



The Upward Call (Philippians 3:12-21)

The Upward Call

“Not that I **have already attained**, or am **already perfected**; but I **press on**, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also **laid hold of me**. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but **one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead**, I press toward the goal for **the prize of the upward call** of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, **as many as are mature, have this mind**; and **if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you**. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, **let us be of the same mind.**”

Philippians 3:12-16 NKJV

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- ☑ *“Not that I have already attained, or am **already perfected**; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that **for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.**” Philippians 3:12 NKJV*

☑ Why has Y'shua laid hold of you? To be perfected (mature)!

- ☑ Be perfect as my father in heaven is perfect
- ☑ “Therefore you shall **be perfect**, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48 NKJV
- ☑ Perfect and complete lacking nothing
- ☑ “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, **that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**” James 1:2-4 NKJV
- ☑ “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in **bringing many sons to glory**, to make **the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings**. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,” Hebrews 2:10-11 NKJV
- ☑ Hebrews—for those who are mature
- ☑ “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. **For everyone who partakes only of**

milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both **good and evil.**"

Hebrews 5:12-14 NKJV [**End of chapter 5**]...

☑ **...[Start of chapter 6] "Therefore,** leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, **let us go on to perfection,** not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. **And this we will do if God permits.**" Hebrews 6:1-3 NKJV

☑ But for those who are mature...

☑ "And I, brethren, **when I came to you [in your unbelief and immaturity],** did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. **I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.** And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. **However, we**

speaking wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing." I Corinthians 2:1-6 NKJV

☑ *"Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, **forgetting those things which are behind** and **reaching forward to those things which are ahead**, I press **toward** the goal for the prize of **the upward call** of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13-14 NKJV*

☑ **The ONLY WAY to obtain the ultimate prize is to leave your past behind!**

☑ Go and sin no more...

☑ **Leading up to the ultimate picture of forgiveness:**

"Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, **"Why have you not brought Him?"** The officers answered, **"No man ever spoke like this Man!"** Then the Pharisees answered them, **"Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."** Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, **"Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"** They answered and said to

him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." And everyone went to his own house." John 7:45-53 NKJV [**End of chapter 7**]...

☑ ...[**Start of chapter 8**] Now the exchange that demonstrates what it means to start over with a clean slate. "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" : "But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. **Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery.** And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, "**Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?**" This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and [*]**wrote on the ground** with His finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And again He stooped down and [*]**wrote on the ground.**

Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, **“Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”** She said, **“No one, Lord.”** And Jesus said to her, **“[**]Neither do I condemn you; [***]go and sin no more.”** Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, **“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”**” John 8:1-12 NKJV

- ☑ [*] “O LORD, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You shall be ashamed. **“Those who depart from Me Shall be written in the earth,** Because they have forsaken the LORD, The fountain of living waters.”” Jeremiah 17:13 NKJV
- ☑ [**] “There is therefore now **no condemnation** to those who are in Christ Jesus, **who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**” Romans 8:1 NKJV

- [***] “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**” II Corinthians 5:17 NKJV
- Where has your sin gone?
 - “**As far as the east is from the west,** So far has He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalms 103:12 NKJV
 - Why not “**As far as the north is from the south?**”
- Leave the past in the past—don’t remember your sins!
 - If you do these things...** “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, **add** to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. **For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.**” II Peter 1:5-8 NKJV
 - The one way to miss out...** “For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has **forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.**” II Peter 1:9 NKJV

- ☑ Later in the same letter Peter describes this grave error of forgetting to leave behind your sins and what it leads to:
- ☑ **Again Entangled:** “For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, **they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness**, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. **For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning.** For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.” II Peter 2:18-21 NKJV
- ☑ **Going back to your past is like...** “But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: **“A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”**” II Peter 2:22 NKJV

- ☑ **From:** “The great God who formed everything Gives the fool his hire and the transgressor his wages. **As a dog returns to his own vomit, So a fool repeats his folly. Do you see a man wise in his own eyes?** There is more hope for a fool than for him.” Proverbs 26:10-12 NKJV
- ☑ How do you practice NOT going back? Spiritual Violence and wrestling with God.
- ☑ **The kingdom requires spiritual violence:** “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, **and the violent take it by force.**” Matthew 11:12 NKJV
- ☑ **I will not let You go unless You bless me!** “Then Jacob was left alone; **and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day.** Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, “Let Me go, for the day breaks.” But he said, “**I will not let You go unless You bless me!**” So He said to him, “What is your name?” He said, “Jacob.” And He said, “**Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.**” Then Jacob

asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "**For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.**"" Genesis 32:24-30 NKJV

☑ What is the upward call?

☑ **The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:**

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, **for the equipping of the saints** for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, **till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine**, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, **may grow up [mature] in all things into Him who is the head**—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the

body for the edifying of itself in love.” Ephesians
4:11-16 NKJV

☑ *“Therefore let us, **as many as are mature, have this mind**; and **if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal** even this to you.” Philippians 3:15 NKJV*

☑ **Have what mind? The mind that knows the upward call. And who could know such things? A person with a mature mind. Maturity vs. Childhood**

☑ How do we obtain the mature mind?

☑ **Bringing thought into captivity:** “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, **bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ**, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.” II Corinthians 10:4-6 NKJV

☑ **Be transformed by the renewing of your mind:** “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, **but be**

transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Romans 12:1-2 NKJV

- ☑ **Solid food in the word of righteousness or milk:** "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. **For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness**, for he is a babe. **But solid food belongs to those who are of full age**, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both **good and evil.**"

Hebrews 5:12-14 NKJV

- ☑ **The obvious consequence of choosing milk over solid food:** ""Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little." For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people, To whom He said, **"This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest,"** And, **"This is the refreshing";** Yet they would not

hear. But the word of the LORD was to them, “Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little,” **That they might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught.**” Isaiah 28:9-13 NKJV

- ☑ **Deeper meaning of Isaiah’s words for the believer in Christ:** *Instead of going forward toward the upward call, a choice to reject the mature message that is available to the ever-maturing mind, inevitably leads back to the sins of the past (returning to your vomit)! What about you?*

- ☑ The mind of Christ

- ☑ **For the unbeliever to become a baby (immature)**

believer: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with **excellence of speech or of wisdom** declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And **my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom,** but in **demonstration of the Spirit and of power,** that your **faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.**” I Corinthians 2:1-5 NKJV

☑ **For the believer to become a mature believer:**

“However, we speak **wisdom among those who are mature**, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the **wisdom of God in a mystery**, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages **for our glory**, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. **For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.** For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? *[this is all the unbeliever can ever know]* Even so **no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. [And what are those things freely given to us? The deep things of God, the mysteries of God.]** These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things

with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for **they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.** *[It's a waste of time to talk about such things with unbelievers.]* But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For “who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?” **But we have the mind of Christ.”** I Corinthians 2:6-16 NKJV

☑ *“Nevertheless, **to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.**”*
Philippians 3:16 NKJV

☑ **The Same Mind**

☑ **One Faith:** “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring **to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.** There is **one** body and **one** Spirit, just as you were called in **one** hope of your calling; **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism; **one** God and Father of all, who is

above all, and through all, **and in you all.**" Ephesians 4:1-6 NKJV

☑ **One with Yahweh, Y'shua and each other...** ""I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they **all may be one**, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; **that they also may be one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, **that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one**, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." John 17:20-23 NKJV

Our Citizenship is in Heaven

"Brethren, **join in following my example**, and note those who so walk, **as you have us for a pattern**. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, **that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ**: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame— **who set their mind on earthly things**. **For our citizenship is in heaven**, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who **will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to**

His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” Philippians 3:17-21 NKJV

Philippians 3:17-21

☑ “Brethren, **join in following my example**, and note those who **so walk, as you have us for a pattern.**” Philippians 3:17 NKJV

☑ Imitate me...

☑ “Therefore I urge you, **imitate me.**” I Corinthians 4:16 NKJV

☑ “**Imitate me**, just as I also **imitate Christ.**” I Corinthians 11:1 NKJV

☑ FROM PREVIOUS TEACHING: “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed **I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ** Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and **count them as rubbish**, that I may gain Christ” Philippians 3:7-8 NKJV

☑ **He left us THE EXAMPLE:** “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, **leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:** “**Who committed no sin**, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself

to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, **might live for righteousness**— by whose stripes you were healed.” 1 Peter 2:21-24 NKJV

☑ **He is the light...** Then Y’shua spoke to them again, saying, “I am **the light of the world**. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have **the light of life**.” (John 8:12)

☑ **You are the light...** “**You are the light of the world**. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. **Let your light so shine** before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:14-16 NKJV

☑ *“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the **enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame— who set their mind on earthly things.**”* Philippians 3:18-19 NKJV

☑ **Enemies of the Cross—those who set their minds on the flesh, their end is destruction**

☑ **Set your mind on things above:** “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. **Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.** For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

Colossians 3:1-3 NKJV

☑ **The carnal mind is enmity against God:** “For those who live according to the flesh **set their minds on the things of the flesh,** but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. **Because the carnal mind is enmity against God;** for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” Romans 8:5-9 NKJV

☑ **Live according to the flesh—die according to the flesh:** “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. **For if you live according to the flesh you will die;** but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” Romans 8:12-13 NKJV

- ☑ **“For all that is in the world**—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world **is passing away**, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” 1 John 2:16-17 NKJV
- ☑ **god is their belly**
- ☑ **What you believe is what you will fill yourself with:** “A man’s stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth; From the produce of his lips he shall be filled.” Proverbs 18:20 NKJV
- ☑ **The glutton will come to poverty:** “Do not mix with winebibbers, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat; For the drunkard and **the glutton will come to poverty**, And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags.” Proverbs 23:20-21 NKJV
- ☑ **Fleshly desires brings forth death:** “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” James 1:14-15 NKJV
- ☑ **Glory is their shame**

- ☑ “Surely He scorns the scornful, But **gives grace to the humble**. The **wise shall inherit glory**, But **shame shall be the legacy of fools.**” Proverbs 3:34-35 NKJV
- ☑ “**Let another man praise you**, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips.” Proverbs 27:2 NKJV
- ☑ “**Do not exalt yourself** in the presence of the king, And do not stand in the place of the great; For it is better that he say to you, “Come up here,” Than that you should be put lower in the presence of the prince, Whom your eyes have seen.” Proverbs 25:6-7 NKJV
- ☑ “**And whoever exalts himself will be humbled**, and **he who humbles himself will be exalted.**” Matthew 23:12 NKJV

- ☑ “For our ***citizenship is in heaven***, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ***who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body***, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.” Philippians 3:20-21 NKJV
- ☑ **Heavenly Citizenship vs. Earthly Citizenship**
- ☑ **I bestow upon you a kingdom:** ““But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And **I bestow upon you a kingdom**, just as My Father bestowed one upon

Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”” Luke 22:28-30 NKJV

☑ **The kingdom of God is within you:** “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, **the kingdom of God is within you.**”” Luke 17:20-21 NKJV

☑ **An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled:** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to **an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled** and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,” I Peter 1:3-4 NKJV

☑ **The Glorified Body**

☑ **Incorruption, glory, power:** “So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is **raised in incorruption**. It is sown in dishonor, it is **raised in glory**. It is sown in weakness, it is **raised in power**. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a **spiritual body**. There is a

natural body, and there is a spiritual body." I Corinthians 15:42-44 NKJV

- ☑ **We shall all be changed:** "Now this I say, brethren, that **flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed**— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be **raised incorruptible**, and **we shall be changed**. For this **corruptible must put on incorruption**, and this **mortal must put on immortality.**" I Corinthians 15:50-53 NKJV

- ☑ Y'shua's Glorified Body:

- ☑ **Flesh and Bones not Flesh and Blood:** "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, **for a spirit does not have flesh and bones** as you see I have."" Luke 24:39 NKJV
- ☑ **Moving through walls:** "Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, **when the doors were shut** where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, **Jesus came and stood in the midst**, and said to them, "Peace be with you."" John 20:19 NKJV

- ☑ **After the Road to Emmaus, a disappearing act:** “Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, “Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” And He went in to stay with them. Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; **and He vanished from their sight.**” Luke 24:28-31 NKJV.

NEXT WEEK

Meditate on these Things (Philippians 4:1-9)