Dear Open Door Family,

Last week I had the wonderful privilege of attending the Moody Bible Institute Pastor's conference. It was a joy to be there with Steve Anderson and Bob Dunbar. We were challenged several times each day by men who taught us from God's Word. Please pray for me and these men that the challenges and encouragement that we received will continue to bear much fruit.

This passage from Philippians is a great challenge to me. We have all heard the phrase "do not try this at home." Normally, it said by someone who is doing something dangerous that they do not want anyone to try. Many children growing up heard parents say, "Don't ever smoke," while their mother or father was smoking a cigarette. The sad truth is that the example is always more powerful than the words themselves. So these verses are all the more challenging when we see that the apostle Paul tells us to listen to what he's saying ***and*** do those things which he is doing. May we all be able to say that to others in our own walk with the Lord.

***Philippians 3:17-19*** *(HCS) Join in imitating me, brothers, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. [18] For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. [19] Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame. They are focused on earthly things, [20] but OUR CITIZENSHIP is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

If we want to know what it means to live like Jesus we can open up our New Testament to the gospels and read the very words of Jesus and hear the descriptions of what he did by eye witnesses. When Paul wrote this letter there was no N.T. available so he said, "Watch me and live like I do. Do this because I am following and serving Jesus Christ." Paul then issues an incredibly strong warning in which he says there are "many that live as enemies of the cross of Christ." That is beyond my comprehension. How can anyone hate the symbol of freedom? - The symbol of forgiveness? - And how can anyone hate Jesus who died on that cross to make salvation possible? Maybe the problem is that they do not want to admit they are sinful, fallen, and in desperate need of Grace. Perhaps they cannot bring themselves to bow in humble submission at the foot of the cross and accept the pardon being offered. It is possible that they are so focused on themselves, their wants, and the here and now that they refuse to consider eternity.

**PRAYER:** Lord God, please help me to know you more and more through Your Word and time with alone with you. Help me to be a good model in my actions and behavior so that others will see you in me. Help me to NEVER live as an enemy of the cross. Keep me focused on the Eternity and the joy of seeing you face to face.

Pastor Mark Kieft

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