The Gap Between the Real and The Ideal
Phil. 3:12-15

Introduction:
A. Gap has existed since fall of man.
   1. No longer an ideal world (Gen. 3:17-24).
   2. No longer any ideal people. (Cf. Rom. 3:10,11; 1 John 1:8,10)
   3. No longer any ideal inter-personal relations. (Marriage, church, etc.)
B. Gap generates good and bad attempts to cope with it.

Discussion:
I. To Some, The Solution Is to Repeal the Ideal.
   A. Deny perfect standard. (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16,17; James 1:25).
   B. Dilute perfect standard.
      1. Pervert it. (Gal. 1:8,9)
      2. Water it down.

II. To Some, The Solution Is to Accept the Real Without Improvement.
   A. No desire to correct sin. (cf. 1 John 1:7-9).
   B. No desire to grow. (Heb. 5:12-6:1; 2 Pet. 3:17,18; Phil. 3:12-15; Minnie Pearl’s brother).

III. To Some, The Solution Is to Abandon the Struggle for Ideal.
   A. With self.
      1. Accepting status quo.
      2. Escapism - drugs, hedonism.
      3. Suicide.
   B. With relationships.
      1. Leave families, jobs, brethren.
      2. Jump from one to other - looking for ideal.

IV. To Others, The Solution Is to Patiently Strive for The Ideal.
   A. For self – requires patience with self (cf. 1 John 2:1-3).
   B. For relationships – requires patience with others.
      1. With Family. (cf. 1 Pet. 3:1,2; Eph. 6:4).
      2. With Brethren. (Eph. 4:1-6; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; 4:1-4)
      3. But, “long-suffering” is not “ever-suffering.” (1 Cor. 5:13; 2 Thess. 3:6,14; Rev. 2:20,21).

Conclusion:
A. We will not be lost for not reaching ideal in this life.
B. We will be lost for not reaching for ideal in this life.