursue** the holiness that will one day be ours.

This pursuit starts with a new mindset says:

- I **must** live according to God's holy standard.
- I **must** pursue Christlikeness with everything I have.
- I **must** desire and embrace sanctification.

But prioritizing spiritual perfection isn't just about thinking differently—it's about **living differently**. Since glorification is the goal, your **time, energy, and priorities** must reflect that. And it starts by letting go of things that don't move you closer to Christ.

Things like...

- **Endless scrolling** on social media that fills your mind with comparison, outrage, or distractions.
- **Binge-watching** shows for hours while your Bible collects dust.
- **Pursuing career success** at the expense of your spiritual health and family.
- **Prioritizing comfort** over spiritual discipline—sleeping in instead of seeking God, skipping church for convenience.
- **Always upgrading**—the latest smart phone, car, house—while neglecting to give to the work of ministry.
- **Obsessing over image**—body, fashion, status—more than your soul.
- **Living for the weekend**—vacations, entertainment, pleasure—simply as a means to escape your reality.

Loved ones, **be careful**—anything that distracts you from Jesus can quietly take **first place** in your life.

Instead of pursuing holiness, you'll find yourself chasing after **temporary pleasures**, unable to let go. Like an addict who can't say no, you'll keep coming back—beholden to the next thrill, the next upgrade, the next distraction, the next guilty pleasure.

I'm not saying Christians shouldn't enjoy life. Travel. Have fun. Engage in culture. But don't **prioritize** these things—because they won't get you to your ultimate goal.

That's the mindset we need.

**Prioritize being perfected in Christ, because it's the only thing that truly matters, and as you do...**

## **2. Understand and fully agree that they belong to Jesus. v12c**

Paul says, **"I have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus."**

If you are in Christ, you are **His**. He bought you at the highest cost—His own blood. That's not just a theological truth; it's a reality with deep implications.

**B/c you're life belongs to Jesus, He has the first and final say** over your body, your behavior, your time—**everything**.

But don't mistake this for harsh control. Jesus isn't a paranoid helicopter parent micromanaging your every move. He's not a jealous lover trying to manipulate you. No. His motives are pure. And he only wants what's best for you.

And He alone knows the way of righteousness. He's the only one to have lived in this world, being tempted in every way imaginable, yet he never sinned. So when He speaks, **He knows what He's talking about and it behooves us to listen**.

Surely, all of us agree that belonging to Jesus means that we should obey Him. But **if we're honest, sometimes we struggle to follow**.

Like a stubborn horse that refuses to be bridled. Or

Like a toddler who crosses their arms and yell, **"You can't make me."**

We resist.

We all have “**you can’t make me**” areas in our hearts—places where we **refuse to surrender**, where we cling to control. But let’s be real: what’s actually happening in those moments. Is that we’re trying to **reclaim ownership of our lives**.

And this isn’t just about one decision or one area—it’s a **heart posture**. We call Jesus **Lord**, but we act like **we’re our own masters when we know full well that’s a lie**.

Let me try to illustrate what I mean.

Imagine you’re on a road trip. **Jesus is driving**. He knows exactly where you need to go. He’s mapped out the best route, he sees every obstacle ahead, and His timing is perfect.

But **you? You’re in the passenger seat. Better yet you’re in the backseat.**

And you don’t like how He’s driving, so you shout out...

- “Jesus, why are we going this way?”
- “You’re driving too slow! Shouldn’t we be there by now?”
- “Wait! Don’t take that turn! It’s better go this way.”

And sometimes, when it really feels like He’s not listening, you **reach for the wheel**.

You tell yourself you’re just **helping**, but the truth? **You don’t trust the Driver.**

Then it happens.

Jesus calmly **takes His hands off the wheel** and says, “**Alright, you want control? Go for it.**”

At first, you’re excited. **Finally!** You get to be in charge.

You step on the gas.

You take the turns that **feel right** to you.

But it doesn’t take long before things start **falling apart**.

- The road you thought was best? **Is a dead end.**
- The shortcut you insisted on? **only adds time to your trip.**
- The turn you ignored? **Ultimately get’s you lost.**

And then you realize, that you don’t have no business driving.

Your grip on the wheel...

Your fight for control...

Your refusal to trust...

**It wasn’t freeing you.**

It was actually hurting you.

So finally, you **pull over**.

You **take a deep breath**.

And you do what you should have done from the start—

**You say sorry to Jesus. You climb into the back seat. and you give Jesus the wheel.**

- **From the back seat you can be lead.**

- **From the back seat you can follow.**

So let me ask you a questions:

How often do we question God’s timing, doubt His plan, or try to take the wheel back because we think we know better?

**Surrender isn’t a loss of freedom—it’s trusting the only One who truly knows the way.**

Belonging to Jesus isn’t just a **theological concept**—it’s a **daily practice**.

A continual **surrender**.

A trust that **He knows what’s best**, even when our **flesh thinks it does**.

**Understand and fully agree that you belong to Jesus.** That's our **second characteristic**.

In addition... All Ready... But Not Yet disciple...

### **3. See themselves as a Work in Progress, Moving Towards Perfection. v12a & 13a**

Paul—despite his deep faith, spiritual maturity, and massive ministry impact—says plainly, “**I haven't arrived.**”

Think about that. This is the same man who planted churches, performed miracles, and wrote two-thirds of the New Testament. And yet, he still saw himself as a work in progress.

If Paul hadn't arrived, that means we haven't either.

No matter how long you've been walking with Jesus, you're not done growing. You haven't peaked. God is still working on you. You're not perfect, but you're being perfected.

This truth is both **freeing and challenging**.

**Freeing**—because you don't have to pretend. You don't have to act like you've got it all together.

The Gospel gives you room to be honest. You don't need to fake spiritual strength or wear your “perfect Christian” mask. To front like you're all put together, when you're freaking out on the inside.

God is not looking for flawless people. He's looking for **faithful** disciples—people who keep showing up, keep growing, keep trusting in Him more and more.

**But** being a work in progress also means we're called to **change**.

God didn't save you for you to stay the same. **Yes, He gives grace when we fall—but grace isn't a free pass to stay stuck.**

Just like a baby has to be born or it becomes dangerous for the mother and the baby, we can't stay in the spiritual womb. Growth is the goal. And growth requires effort.

God has invested **everything** in you—the blood of His Son and the gift of His Spirit. And yes, **He expects a return**: your growth, your sanctification, your progress in Christ. Is how you show God that you're grateful. Which is all the repayment that he wants.

There is nothing more tragic than a spiritually underdeveloped believer.

Saved at 15, now 40, but still spiritually immature. Still drinking milk—basic truths—when by now, they should be eating steak, feeding others, and leading with wisdom.

God didn't save us so we could stay stuck in spiritual infancy. He saved us to grow us. To shape us. To make us more like Jesus. To get greater use out of us. And more glory.

So train your soul! Pray. Get in the Word. Repent as needed. Obey. Join a discipleship Group. Do what's necessary to keep growing.

**Press on**—becoming who God saved you to become.

That's our 3rd characteristic. 4th already, but not yet disciples...

### **4. Hold Success Loosely because their True Reward Is in Heaven. v13b-16**

There's nothing wrong with success.

Earning a degree, buying your first home, getting that promotion, overcoming sickness—these are real wins. They matter. And they're a result of: prayer, God's favor, and hard work.

So yes, **celebrate what God has done** in your life. Hang the diploma. Frame the certificate. Post the testimony. But don't let success make you **comfortable**.

Paul had a resume worth bragging about—but in this passage, he says, “**I forget what's behind and press on.**” Why? Because his eyes were fixed on the **real prize**—Jesus Himself.

Success is good, but it's not the finish line. It's not the goal.

Too often, we treat past accomplishments like a final destination—like we've "arrived." We stop pushing. We stop growing. And we start coasting.

Loved ones:

**We are not the sum total of our accomplishments.**

**We are not our resumes.**

**We are not our most recent spiritual break through.**

Celebrate your victories, but don't cling to them. Be grateful, but not stagnant. Because the best of what you experience on earth **doesn't compare** to what's ahead.

Paul says, "**All of us who are mature should think this way.**" In other words, this is **how mature believers view success**—as fuel to keep going, not a reason to stop.

Success in this life is temporary—but **your reward of perfection in glory is the ultimate achievement. Push for it. Be known by that.**

That's no four. The 5th characteristic of an "already-but-not-yet" Christian, is that they...

## 5. Live up to what they know. v16

Paul puts it this way: "**Let us live up to whatever truth we have attained.**" In other words, if you know you're supposed to forgive, then forgive.

If you've been taught to pray, then pray.

If you understand the call to live holy, to be generous, to be kind, to walk in love—then walk in it.

Spiritual maturity isn't about having all the answers. It's about obedience. It's about living out the truth you already know while staying open to learning more.

Think of the church like a school that goes from kindergarten to college. We've got brand new believers and seasoned saints all under the same roof. Although we have varying levels of knowledge—**everyone** is responsible for the level of truth they've already been taught.

**God doesn't get glory from people who refuse to grow.** He doesn't get glory from believers who've sat under years of preaching but still act like spiritual toddlers. And on the flip side, **God doesn't get glory from the person who knows all the theology and can explain Greek verbs, but they refuses to submit to church leadership.**

Let me be clear: God is not asking you to live beyond your ability. Rather He's telling us **not to live beneath** it. IOW act your spiritual age, not your shoe size. Y'all know what I'm saying.

Which brings us to our next characteristic of an already-but-not-yet Christian. This one is a warning about the kinds of people we roll with...

## 6. Only follow and imitate those who pursue Christ righteousness. v17

If we're serious about reaching our goal of Christlike perfection, then we have to be intentional about who we follow and learn from. Paul tells the Philippians to imitate him—not because he's being arrogant, but because he was a reliable, faithful example in a time when the church was still young, and mature leaders were scarce.

Paul's track record was clean: his doctrine was sound, his devotion to Christ was sincere, and his love for the Church was evident. The Philippians needed a model for Christian living, and Paul gave them one.

Then like know we need people who are worthy of being followed too. The chief of which being Jesus. The Gospels and the epistles of the New Testament show us how He lived, how He prayed, how He faced temptation, how He led, loved, and even how He handled conflict.

But God also places people in our lives to be visible, tangible examples—people we can see and walk alongside. Your pastor, elders, deacons, and ministry leaders should be the kind of people you can follow as they follow Christ. We've been entrusted with the care of your soul and are called to lead by example.

But don't stop there. Look for someone at your level too—a fellow believer who's pursuing Jesus with integrity. Someone you can talk to, pray with, confess to, and grow alongside. Do life with someone who's chasing the same spiritual goals you are.

**But here's the warning:**

Make sure the person you're imitating is actually pursuing Christ.

Don't fool yourself—you can't stay close to people who live contrary to God's ways and remain unaffected. That's a lie.

Scripture doesn't stutter: “Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals.’ Come to your senses...” ([1 Corinthians 15:33–34](#)).

Don't believe the lie that you're strong enough to resist the pull. You're not. They'll have you worshiping like a saint on Sunday and living like hellian by Friday.

If the people closest to you are pulling you away from Jesus instead of pointing you to Him—it's time to let go.

Don't compromise your faith just to maintain a friendship or avoid awkwardness. How you live during your “not yet season” matters.

**Only follow and imitate people you personally know are pursuing Christ with sincerity and consistency.**

That's the sixth characteristic of someone who's living in the “already but not yet.” Seven is they...

## **7. Grieve for those who live as enemies of the cross, but understand it's their choice. v18-19**

Just like in Paul's day, there's no shortage of people who choose to live as enemies of the cross.

They reject Jesus, deny the Gospel, and mock the Christian faith—some openly, others more subtly, hiding behind religious language and fake spirituality.

And these aren't just outsiders. Many claim to be Christians. They show up in churches. They know the lingo. They quote Scripture. But their lives tell the truth—they're not true disciples.

Just because they're standing in the same terminal doesn't mean they're boarding the same flight.

Yes, they make ministry harder. Yes, they give us a bad name. Yes, they stir up confusion, conflict, and pain. But unless they repent, they are headed for hell, not heaven.

So please don't just roll your eyes at them. Don't dismiss them and say no better for them — rather **grieve for them**.

Pray that they would surrender to Jesus and be saved. Because once the boarding door of eternity closes, **it's never to open again**.

That will be the tragic reality for many who choose to live as enemies of the cross.

Which brings us to our 8th and final characteristic of an already-but-not-yet disciple, the..

## **8. Eagerly await for Jesus to deliver them to heaven. v20**

This is where comes full circle.

Every struggle, every sacrifice, every act of obedience—it's all worth it. Why? Because **Jesus is coming back**.

And He's not coming quietly. He's coming as a **conquering King**.

When He returns, everything and everyone will bow. There will be **no more sin, no more corruption, no more persecution**, and **no more pain**.

And here's the best part—**He's going to change us**.

With the same power that raised Him from the dead, Jesus will transform our weak, broken, earthly bodies into **glorious, resurrected ones**—just like His.

No more sickness. No more exhaustion. No more temptation. Just perfect, eternal bliss with Him.

**He will make all things new—including you.**

So don't lose heart. **Long for that day. Live like you believe it's coming.**

Because it is. And when it does, you'll finally be home—free from everything that satan and this world has tried to destroy you with.

Keep waiting. Keep hoping. Keep pressing. Keep longing for Jesus - He's on his way.

## **Boarding pass slide:**

If you're in Christ, your citizenship in heaven is already secure. You're not waiting for approval—you've already been accepted. The paperwork is done. Your passport is stamped. Your boarding pass is in hand. Your seat is reserved. And you're bound for glory.

But here's the tension:

You belong to a place you haven't arrived at yet.

You're still in the terminal—waiting for departure.

And in this *already-but-not-yet* space, **how you live matters.**

What you do while you wait reveals what you believe about where you're going.

You're not just passing time—you're in the terminal preparing for what is to come.

And from what I've seen—in the text and through life experience—the terminal is full of different kinds of people:

**Some are eager and growing.** You're hungry for God, maturing in your faith, showing up ready. You just need encouragement and solid teaching.

**Some are bare-minimum believers.** Just enough Jesus to claim the benefits, not enough to carry the cross. You want the perks of faith without the price.

**Some are curious but unsure.** You feel the pull to grow, but you're not sure where to start. You want to take your faith seriously but need guidance.

**Some need to recommit.** You've known Jesus. You've walked with Him. But lately, you've been coasting. Drifting. Half in, half out. It's time to return.

**And some are unsaved.** You've convinced yourself you can live however you want. That following Jesus is too much.

But hear me: **you're headed somewhere too.**

Just as believers are already citizens of heaven waiting for their flight, **without Christ, you're already a citizen of hell**—standing in the same terminal, bound for a different destination.

And when your *"not yet"* becomes *"right now,"* it will be too late to change course.

Hell is real. It wasn't made for you—but it became necessary when humanity chose rebellion over relationship with God. And you're guilty of the same sin.

But there's good news: **it doesn't have to end that way.**

Jesus died in your place. He took your punishment. He made a way for you to be forgiven and made new.

So believe in Him. Confess your sin. Surrender your life. **And you will be saved.** Don't wait. **Change your boarding pass while there's still time.**

## **So where are you in the terminal?**

Are you growing? Coasting? Curious? Wandering? or Lost?

Wherever you are—**there's a next step for you.**

Don't waste the wait.

Don't ignore the signs.

Don't gamble with eternity.

**Your flight will be called. The gate will close. Your soul will take flight.**

**Be ready. Ready to go home!!!**

Let's pray...

Communion...

**Closing...**

**Q's/Prayer, CC, Baptism, Anniversary/Open-table, LGLP**