

Philippians Series

Lesson #082

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Dean Bible Ministries

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Are There Really Carnal Christians? Philippians 3:17–21



In Php. 3 the focus is on standing firm against error.

Two sources:

- 1. The Judaizers: added human works to justification and/or spiritual growth (sanctification) [Legalism].**
- 2. The enemies of the cross of Christ, Php. 3:17ff; followed their lustful desires [licentiousness, antinomianism].**

Php. 4:1, “Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.” [NKJV]

Php. 3:15, “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.

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

**φρονέω *phroneō* 1 plur pres act
subjunctive [imperative]
to be wise, to think**

**φρονέω *phroneō* 2 plur
pres act indicative
to be wise, to think**

Php. 3:15, “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.

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subjunctive [imperatival]
to be wise, to think**

**φρονέω *phroneō* 2 plur
pres act indicative
to be wise, to think**

**στοιχέω *stoicheō*
pres act infin
to walk in line**

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

Php. 3:18, “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:

Php. 3:19, “whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.”

περιπατέω peripateō

to walk, walk around;

figurative for a person’s way of life, how they think, talk,

act, work, live

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

συμμιμητής *summimētēs*
masc plur nom
joint-imitator
***remember “same rule”**
“same mind” in
Php. 1:8, 12

τύπος *tupos*
masc sing acc
(m) image,
pattern, example,
sign; type

Php. 3:17, “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.” [ESV]

Php. 3:17, “Join in imitating me, brothers, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us.” [HCSB]

Php. 3:17, “Brothers, you become joint followers of my example.” [RD]

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

συμμιμητής *summimētēs*
masc plur nom
joint-imitator
***remember “same rule”**
“same mind” in
Php. 1:8, 12

τύπος *typos*
masc sing acc
(m) image,
pattern, example,
sign; type

σκοπέω *skopeō*
2 plur pres act impera
to pay attention to; closely watch

Php. 2:4, “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Php. 3:17, “Brothers, you become joint followers of my example, and pay close attention to those who walk in this manner, that they have us for a pattern.” [RD]

**οὕτως *houtōs*
(demonstr) thus, so,
in this way or manner**

Php. 3:17, “Brothers, you become joint followers of my example, and pay close attention to those who walk in this manner: they have us for a pattern.” [RD]

οὕτως *houtōs*

**(demonstr) thus, so,
in this way or manner**

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

**οὕτως *houtōs*
(demonstr) thus, so,
in this way or manner**

“For God loved the world in this manner, He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Php. 3:18, “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:

Php. 3:19, “whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.” [NKJV]

Are these believers or unbelievers? [Revised]

- 1. Paul is addressing the Philippians as believers, but he uses unbelievers as an example, so they do not go back to living like an unbeliever. [Revised]**
- 2. His commands are to walk a certain way, which seems unnecessary if obedience and spiritual growth are the inevitable consequence of being saved/justified.**
- 3. In other passages Paul contrasts two kinds of walking that can characterize believers.**

Eph. 4:1, “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,”

Eph. 4:17, “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,”

Both are addressing believers.

If believers are inevitably going to grow and mature, then why keep warning them to no longer walk or live like unbelievers?

In Galatians

Gal. 5:16, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

Gal. 3:3, “Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?”

Rom. 8:5, “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*.”

Rom. 8:6, “For to be fleshly minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

Rom. 8:7, “Because the fleshly mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.”

Rom. 8:8, “So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

4. Contextually Paul is telling them to follow the example of the apostles and their companions: Timothy, Silas, Epaphroditus, and that they as believers should not be like those who are bound for eternal punishment who are characterized by four things: enemies of the cross of Christ; their end is destruction; not eternal, but temporal divine discipline; who glory in things that are really shameful; and they set their minds on earthly things.

What is the “Good News” i.e., the Gospel?

John 3:18, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Two Types of People

Those who believe in Christ vs. Those who do not believe

Not condemned

Condemned already

**Because they believed
they are justified
Not “declared righteous”**

No belief, no justification

1 Tim. 1:15, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”

Luke 19:10, “for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Php. 3:17, “Brothers, you become joint followers of my example, and pay close attention to those who walk in this manner: they have us for a pattern.” [RD]

**οὕτως *houtōs*
(demonstr) thus, so,
in this way or manner**

Php. 3:18, “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:

Php. 3:19, “whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.” [NKJV]

Php. 3:20, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Php. 3:21, “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.” [NKJV]

Php. 3:18, “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:” [NKJV]

What does he mean by “the cross of Christ”?

1 Cor. 1:18, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

1 Cor. 1:21, “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.”

1 Cor. 1:22, “For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;

1 Cor. 1:23, “but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,”

1 Cor. 2:1, “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.

1 Cor. 2:2, “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

Php. 3:19, “whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.” [NKJV]

- **Their end is destruction,**
- **Their god is their belly,**
- **And they glory in something that should be shameful,**
- **The mind is set on earthly things.**

Php. 3:19, “whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.” [NKJV]

τέλος *telos*
neut sing nom
(n) end, destiny

ἀπώλεια *apōleia*
Noun fem sing nom
destruction, ruin

Matt. 26:8, “But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, ‘Why this waste?’ ”

John 17:12, “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”

Rom. 9:22, “What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,”

Php. 1:28, “and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.”

Matt. 26:8, “But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, ‘Why this waste?’ ”

John 17:12, “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”

2 Thess. 2:3, “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,”

Php. 1:28, “and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.”

1 Tim. 6:9, “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.”

1 Cor. 3:1, “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ.”

1 Cor. 3:1, “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ.”

πνευματικός *pneumatikos*

Adjective

masc plur dat spiritual

σάρκινος *sarkinos*

Adjective masc plur dat

fleshly, sinful, carnal

1 Cor. 2:14, “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.”

1 Cor. 2:14, “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God [*to pneuma tou theou*]; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”

**ψυχικός *psuchikos*
nom masc plur
natural, unspiritual**

1 Cor. 2:14, “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they [‘the things’] are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them [‘the things’], because they [‘the things’] are spiritually appraised.”

**ψυχικός *psuchikos*
nom masc plur
natural, unspiritual**

**πνευματικός *pneumatikos*
Adjective
masc plur dat spiritual**

**Jude 19, “These are the ones who cause divisions,
worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.”**

ψυχικός *psuchikos*

nom masc plur

**soulish, in contrast to spiritual,
“not having “spirit” or “a spirit”**

Heb. 4:12, “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

1 Thess. 5:23, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

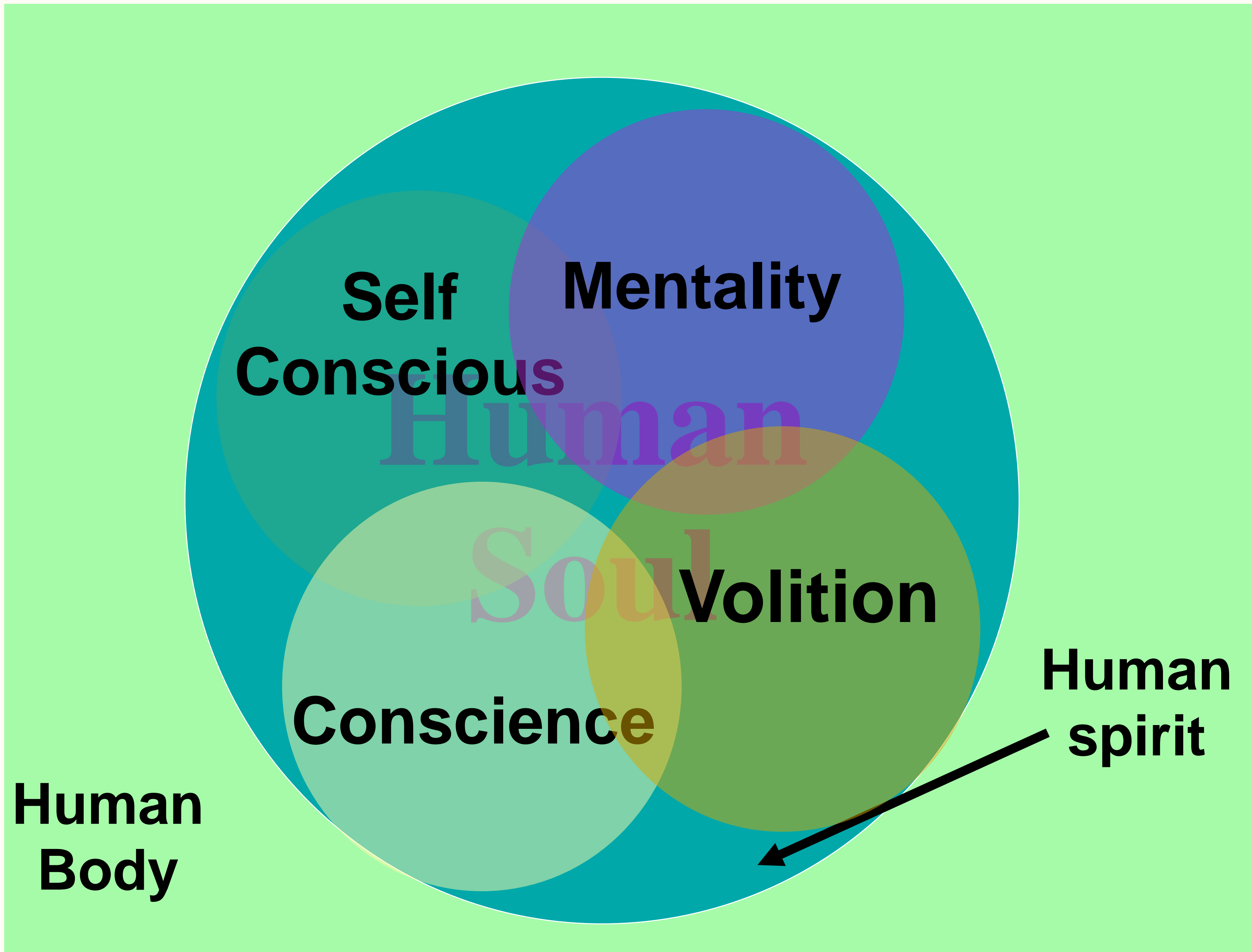
Jude 19, “These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the spirit.”



ψυχικός *psuchikos*
nom masc plur
soulish, in contrast to spiritual,
“not having ‘spirit’ ” or “a spirit”

Spirit or spirit?

Literally, “not having spirit”



James 3:14, “But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

James 3:15, “This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.”

ψυχικός *psuchikos*

fem sing nom

natural, unspiritual

1 Cor. 3:1, “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ.”

1 Cor. 3:2, “I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able,”

1 Cor. 3:3, “for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?”

spiritual = growing, maturing believers

babes = little if any teaching, no growth, living like they always did

carnal = believers who should have matured, but are living like unbelievers

Matt. 5:19, “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Php. 3:19, “whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.” [NKJV]

Php. 3:18, “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:

Php. 3:19, “whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.” [NKJV]

κοιλία *koilia*

**Noun fem sing nom
stomach, womb
figurative, for their
lustful appetites**

Rom. 16:18, “For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”

Php. 3:18, “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:

Php. 3:19, “whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.” [NKJV]

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James 3:15, “This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic.”