

Messengers For Christ

*Outreach Program
Handbook 10*

Acts 16:5: And so [Indeed therefore] were the churches established in the faith [the family faith, which is the faith common to all in the family of God], and increased in number daily.

Before we actually begin our study of Paul's epistle to the Philippians let's see how the Word of God first got to European soil. Acts 16:5 is the sixth great statement in the Book of Acts. It summarizes and concludes Acts 12:25-16:4. As Paul and others traveled they were able to establish entire fellowships in the Word. That indicates great growth. True ministers of Jesus Christ strengthen and firmly establish the hearts of the faithful. That's why men and women with ministries should always travel to be with the people in their local areas.

Verse 6 in Acts 16 starts the seventh section of the book of Acts which is summarized and concluded in Acts 19:20. Acts 19:20 summarizes and concludes Acts 16:6-19:19. The way these great statements or concluding summaries work is that they function with the preceding section in a check and balance method. They are examples of the figure of speech symperasma.

You may be familiar with the concept of checks and balances from the set-up of our government. How many branches are there in our government? Most of us learned in school that there are three: the executive, the judicial, and the legislative. That's the president, the courts, and congress. (Let me just make a short tangent to say that there is really a fourth branch that those in government do not want us to know about. The fourth is the people. We, the people, can exercise checks and balances on each of the other three branches also.)

Well, back to the concept of checks and balances. The congress makes the laws, but the president has veto power and the courts can rule the legislation unconstitutional. The president enforces the laws, but the congress appropriates the money to do so, and the courts can say that what he is doing is unconstitutional. The courts interpret the laws, which for all practical purposes changes them to suit their purposes. However, the president appoints the justices and the congress approves them. If the courts declare something unconstitutional the congress can amend the constitution so that it becomes constitutional. So can the people.

Let's get back to what we are really addressing here in Acts, the check and balance relationship that the symperasmas have with the sections. As we read the seventh section we should keep the seventh great statement in mind because it will shed light on what we read. We will also see that the sections will define the terms in the great statements. The 7th great statement is Acts 19:20 which reads, "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." This verse describes the pinnacle of rise and expansion of the Christian Church in the first century. Paul is still free and traveling. In Acts 16:6, Paul is in his second itinerary. This section is guided by the great statement "so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." It illustrates what it means for the Word to prevail. We'll see what's required for the Word to prevail in this section, and this section will define what it means to prevail.

We could spend twenty hours getting into these great statements, but I just want to mention them here because what we are really interested in... What we are really trying to get to is the Book of Philippians. We are in Acts for the purpose of how it will shed light on the Philippians and subsequently on the epistle Paul wrote them. Philippi is first mentioned in this 7th section.

Acts 16:6-7: Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost [God, the giver, not His gift] to preach the word in Asia, ⁷ After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit [God] suffered them not.

It is interesting to me that the first two examples of direction in the rise and expansion of the church in the seventh section are "Don't go there!" At the end of verse seven God still has not told them what to do; He has only told them what not to do. Don't go to Asia, and don't go to Bithynia. We know they eventually did take God's Word to Asia and Bithynia, but the timing was not right to do it at this time. At the very start of the section God says don't preach the Word in Asia, and by the end of the section in Acts 19:10, it says that all Asia heard the Word of the Lord both Jews and Greeks. At the end of the section it was described as "the Word of the Lord." The term "Lord" often emphasizes the commitment and sold-out attitude of reverent obedience of a bond slave of the Lord Jesus Christ. We'll see that commitment build to its pinnacle throughout this section.

Affirmations: My church is established in the faith. I take direction from the Holy Spirit.

Recommended Reading: Acts 16 KJV.

Acts 1:8: But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

What we really see develop in the seventh section is the reverent obedience to God, and the commitment to do whatever it takes to move His Word. So, when God said no to their desire to go to Asia and Bithynia, did they just sit down and do nothing? No, the prevailing direction by revelation they were currently operating under was Acts 1:8.

Were they wrong to consider the options of Asia and Bithynia? No, they are both included in the uttermost part of the earth. However, in Acts 16:6-7 God gives them revelation to “tweak” what He had previously told them. Acts 1:8 is like a soldier’s standing orders or general orders.

A soldier is given three general orders in boot camp. These he has to memorize and he’s responsible to repeat them on command. If I remember correctly, they are: 1. I will guard everything within the limits of my post and quit my post only when properly relieved. 2. I will obey my special orders and perform all of my duties in a military manner. 3. I will report violations of my special orders, emergencies, and anything not covered in my instructions to the commander of the relief. These general orders always applied. You knew them and were responsible to function properly by obeying them. The standing orders of Acts 1:8 [above] have not been changed in our administration. We are still responsible to do as it directs. Where are we witnessing?

Acts 16:8-10: And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.¹⁰ And after he had seen the vision, immediately **WE** endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called **US** for to preach the gospel unto them.

We see they are still moving ahead. They end up in Troas [That’s Troy of the Trojan Horse fame.] They are still moving and speaking, and they arrive in Troas a port city. This is an important stop for they connect with someone very important to their mission. Paul and Silas started the journey (Acts 15:40); Timothy joins them in Acts 16:3. Now in Acts 16:10 Luke will join the entourage. Although God never has Luke mention his own name, Timothy joined them because of the change in pronouns. Luke is writing Acts and he says: Verse 6: “Now when **they** had gone...” Verse 7: “After **they** were come...” Verse 8: “And as **they** passed by...” Verse 10: “And after he had seen the vision, immediately **we**... assuredly gathering that the Lord had called **us**. . . . Luke was now with Paul, Silas, and Timothy.

That’s the direction they had been waiting for. God tells them who needs their help. What do they do when the revelation comes? They immediately endeavor to go to Macedonia. Timing is important, and they respond immediately. Talk about missionary zeal or passion for outreach. It’s not about going to church; it’s about transforming the world. If we as Christians don’t get it again, the Muslims are going to bury us, because they have it, and they will demonstrate the energy of their convictions.

The Greek word for endeavor is *zēteō*, to seek after, to strive for with zeal. They set their mind and reasoning on accomplishing the task. Why did they immediately endeavor? It says they “assuredly gathered.” The Greek word is *sumbibazō*. It means to cause to coalesce or join together. It means to unite or knit together in affection, conclusion or opinion. It is used three times in Ephesians and Colossians of how the body of Christ is knit together. These four men came to the same conclusion. They were united in their stand with Paul and the revelation he received.

Acts 16:11-15: Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course [they didn’t waste time or effort] to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis;¹² And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony [a military settlement with the Italic right; this was Rome away from Rome.]: and we were in that city abiding certain days.¹³ And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side [The Gangites river is a mile and a half west of the city.], where prayer was wont [known] to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*.¹⁴ And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, [If we do our job, He will do His. He’s the One Who opens the hearts of men.] that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.¹⁵ And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

Paul went where he knew people prayed, and he found Lydia. Paul spoke the Word to her, and she and her whole household responded to the Word Paul taught.

Affirmations: I have received power and am a witness. I am obedient and committed.

Recommended Reading: Acts 16 NLT.

Acts 16:16-18: And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: ¹⁷ The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. ¹⁸ And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

This possessed damsel was used by her masters to make money. She followed Paul and his companions many days until Paul got the guidance to remove the spirit. During that time, she must have heard things that Paul preached that softened her heart. Paul's words must have gotten through the evil spirit influence and reached her heart. The devil has no fore-knowledge, all he knows is what the Word says. He has this woman follow Paul and the gang to try to hinder God's purposes, but he can't stop the power of God in believing men and women. She must have wanted the spirit out or she could have invited it back in. I think the context supports that this woman really wanted deliverance. It was her masters, (probably the religious leaders in the Pythian Temple) that got upset. People were willing to pay big money to hear what this possessed damsel had to share, and her masters were about to lose this income. If the woman would have wanted the spirits back, she could have opened to them again. She did not want them back and enjoyed her deliverance. It was her masters who got upset. So upset, that they act maliciously and very inappropriately.

Acts 16:19-20: And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* into the marketplace unto the rulers, ²⁰ And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews do exceedingly trouble [*ektarrassō*] our city,

The Judeans were recently thrown out of Rome, and this military colony was eager to follow the example of their mother city. Remember, Paul and Silas were the only Judeans. Timothy and Luke were of Gentile background which was probably the reason they were not taken with Paul and Silas.

Acts 16:21-22: And teach [*katangellō*] customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. [They preached a God other than Caesar.] ²² And the multitude rose up together [*sunephistēmi*, only occurrence] against them: and the magistrates rent off [*perirrhēnumi*, only occurrence] their clothes, and commanded to beat [*rhabdizō*, only occurrence] *them*.

These three Greek words are used no other place in the New Testament. This was unique; this travesty of justice is recorded no other place in the New Testament. This is what Paul calls "shamefully entreated" in I Thessalonians 2:2. Those three words are used no place else in the Bible. This was rare and outrageously insolent behavior. This was audaciously rude, disrespectful, and impertinent.

Although this was exceptionally bad and distasteful, Paul doesn't stop it. I'm sure he protested, but he could have stopped it had he wanted. Why would he endure this kind of treatment when he didn't have to? He must have had revelation. Why else would he not have told them he was a Roman citizen? To falsely claim Roman citizenship was punishable by death so people didn't do it without proof.

Acts 16:23-24: And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: ²⁴ Who, having received such a charge [This was no ordinary charge; this was a very special case of great importance to the magistrates.], thrust them into the inner prison [death cell], and made their feet fast in the stocks.

The jailor made sure that they wouldn't get away and that they would be as uncomfortable as possible. Remember this is the seventh section showing how the Word of God prevails. Does this look like the prevailing Word to you? Well, the account is not over yet, is it?

Acts 16:25: And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

That's real joy in service. Despite what Paul and Silas endured they continued to pray and praise God. Anyone can praise God in the good times. What does one do when the storms of life come? Does God change or do we?

I Thessalonians 5:18 says, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." It doesn't say **for** every thing give thanks; it says **in** every thing give thanks.

This is one way to secure victory; we praise our problems away. The swiftness and surety of our deliverance is often determined by how we respond to tough times and troubling situations. Paul and Silas prevailed. They were delivered because they made up their mind to stand for God. They praised God through the difficulties and the difficulties didn't last long. Sometimes it's the power of our praise that effects the magnitude of our miracle.

Notice it says, "the prisoners heard them." They might not have understood it, but they heard it. When the doors sprang open, do you think they might have made the connection. Not only was their deliverance a witness, but how they endured the attack of the adversary was a witness also.

Affirmations: Nothing stops me from doing what God asks. I praise my way to victory.

Recommended Reading: Acts 16 NAS.

Acts 16:26-28: And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. ²⁸ But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

This shameful treatment in Philippi may not seem logical initially, but if they did not tell the authorities they were Romans by revelation, they must have known that God had something big planned. You have real joy in service when you are willing to suffer for furtherance of the gospel. This pattern was established earlier in Acts and also documented in other New Testament books.

Acts 5:41: And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to **suffer** shame for his **name**.

After being thrown in jail and beaten for having healed the man at the temple great beautiful, they rejoiced that they were given the privilege. When God told Ananias to minister to Paul in Acts 9:16, He also said, "For I will shew him [Paul] how great things he must **suffer** for my **name's** sake. James 5:10 also instructs us to, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the **name** of the Lord, for an example of **suffering** affliction, and of patience." If we take the time to examine the lives of the prophets, we'll see what they endured for the sake of the message they delivered.

I Peter 2:20 elaborates, "For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and **suffer for it**, ye take it patiently [endure it], this *is* acceptable with God." It's acceptable with God; how about you? Many times, we do not pursue the open doors God has given us because it costs our ease and comfort. It's just not acceptable to us. We don't accept the opportunities, because we don't care for the situations.

I Peter 3:14 continues, "But and if ye **suffer for** righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." Not only can we enjoy in serving; we can also be happy. Joy is an inside job, and we can always manifest joy. For most people, happiness is based too often on happenings. If the right things happen, we are happy. If they don't; we aren't.

For the believer happiness is based on obedience. How can Peter say, be happy if you suffer? He qualified it; he said if ye suffer for righteousness sake. If you do the right thing and suffer for it you should be happy. Happy because you are suffering? NO. Happy because you obeyed and did the right thing. After Jesus washed the apostles' feet and taught them about serving, he said in John 13: 17, "If ye know these things, happy are ye **if ye do them**." Knowledge doesn't make you happy, obedience does.

I Peter 3:17: For *it is* better, if the will of God be so [the permissive will of God], that ye **suffer for** well doing, than for evil doing.

After these examples of joy in serving in Acts 16, how appropriate for Paul to write the Philippians, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to **suffer for** his sake (Philippians 1:29). The Philippians learned this from Paul by word and example. In all fairness though, "suffer" in the Greek isn't limited to bad things. It is the word *paschō*, and it means to endure or experience things. It is used for both good and bad things and the context will usually clarify it.

Acts 16:29-17:1: And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. ²⁸ But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. ²⁹ Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, ³⁰ And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? [He knew they were incarcerated because they preached the gospel, and he wanted to know about the God Who delivered His servants like this!] ³¹ And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and **thy house**. ³² And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in **his house**. [Like Lydia, the entire household was won to the Lord.] ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, [Remember this is not water; it's the new birth.] he and all his,

straightway. ³⁴ And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. [Not only is there joy in serving; there is joy in believing God at any and every level.] ³⁵ And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. [Paul and Silas had agreed to go back to jail for the sake of the jailor. The earthquake was not designed to spring them from jail, but rather to be a demonstration of power to convince the jailor of the truth of Paul's message.] ³⁶ And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. ³⁷ But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast *us* into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out. [Paul wanted to see them face to face. Paul is still walking and the revelation is clear. Paul knows he is going to come back, and he wants to know exactly who owes him it case things come up again in the future.] ³⁸ And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans. [Remember the background of Philippi and the Italic right.] ³⁹ And they came and besought them, and brought *them* out, and desired *them* to depart out of the city. ⁴⁰ And they went out of the prison, and entered into *the house of* Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed. ^{17:1} Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: [All three of these cities were in Macedonia.]

This was Paul's first trip to Philippi. It was a very successful one despite all the difficulties they endured. Philippi doesn't come up again until Acts 20.

When he arrived at Thessalonica he told them all about what happened at Philippi. It was an important lesson that he learned, and he wanted to be sure they learned it, too. When he writes his first epistle to the Thessalonians he again mentions what he endured in Philippi.

I Thessalonians 2:2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at **Philippi**, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention [*agōn*, the struggle and fight of an athlete].

Paul told the Thessalonians that they had a rough time in Philippi, and reminded them that Thessalonica was not without its conflict either. You can't move the Word without ruffling a few feathers. Opposition isn't an indication you are doing something wrong, just that you are doing something. We are going to face contention. Are we willing to go into training to be able to handle the contention and still move the Word?

Affirmations: I have real joy in serving. I'm willing to suffer for furtherance of the gospel.

Recommended Reading: Acts 16 ERV.

II Thessalonians 3:1: Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you:

If we want to see Acts 19:20, we must be willing to begin to live Acts 16. We move at God's direction willing to make whatever sacrifice is necessary. If we don't sacrifice our ease and comfort, the Word will never move. Nothing worthwhile rarely comes without sacrifice. That's the background of the Book of Philippians.

If we want great marriages... if we want great fellowships... if we want a great move of God in our lives... then we may have to make great sacrifices, too. Are we willing to sacrifice our ease and comfort on the altar of truth? Are we willing to sacrifice our likes and preferences and prejudices on the altar of *Father Knows Best*. Are we willing to do outlandish, foolish, or embarrassing things for the furtherance of the gospel?

If we are not willing to make sacrifices we will never get to where the Word prevails in our lives. We may never be asked to do so, but we must be willing to do so. Are we willing to be unjustly accused, beaten and imprisoned to reach our Philippian jailor? Maybe you will never be asked to, but if your life goes anything like mine you will.

I used to think of the prevailing Word as the Word prevailing over the efforts of the adversary... over sickness... over lack and need... over discouragement... over confusion. That's all true. But I've learned more recently that the area I need for the Word to prevail in is in my personal commitment to the truth and my willingness to sacrifice for it. It needs to prevail over my ease... my comfort... my personal preferences... my temperament. There's a big difference in God blessing me or rewarding me with the things I love, and me making sure I get what I want.

I love a great football game... a great game of cards with friends... enjoying a funny movie or TV show with my wife... having iron sharpening iron time with my band of brothers... having an extended, uninterrupted time in the scriptures.... Those things mean so much to me personally and do so much for me personally. But they can't become more dear to me... more important to me... more precious to me than obedience to the Word and will of God.

The reason I'm committed to lose weight is because God told me that I needed to if I wanted to do what He has called me to do. If I didn't lose weight, I wouldn't physically be able to keep the schedule He has for me and accomplish what He wants me to do. Then I had to decide. So, I sacrificed my love of food on the altar of being a living sacrifice. I know God has appointed feast times and required that His people keep them, and I so look forward to Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter where I can eat the fat and drink the sweet and enjoy an abundance. However, on a daily basis I have had to lay my love for food on the altar. We are all different, and we cannot legislate those kinds of personal things. However, as our relationship with our loving heavenly Father develops, He will require things of us. If we do decide to do them, we will see the blessing.

Psalms 119:1-3:

Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. ² Blessed *are* they that keep his testimonies, *and that* seek him with the whole heart. ³ They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.

Most people never develop real relationships because they are too much work. They fail and are frustrated so often that they just give up. They succumb to defeat because they are not willing to push through to victory. They are not willing to bring their body into subjection. They refuse to become athletes of the spirit. They refuse to pay the price... to make the sacrifices that are required. The self-discipline that Olympic and professional athletes strive for should pale in comparison to our commitment and discipline to the word of truth.

Don't you dare be so presumptuous that you tell people what to do. It's our job to set people free; it's God's job to pull in the reins. If people aren't listening to God, God may give you a message to deliver to them, but He'll never make it your responsibility to see that they do it. Everyone is responsible and accountable to God. God told Paul not to go to Jerusalem. Then when Paul didn't obey, God sent word through others to tell Paul the same thing. However, He never made those people responsible to stop Paul from going. It was still up to Paul. Neither did they stun him or throw him out of fellowship until he acquiesced. We never want to be legalistic. God extends grace and so do we.

Affirmations: I sacrifice my ease and comfort to move the Word. I do my best to set people free.

Recommended Reading: II Thessalonians 3 KJV.

I Corinthians 9:16-19:

For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! ¹⁷ For if I do this thing willingly [*ekōn*, only other occurrence is Romans 8:20], I have a reward: but if against my will [*akōn*, only occurrence], (a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.) ¹⁸ What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. ¹⁹ For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

Paul's reward is knowing that he did the right thing, even though he initially did not want to. Hebrews 4:12 says, the rightly divided Word is quick and powerful. The Word of God will help us figure out all the notions and commotions of our mind. It will help us sort through all the extraneous thoughts and get to what's really in our heart. There is little more powerful than clearly knowing God's will from God's Word. Once that has been ascertained and believed, it must be pursued. The Word of God is not only the will of God; it is the way of God for us to go. Once we know what the Word says, then we ought to know what to do. Running with the Word gives direction and purpose to life. When we run the way of God's Word we enlarge our hearts and build endurance according to Psalms 119:32. Psalms 119:60 also directs us to make "haste, and delay not to keep thy commandments." When we run, we run to win.

Why do we do the difficult and trying things we do? So, we please God and win people. Do we really want to "gain the more?" If so, we will have to make ourselves a servant to more.

I Corinthians 9:20-24:

And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; ²¹ To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. ²² To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some. ²³ And this I do for the gospel's sake, [This wasn't his preferred way to live; he did it for the sake of the gospel.] that I might be partaker thereof with *you*. ²⁴ Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth [*lambanō*] the prize? So run, that ye may obtain [*katalambanō*].

Are we just going through the motions or are we running to obtain? Are we doing things with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength or are we just coasting along? Am I in this thing to obtain or do I just have nothing else to do today?

I Corinthians 9:25-27:

And every man that striveth for the mastery [*agōnizomai*] is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain [*lambanō*] a corruptible crown [*stephanos*]; but we an incorruptible. ²⁶ I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight [box] I, not as one that beateth the air [This isn't shadow boxing; punches are given and received]: ²⁷ But I keep under my body [this literally means "I beat it black and blue."], and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway [*adokimos*, rejected from the competition].

Paul was living his adventure of life that brought the understanding of these truths into a real *ginōskō* kind of lifestyle. *Ginōskō* refers to experiential knowledge gained through the exertion of one's will. He sacrificed his Judean heritage on the altar of the truth of the great mystery. We will see that in detail when we get to Philippians 3, but we see him living it in Acts now. Please turn to Acts 20.

Affirmations: I run the way of God's commandments. I run to obtain.

Recommended Reading: I Corinthians 9 KJV.

Acts 20:1-2: And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto *him* the disciples, and embraced *them*, and departed for to go into Macedonia. ² And when he had gone over those parts, [that includes Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Berea, and Thessalonica.] and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

Paul doesn't get back to Philippi until Acts 20. It was during this time in Macedonia in the fall of 57 AD that Paul wrote II Corinthians.

Acts 20:3-6: And *there* abode three months. [I was during this time that Paul wrote Romans.] And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia. ⁴ And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. ⁵ These going before tarried for us at Troas. ⁶ And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

Whenever you read Macedonia you need to think Philippi and Thessalonica and Berea. Those were the major works in Macedonia. When you read the church epistles in their entirety you will see that the Macedonians were recognized for their liberal giving. They were frequently held forth as an example to other churches.

Romans 15:26: For it hath pleased them of **Macedonia** and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

This is the first of several references to their giving. It will also come up when we get to Philippians 4.

I Corinthians 16:5: Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through **Macedonia**: for I do pass through **Macedonia**.

Paul had a regular route that he traveled. He often went to Achaia through Macedonia and then returned through Macedonia also.

II Corinthians 1:16: And to pass by you into **Macedonia**, and to come again out of **Macedonia** unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea.

These verses can be put together with Acts, but we won't take the time to do it now.

II Corinthians 2:13: I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into **Macedonia**.

Paul was concerned that he didn't find Titus and went to Macedonia and kept looking for him.

II Corinthians 7:5: For, when we were come into **Macedonia**, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without *were* fightings, within *were* fears.

Whenever there are fightings without, there is likely to be fears within. That's because we are human, and no one really ever wants a fight. No natural man does. Paul and those he traveled with had fears. So, if when we are trying to move the Word and face opposition they might come up for us, too. Macedonia never seemed to be an easy place to move the Word, but Paul consistently went back despite the troubles he had there.

II Corinthians 8:1: Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit [we want you to know] of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of **Macedonia**; [That's Philippi, Amphipolis and Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea, and probably more not mentioned in Acts.]

"Grace" in this verse refers to the grace of giving. Paul wanted the Corinthians to know about how the churches of Macedonia operated this principle. "Giving" is a theme of both II Corinthians 8 and 9.

II Corinthians 9:1-5: For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: ² For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of **Macedonia**, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many. ³ Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready: ⁴ Lest haply if they of **Macedonia** come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting. ⁵ Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as *a matter of* bounty, and not as *of* covetousness.

The giving of the churches of Macedonia made the outreach in Corinth available.

II Corinthians 11:9: And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from **Macedonia** supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*.

Paul didn't ask the Corinthians for financial support. New works are supported by older works, until the new believers catch on and commit to giving as a way of life.

II Corinthians 13:14: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen. {*The second epistle* to the Corinthians was written from **Philippi**, a city of Macedonia, [and delivered] by Titus and Lucas.}

This was written by Paul and Timothy from Philippi in the fall of 57AD. That's all the references to Philippi in the New Testament

Affirmations: I'm a liberal giver. Trouble never keeps me from doing what I should.

Recommended Reading: Acts 20.

Philippians 1:1-2: Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ [That's the senders.], to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons [That's the receivers.]: ² Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ. [That's the greeting.]

Philippians is not so much concerned with doctrine as it is with practice. It prescribes a pattern of conduct. It deals with the deportment of the believers as they live the great mystery of the one Body. It deals not so much with our position in Christ, as it does with how we should behave once we know what it is. The power of its appeal will depend upon our awareness and appreciation that we are a joint body and joint-partakers of the promise of Christ in the Gospel. Being that we are one Body and joint-partakers of the promise, Philippians prescribes a demeanor which should flow from our relationship to Christ and to our fellow saints as we operate as One Body.

This two-verse salutation is typical of the times and although similar to his other epistles, it has some important and significant differences. Typical of the fashion that was the standard of his day, it has the name of the sender, the name of the recipient, and a greeting that follows. These salutations could be formal and complex or informal and simple.

There are a couple of other examples of salutations in the Book of Acts. When the Council of Jerusalem wrote letters in support of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:23 it started: "The apostles and elders, your brothers [That's the senders.], to the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia [That's the receivers.]: Greetings." Again in Acts 23:26 when the Captain sent Paul to Felix he wrote a letter which started: "Claudius Lycias [That's the sender.], To His Excellency, Governor Felix [That's the receiver.]: Greetings." Another example of a more elaborate greeting is this one from the emperor Claudius to the people of Alexandria in Egypt: "Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, Imperator, Pontifex Maximus, Holder of the Tribunician Power, Consul Designate [That's the sender.], to the City of the Alexandrians [That's the receivers.], greetings." [Found at: <http://www.csun.edu/~hcfl1004/claualex.html>.]

Philippians 1:1-2 fits the typical pattern: the name of the sender to the name of the recipient followed by a greeting. It sounds similar to the salutations in Paul's other epistles, but there are some important differences. Let's look first at the phrase relating to the sender. It says, "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ..." Philippians along with both of the epistles to the Thessalonians do not mention Paul's apostleship in the salutation (although I Thessalonians 2:6 does mention it, later). Philippians along with Romans are the only two that refer to Paul as a *doulos*. In Philippians Paul treats Timothy and himself as equals, both servants, bondslaves, of Jesus Christ. He makes no distinction between himself and Timothy as he does in Colossians where he says, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus *our* brother..." In Philippians he says, "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ..." putting them together on equal footing.

In Philippi they were practicing error concerning the One Body; they were not maintaining the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. They were not likeminded in how they loved and served. They had strife and vainglory and lacked lowliness of mind. Right from the beginning Paul demonstrates this lowliness of mind in treating himself and Timothy as equals, both bondslaves of the Lord Jesus Christ (who himself was also a bonds slave as it says in Philippians 2:7).

A couple of the peculiarities of this salutation which we will investigate in future lessons are the reference to both Paul and Timotheus as servants of Jesus Christ and the mention of both the bishops and deacons. We will use our next 7 lessons to look at some of the wonderful truths in these first 2 verses.

Affirmations: I'm a bonds slave of Jesus Christ. I'm a saint.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 1 KJV.

Matthew 20:25-28: But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. ²⁶ But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; ²⁷ And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant [*doulos*]: ²⁸ Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

When I think of the word *doulos*, I associate it with Paul and Timothy and other great men of God. It's an honorable title. It's a word that conveys dignity, dedication, and esteem, but that's because of the way it is presented in the New Testament. Our Biblical culture has elevated the word and dignified it, but the culture of the day when these epistles were written made no such association.

They owned *douloi*, or at least they knew people who were *douloi*. *Douloi* were menial servants. They were the lowest of the household slaves who washed the feet of guests who entered the house. There was no respect or dignity associated with their station in life. In Bible times *doulos* was a term without dignity and respect. It's only the Biblical culture that brought it to a place of honor and dignity.

In John chapter 13 when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, he was changing the way people thought of the lowliness of service. If you remember, Peter had a problem with it. Peter said, "You'll never wash my feet." He had a problem associating the lowliness of the work of a *doulos* with his master, Jesus Christ. However, Jesus was teaching and making a point. He was changing the way people thought about serving. After washing their feet, teaching by word and example, he said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

When Paul and Timothy used that word about themselves it did not have the same dignity that it has now. It was men like Jesus and Paul and Timothy that brought dignity to the service of a *doulos*. It took some time before the term changed. The Greek culture, like the Roman one, treated slaves harshly. The Greek idea of authority was to rule not serve. Serving God was all right, but serving others was hard to accept. That required quite a paradigm shift for them. Jesus was aware of the culture and intended to change it.

The major theme of joyfully serving is why *doulos* and not *apostolos* is used. *Doulos* emphasizes the lowliness of serving and *apostolos* emphasizes the authority of the divine commissioning. In Philippians Paul never calls himself an *apostolos*, but he does call Epaphroditus one [Philippians 2:25]. Remember Epaphroditus was from Philippi and was sent by the Philippians to minister to Paul's needs. Paul also treats himself and Epaphroditus as equals and describes him with dearness saying in verse 25: "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger [*apostolos*], and he that ministered to my wants."

The order of the words, *Jesus Christ*, is correct, and it too, emphasizes serving. Do you see how I am trying hard to make a point to always say serving and not service? Everyone likes service, especially when they are the ones being served. I say *serving* instead of *service* to make a point that we should be on the giving end of the service, the serving.

Well, we looked at the description of the sender, now let's investigate the description of the recipients. It says, "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." It is written to *the saints*, which is the Greek word *hagios*, holy ones. In the KJV *hagios* is usually translated holy. It is the adjective from the verb meaning "to sanctify." When something is sanctified, it becomes holy. This Greek word family in the scriptures is used to denote things separated from the common place. Here it is used to distinguish people who are sanctified and set apart from the rest of humanity. With scripture build up from Romans 15:16, I Corinthians 6:11, and other places we see that what sets them apart is the gift of holy spirit. Having holy spirit makes them holy ones, called *saints* in the KJV.

It refers to those who have been consecrated or set apart for God. You don't have to perform three miracles and be canonized by the church to be a saint. As far as the Bible is concerned, every born-again believer is a saint. A saint is someone who has been set apart and chosen by God to be part of his forever family.

However, when it mentions "the saints" it adds a very significant word here in Philippians. It adds "all." Romans is the only other epistle with "all" in the salutation, but it does not say "saints." Of course, the other epistles being addressed to the saints, includes all of them. No one is left out, but Philippians adds "all" for emphasis. He wants to emphasize that everyone is included and that no one is missed or left out. We will see that emphasis repeated when we get to the phrase at the end of the verse "including the bishops and deacons."

Affirmations: I reverence servants of Jesus Christ. I have been consecrated and set apart by God for His purposes.
Recommended Reading: Matthew 20 or John 13.

Philippians 1:1: Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to **all** the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

“All” the Greek word *pas* occurs 30 times in Philippians. 10 of which occur when the Philippians are being addressed. This also relates to the universality of the doctrine and the equality of all the believers. The Philippians were factious and partisan. They discriminated in their judgement and did not view or treat everyone in the same way. This was one of the practical errors Philippians is intends to correct. Paul makes it very plain that he is not going to be partisan; he intends to treat them all with the same love and compassion. We just read in verse 1 where Paul addresses all the saints, let’s take the time right now to look at the other nine verses where Paul refers to them all.

Philippians 1:4: Always in every prayer of mine for **you all** making request with joy,

There wasn’t anyone he left out when he prayed. He wanted them to know he prayed for all of them.

Philippians 1:7: Even as it is meet for me to think this of **you all**, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, **ye all** are partakers of my grace.

There wasn’t anyone he didn’t carry in his heart. He wanted them **all** to know that they **all** were dear to him and that they **all** partook of his grace. As we get into the rest of the epistle, we will see how the Philippians did not treat each other the same way. They were fractious¹ and played favorites and did not include everyone or carry everyone equally in their hearts.

Philippians 1:8: For God is my record, how greatly I long after **you all** in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

Three times in the opening prayer in Philippians 1:3-11 he uses “you all.” There wasn’t anyone he didn’t long after in the bowels of Jesus Christ. This is by divine design; God wants to make a point that no one is excluded, no one is missed or left out.

Philippians 1:25: And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with **you all** for your furtherance and joy of faith;

Although they were factious² and not always willing to work with each other, Paul wanted them to know he was committed to continue to work with all of them. Yes, the Philippians didn’t get along with each other, yet Paul was going to make sure they all knew he was interested in every one of them. He wanted to further everyone’s joy of faith.

Philippians 2:17: Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with **you all**.

Paul rejoiced with every one of them.

Philippians 2:26: For he [Epaphroditus] longed after **you all**, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

Ephaphroditus following Paul’s example was not partisan but longed for them all also.

Philippians 4:21: Salute **every saint** [not just certain ones, not just the ones that agree with you] in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.

Philippians 4:23: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you **all**. Amen.

God’s grace is not limited to any one faction. It will be with them all. This reoccurrence of “all” throughout the epistle when addressing the Philippians further contributes to the emphasis on likemindedness. The very first verse and the very last verse in Philippians addresses all the Philippians together. No one is left out. They are all members for one body and should be acknowledge and treated with honor and respect.

Affirmations: I pray for all the MFC. I try hard to not leave anyone out.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 1 NLT

1. Fractious is an adjective meaning refractory, unruly, inclined to make trouble, or stubbornly resistant to authority or control. It is also used to describe people *who are* readily angered; peevish; troublesome; irritable; cranky; quarrelsome; or easily irritated or annoyed.
2. Factious is an adjective meaning given to or promoting internal dissension; given to faction; addicted to form parties and raise dissensions, in opposition to government or the common good; turbulent; seditious; prone to clamor against public measures or men.

Philippians 1:1: Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

At the beginning of the salutation Paul describes himself and Timothy as “servants of Jesus Christ” to emphasize the humility of serving. Now, when describing the saints he uses “in Christ Jesus” to emphasize their exalted position and privilege. They have been placed in Christ Jesus and are identified with Christ in his victory and glory. Paul is humble to serve, and the Philippians have been exalted by God and worthy and deserving of his service. God is the One Who placed them in Christ Jesus [in that exalted position]. God’s the one Who put them there. That wasn’t anything they did on their own to get there. If God saw fit to place them in Christ Jesus in an exalted position of protection and privilege, who were they to not recognize it and esteem each other accordingly.

Ephesians 2:10: For we are his workmanship, created **in Christ Jesus** unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We recognize that God is the one who created them in Christ Jesus. He placed them in this exalted position of protection and privilege. They are honored and honorable people.

The last phrase in verse one says, “with the bishops and deacons.” The NIV says, “together with the bishops and deacons.” The NAS says, “including the bishops and deacons.” This is the only epistle which specifically addresses people serving as bishops and deacons. Of course, they were included in the already mentioned phrase “all the saints.” However, specifically including them in the salutation is an emphatic way of letting them know that what Paul is writing is intended for them as much as any of the other saints. He did not want them to dismiss what he was saying as being for everyone else and not for them. It’s like Romans 12:3.

Romans 12:3: For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith.

Just because we are bishops or deacons doesn’t mean that the Word doesn’t apply to us. The principles of the renewed mind are for everybody. Especially for those who would like to function as bishops and deacons. It’s not just Joe Believer who causes problems in the church, it’s the leadership. It’s the bishops and deacons, those who ought to know better, as was the case in Philippi.

Philippians is the last of the church epistles to be written, and already the leadership within the church is in practical error. Paul wants them to know this epistle is written for them. The next epistle he writes is I Timothy. Then Titus and II Timothy. In them he addresses the leadership specifically.

We will see as we study more of the epistle of Philippians that the factious and seditious elements that Paul addresses in the letter are intended for everyone including the bishops and deacons. They must see how their lack of likemindedness will drastically affect the people they serve. Any political intrigue and squabbling among their ranks will be passed on to those whom they are serving. To a large degree these bishops and deacons were responsible for the problems at Philippi. It was not like in I Corinthians 1:12 where every one of the believers were saying, “I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ” (I Corinthians 3:4). In Philippi it was the servant leaders who were being factious, disdaining one another and drawing people to themselves.

These two distinct offices are discussed in I Timothy 3:2 and 3:12. The bishop, *episkopos*, and the deacon, *diakonos*, are positions of service in the body of believers. It’s only logical that wherever people unite in striving to accomplish a common goal, the experienced should supervise, and the capable should serve. Then, as others prove themselves, they are extended opportunities to serve also. An *episkopos* is an overseer (Acts 20:28), a man charged with the duty of seeing that things done by others are done rightly (I Peter 5:2). He functions as a curator, guardian, or superintendent of others with the same or similar responsibilities that he has.

Episkopos is a compound word of *epi* meaning upon or over and *skopos* meaning goal, target, or mark (used only in Philippians 3:14). It is also used in the LXX in Ezekiel 33 of a watchman. The function of the watchman was to watch for danger, fires, and other things happening around the city. An *episkopos* is a spiritual lookout. He keeps his eyes on the goal, and warns of the dangers he sees coming. He is a vision-builder who watches over God’s people.

A *diakonos* is a servant or minister. He is one who runs errands or executes the commands of another. I like to describe him as one who runs to serve. Timothy is admonished in I Timothy 3:10, to prove [*dokimazō*] a believer before asking him to serve as a *diakonos*. Some of the functions of these “deacons” or “ministers” are: keeping house, like Martha (Luke 10:40), drawing water (John 2:9), and it is specially used of those who waited on the table at meals (Luke 22:27; Acts 6:2). Hence it also has the sense of *dispensing*. It refers to lowly duties, not dignified display.

The terms *episkopos* and *prebuteros* describe the same office. The difference in the use of the terms is that *episkopos* refers to the function of the office (overseer) and *prebuteros* refers to the dignity of the office (elder). Paul and Titus did ordain elders, *prebuteros*, as Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5 state.

Note that both bishops and deacons are plural nouns. There were more than one of each in Philippi. These positions of service were important and their function in Philippi was noted and appreciated. The body of believers needs people to serve in these capacities. Bishops and deacons are necessary and vital to the proper continuance and well-being of the believers, and it’s important that they perform their function properly.

Affirmations: I fight factious and seditious elements when I see them. I maintain likemindedness with those with whom I move the Word.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 1 MSG.

Philippians 1:2: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

The last part of the salutation is the greeting, and the one in Philippians is the same as every other of Paul's church epistles, "Grace to/unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." It is as full and rich here as it is everywhere it is written. At the beginning of every epistle, we see the heart of our loving heavenly Father wanting to remind us of the two great realities of life that are ours to enjoy — "grace and peace." These are the believers' staples, like meat and potatoes to mid-westerners. These are what we subsist on. They keep us going. This is our nourishment all the time, every day.

Grace is one of the most practical things to acknowledge in our lives. Every one of the Church Epistles resounds with "grace." It appears at the opening and closing of every one of them. One of the first things God wants us to hear and one of the last things He wants to leave with us in each of His love letters is His wonderful magnificent grace. Each of the epistles is enveloped and held together by God's wonderful grace. Philippians is no different [Philippians 1:2; 4:23].

What is grace? It is God's unmerited divine favor, goodwill, and loving kindness. It's unmerited; there is nothing we did to earn it. Nor is there anything we can do to earn more of it. So, don't even go there. By definition it is unmerited. Grace is God's love in action increasing, keeping, strengthening, and providing for his children. Thayer's lexicon also adds that grace is that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, and loveliness. Certainly, without an acknowledgement of God's grace in our lives there will be very little joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, and loveliness.

Peace is a guarding fruit. It is to rule in our hearts. That means we make decisions based on peace. . . based on maintaining our quiet seas. If we are upset or agitated then we take action to eliminate it. The great cargoes of life come in over quiet seas, and our peace with God maintains our quiet seas. It is opposed to disorder and has a quieting and comforting effect on us [Philippians 4:7; Colossians 3:15; I Corinthians 14:33]. Enjoying and maintaining peace should be a priority in our lives.

The first kind of peace is peace *with* God (Romans 5:1-2). Peace with God means that the struggle is over. And we have peace because we are not fighting against God anymore. Our sins have been forgiven and we can finally relax. The second kind of peace is the peace *of* God (Philippians 4:7). The peace of God comes as a result of having peace with God. It is the peace that transcends all understanding. In other words, it's the peace that we shouldn't have in the midst of the storm but that we do have anyway. It's the peace that allows us to trust God regardless of what's going on around us.

Often these short salutations get read over quickly to get to the heart of the epistle. But, let me remind you that every Word of God is pure and profitable. Let's not speed through it. Let's simply take a few minutes to savor its significance. I believe learning to incorporate God's Word into our daily activities and our logic of life will pay great dividends. I'd like to suggest 3 practical truths we can draw from the salutation and apply every day as we live and move and have our being in Him. We will address them briefly here, and then elaborate on them in the next 3 lessons.

First, let's reaffirm our liberty and loyalty. Paul boldly and proudly asserts his servitude. He has changed masters. Formerly a slave of sin (Romans 6:17), he now serves his Lord Jesus Christ. He stands fast in his new liberty, freed from sin, and declares absolutely and unequivocally his loyalty to his new master. Yes, Christ has set us free, and we have transferred our allegiance to him. We, like Paul and Timothy, must constantly reaffirm our liberty from sin and our loyalty to Christ. That's a good place to start.

Second, let's recognize our position and purpose. Paul addresses this letter "to all the saints in Christ Jesus." He also mentions the bishops and deacons, who serve as spiritual servant leaders to the believers. They, too, are saints. Once born-again of God's spirit, we are saints. Our "*sainthood*" is not due to any good works on our part. This isn't a position we worked for. We are saints because of God's gracious working. When we recognize what He has done in us, our lives may take on new meaning and purpose. As we recognize our position in Christ, we can show the world the greatness and goodness of our Father God. We are His handiwork, his masterpiece, and we should be to the praise of His glory.

Third, let's revel in God's blessings and benefits. We are the recipient of so many blessings and benefits through Christ, and Paul mentions two extremely important ones in this brief greeting — grace and peace. Did you notice that Jesus Christ is mentioned three times in these two verses? God's blessing comes *to* the believer through him. Later in the letter Paul will declare that he can do all things through Christ. But it is only *through* Christ that he can do all things. Christ is the key to everything! If we want to enjoy our lives, we must focus on Christ and what he has done for us.

Affirmations: God's grace upon me was not in vain. The peace of God rules in my heart.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 1 NIV.

Romans 1:1: Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

In the salutation, Paul describes himself and Timothy as “servants of Jesus Christ.” As already mentioned, the word that is translated “servants” is more accurately translated “bondslaves.” He is saying that the relationship to Jesus Christ that he and Timothy had was one of total obedience and complete loyalty. That same relationship is available for every believer, but we, like Paul and Timothy, must continually affirm and reaffirm it.

The cannon of the church epistles begins with Romans. The first word in the church epistles is “Paul,” an individual. The second word is *doulos*, bonds slave. The first thing for every individual believer is to make himself a *doulos*... to decide by his freewill choice because of his love for the master to serve him unconditionally. The third element that completes this exquisite truth is found in the next words, “Jesus Christ.” He is the one to whom we dedicate our lives in service. Following his example, we commit ourselves to serve God unreservedly. This is the beginning of the revelation of the mystery, and it prescribes the first steps of the child of God in his walk with his Father.

There is much to learn from the *doulos* analogy. This is the most predominant analogy in the New Testament. The Old Testament law prescribed how one was to treat slaves. If a Hebrew man fell upon hard times and had to sell himself into slavery, the law limited the length of his bondage. He could only serve 6 years. Then he had to be released and given adequate means for supporting himself after he left. However, this servant could request to remain in the service of his master.

If he loved and trusted his master and wanted to continue to serve him for the rest of his life, he could ask to become a bonds slave, a *doulos*. This concept is really unique to the Hebrew culture for it is a Biblical concept. Once freed, the servant could voluntarily relinquish his freedom to be part of the master’s household. The master of course would consider the request carefully, because if he decided to agree to this request, he would be bound by his freewill commitment to protect and provide for his bonds slave for the rest of his life. Let’s read about it in Deuteronomy 15.

Deuteronomy 15:12-18: *And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.* ¹³ *And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty:* ¹⁴ *Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him.* ¹⁵ *And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day.* ¹⁶ *And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee;* ¹⁷ *Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise.* ¹⁸ *It shall not seem hard unto thee, when thou sendest him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired servant to thee, in serving thee six years: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all that thou doest.*

Although the Hebrew man sold himself into slavery initially because of hard times, his decision to become a bonds slave had nothing to do with hard times. He would be provided with an abundance so that he could leave without fear of providing for himself. That’s how Israel left the slavery of Egypt, with the wealth of Pharaoh. God reminds them of this truth because when the bonds slave left his master he should be provided for just as Israel was. It should be gracious and liberal.

The only reason for remaining with the master was love. If he loved his master and his master loved him, they could make this commitment to each other and seal the deal with an aul on the doorpost. Of course, the symbolism in all of this is astounding. Remember it was the doorpost where the blood of the Passover lamb was to be placed. So, when the ear was bored on the door blood was placed there also. This was symbolic of Jesus who was not only our Passover lamb, but also our example of a true bonds slave.

So, for us, once we have been made free from sin by our master at our new birth, our love for our kinsman redeemer, moves us to commit our lives in service to him. Becoming a *doulos* is a commitment of love because one wants nothing more than to serve the master for the rest of his life. Although becoming a *doulos* of Jesus Christ is the first priority for every believer, we were not always servants of Jesus Christ. Before we were born again, we all were slaves to sin.

Romans 6:16-18: *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?* ¹⁷ *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.* ¹⁸ *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

We were once a slave to sin. We had no other choice. But when we changed lordships, everything changed. Christ has set us free from sin. But our freedom from sin requires another allegiance. Our allegiance has been transferred from our former master, sin, to a new master, Jesus Christ. So, we are now bonds slaves of Christ Jesus. We must constantly affirm and reaffirm our freedom from sin and our fidelity to Christ. Paul stated boldly and proudly that he was a bonds slave of Jesus Christ. That would be a great example for us to follow.

How do you see yourself? How do you speak of yourself? Do you see yourself as a bonds slave of Jesus Christ? Many people see themselves, not as bonds slaves, but as volunteers. What’s the difference? A volunteer gets to choose the agenda. A slave does not. A volunteer gets to define the terms of his or her service. A true bonds slave must be obedient to the will of the master. Do you see yourself as a volunteer for Christ or a bonds slave of Christ? Paul saw himself as a bonds slave of Christ. That is where Philipians begins, and that is where we should begin. Paul proudly spoke of himself and Timothy as bonds slaves of Jesus Christ. We, too, need to reaffirm our allegiance. We affirm our freedom from sin and our fidelity to Christ.

Affirmations: I reaffirm my liberty and loyalty. I am free from sin.

Recommended Reading: Deuteronomy 15.

Romans 8:29:

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

We emulate Paul, understanding our freedom from sin and our fidelity to Christ. But not only are we bondslaves, the people we serve are saints. Not just some of them, but all of them. Not just any saints either, but saints in Christ Jesus. Saints identified with Christ in his glory and victory... saints placed in a privileged and protected position by God. That is who we get to serve, saints separated by God... saints made holy by God... saints placed in a position of privilege and protection by God.

Remember, they are not saints because of anything they have done. They are saints because God has placed them in a position of privilege and protection. He has blessed them and made them part of His family. It's really as simple as that. They are holy because they have holy spirit. The great thing is that an amazing transformation begins to take place when we see those we serve from this new perspective. They are saints, and we should treat them as such. It should affect the way we observe them and serve them. God is the One Who made them worthy and directs us to treat them as such. We should give them a reputation to live up to. A reputation consistent with what God says of them. We all are to conform to the image of God's son. That's how we should see ourselves and that's how we should see each other (Romans 15:5). One tends to live according to the image they hold of ourselves, be it a good self-image or a poor self-image. We should not only see ourselves the way God sees us, we should also see each other through God's eyes. We hold God's people in the highest esteem and communicate our admiration. How are they going to realize how we see them, if we do not open our mouths and tell them. Paul called them saints, heaven's holiest; they were special people. That's what we ought to do. We need to tell our people how great they are. We tell them that they are what the Word of God says they are. We may hold an opinion of them that they do not hold of themselves yet. We have to see them as the Word says and let them rise up to live that way. We do that for ourselves and we must do that for our people, also.

We must let God define us. Most people let the wrong people define them. If I am going to be defined by anybody, I want to be defined by God. God calls me a saint — who am I to disagree. God calls the people we serve saints — who are we to disagree. We should continually affirm and reaffirm what God says about His people. We are all “saints in Christ Jesus.”

This salutation is unique in that Paul and Timothy present themselves as equals in their bond service to the body. Their example of equality reminded the bishops and deacons that they were not to be lords over God's heritage but examples to the church. This was contrary to Greek culture. The Greek idea was to rule not serve. Serving God was all right, but serving others was hard to accept.

Including the bishops and deacons in the salutation was one way of reminding everyone that they were included in this reproof epistle. No one is excluded; indeed, those who serve must be the best examples of the Word in both doctrine and practice. Everyone seemed to be blaming someone else for the apparent lack of likemindedness among the believers. The servant leaders needed to take responsibility for maintaining the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace and not cause division. The division and unrest may have been due to the bishops and deacons not carrying out their responsibilities in full. When they realize that they are not lords over God's people they can begin to truly serve in love.

Following the example of Paul and Timothy we affirm our freedom from sin and fidelity to Jesus Christ. We proclaim our position and purpose. We are heaven's holiest and we serve heaven's holiest also. We accept our blessings and benefits. We now have the privilege to serve Him. He has made us saints. He has given us a purpose for life. He has blessed us with His amazing grace. He has given us His peace which passes all understanding. All of this is just the beginning. This is just the salutation; there is so much more still ahead.

Affirmations: I recognize my position and purpose. I conform to the image of God's son

Recommended Reading: Romans 8.

Philippians 1:1: Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops [*episkopos*, overseer] and deacons [*diakonos*, one who runs to serve].

God wants His people cared for. We need people to watch over us and run to serve us. It's important that we recognize who those people are. Bishops and deacons are servant leaders who rise to function in vital service positions. They should care for God's people like the Eastern shepherd cared for his sheep and like Jesus Christ, the Great Shepherd, does (Hebrews 13:20; I Peter 2:25). The apostle Peter exhorted the elders of the church, to be shepherds to the church of God.

I Peter 5:1-3: The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: ² Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; ³ Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Many "independent minded believers" maintain the notion that they don't need the help of anyone; they are going to follow Christ only. The implication is that there is no need for bishops or deacons. If that is so, why then does God consider scattered sheep, off on their own, not in a fold, not a good thing? In fact, He calls them, "lost" (Luke 15:4-6).

Not all bishops and deacons are sterling examples. Those in Philippi were part of the problem Paul had to correct. This wasn't a new problem. Jeremiah targeted the harsh treatment of the flock by pastors in his day. God didn't want His flock destroyed or scattered, and promised to set up new shepherds who would feed them properly.

Jeremiah 23:1-4: Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. ²

Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. ³

And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. ⁴ And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.

A similar sentiment is expressed in Ezekiel 34. The evil pastors are reprov'd and corrected, and the scattered sheep are to be brought back into the fold. There is no obligation to subject oneself to abusive pastors, but God has promised to provide genuine pastors who would provide for His people. God does not want His people scattered and alone. He wants them in the safety of the sheepfold with the protection of the shepherd.

If being off on one's own was Biblically sound why all the instruction on gathering those who are scattered? The Bible gives the impression that a person is not in the fold unless he is with the group. Why else did Jesus give the parable of leaving the ninety-nine sheep to rescue the one not with the flock? It is interesting that Jesus depicted the separated sheep in His parable in Matthew 18:12-14 as having gone astray, and in Luke 15:4-7 as being lost. They simply nibble their way to lostness. They start eating and before you know it, they have wandered away from the rest of the flock.

God has set certain men in His church as shepherds to tend His flock. They are described in Ephesians 4:11-16 as gifts to the church. He has enabled them and energized them to handle their responsibilities or to perform their job. Like all others, some perform their appointed tasks faithfully (Matthew 25:21,23), while others are unjust stewards of their responsibilities (Acts 20:30). To whom much is given, much is required, and so the minister will have to answer for his faithfulness to function. James makes it very clear that the teacher will receive the stricter judgment (James 3:1).

It is doubtful that one will ever find a pastor without a hint of defect in his character or in the expression of his personality. It is doubtful that one will ever find a pastor with absolutely perfect doctrine (i.e. just like yours, ☺). It is doubtful that one will ever find a pastor who always teaches with clarity and beauty. The meal he prepares may not always have seven courses and be served on fine china, but it should provide the sustenance you need to carry on.

Hebrews 10:24-25: And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

God makes it very clear that other shepherds besides Christ are necessary for leading and caring for His people. Making a diligent and honest search for a true shepherd in the church of God is everyone's responsibility. It is imperative that we find a fold where we can be properly fed and where we can serve. The enemy has scattered the flock through extensive doctrinal changes, and harsh and improper treatment. God has placed us in a body as it has pleased Him. Let's function as a body and care for one another. No one need be scattered, alone, and without the comfort of the sheepfold.

Affirmations: I revel in God's blessings and benefits. I have found the comfort of a sheepfold.

Recommended Reading: Jeremiah 23.

Philippians 1:3-4: I thank my God upon every remembrance [*mneia*] of you, ⁴ **Always** in **every** prayer [*deēsis*] of mine for you **all** making request [*deēsis*] with joy,

Paul prays for the Philippians in chapter one. However, we must understand that the greater application is to the entire church of God, all the saints in Christ Jesus. We'll see Paul's heart and God's desire for each of us as we read. Paul's prayer life was full of thankfulness.¹ Thanking God for people was a habit he had developed. We are motivated to pray for people for whom we are thankful. There is a discipline to remember people with thanksgiving.

At the very heart of our spiritual service to God is habitual, fervent prayer for those whom we serve. The spiritual intercession that we make for God's people is our simplest service. We do it by the spirit, without great fanfare, knowing that we make intercession for the saints according to the will of God in this way.

When the Greek word, *mneia* occurs with *poieō* or *echō* it refers to the discipline to use a lift list and habitually pray for people with whom we move the Word. Establishing the habit of praying in the spirit for those with whom we move God's Word is vital to every servant-leader. As believers we develop a lifestyle of prayer and pray prolifically for people and situations never forgetting those who labor together with us in the gospel. This is a specific commitment that people who move the Word together make to each other. It definitely makes an impact and brings people together, building love and compassion between them. This is an integral part of our MFC adventure

Not only do we direct our hearts to God in prayer for those with whom we move God's Word in a daily habitual manner, but then, as we go through our day, we pray for specific individuals and situations as they come to our remembrance. God will impress people upon our hearts, and when He does, we should faithfully make intercession for them according to the will of God by speaking in tongues. This is what Philippians 1:3 refers to.

This use of *mneia* is not accompanied by *poieō* or *echō*. It doesn't refer to doing our lift-lists, but to the discipline to pray for people as they come to our remembrance. These two types of prayer form a solid foundation upon which we can build loving, caring relationships. Our predetermined habitual prayer times and our discipline to speak in tongues for people when God brings them to our remembrance form the bedrock of our service to God and His people.

In Philippians 1:3 the phrase "I thank my God" is used for a specific purpose and the reason begins to be unfurled in verse 5: "I thank my God... for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now." If you remember Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke first took the gospel to Philippi in Acts 16. Paul had quite a history with the Philippians, and they knew each other well. The Philippians were particularly dear to him, and they helped him in the furtherance of the gospel from the first day they got involved (Philippians 4:15). They shared fully with Paul communicating with him and sending financial support regularly. The word "my" indicates that it was personal and important to him.

Verse four describes how fervent Paul was about the intercession he made for them.

Philippians 1:4: **Always** in **every** prayer [*deēsis*] of mine for you **all** making request [*deēsis*] with joy,

Paul did it at **all times** in **all of his prayers** for **all of them**. Do you see a little emphasis there? All, every, all. The prayer that he made so fervently on their behalf was never a burden. . . it was never grievous or bothersome to him. He did it with joy. Remember, joy is one of key concepts in Philippians. The prayer he made so abundantly on their behalf brought joy to his life. Much of the reason for the joy can be attributed to his discipline to maintain the attitude of thankfulness while doing it. What a lesson for us to learn.

Affirmations: I use my lift list faithfully. I pray for people when God brings them to mind.

Recommended Reading: Read scriptures below.

1. Romans 1:8; 7:25; 16:4; I Corinthians 1:4; 14:18; 15:57; II Corinthians 2:14; 8:16; 9:15; Ephesians 1:16; Philippians 1:3; Colossians 1:3,12; I Thessalonians 1:2; 2:13; 3:9; II Thessalonians 1:3; 2:13; II Timothy 1:3

Philippians 1:4-5: **Always** in **every** prayer [*deēsis*] of mine for you **all** making request [*deēsis*] with joy, ⁵ For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

In the Greek the words “*prayer*” and “*request*” are the same. Combining both of the words and using them together gives a much better understanding of what it describes in this verse. It would read, “Always in every prayer request of mine for you all making prayer request with joy.” The Greek word *deēsis* used here refers to specific requests. It is one of the four different Greek synonyms for prayer which are used in II Timothy 2:1. These four synonyms emphasize four different aspects of what prayer can be.

I Timothy 2:1: I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications [*deēsis*], prayers [*proseuchē*], intercessions [*enteuxis*], and giving of thanks [*eucharistia*], be made for all men;

“Supplications” is the Greek word *deēsis* which places emphasis on objects of necessity. It’s a specific request for a need. “Prayers” is the Greek word *proseuchē* which emphasizes personal commitment and devotion. It’s a more general term that overlaps the others. “Intercessions” is the Greek word *enteuxis* which places emphasis on the childlike confidence and humility of interceding for others. “Giving of thanks” is the Greek word *eucharistia* which emphasizes thanksgiving and gratefulness. With this understanding an expanded translation of I Timothy 2:1 would be: “I exhort therefore, first of all, to make specific and special expressions of need [*deēsis*], to do personal devotions [*proseuchē*] that show our commitment and give preeminence to God acknowledging our need for His assistance, to make intercessions for individuals [*enteuxis*], and to offer thanksgiving [*eucharistia*], for all men.”

The Greek word used twice in Philippians 1:4 is the first of these words from I Timothy 2:1. *Deēsis* refers to the specific and special prayer request Paul made for them. It intimates personal knowledge of their need. Verse five begins to tell us why Paul thanked God for them and why he made this specific prayer request on their behalf.

Fellowship, the Greek word *koinonia*. Paul so appreciated that they took the responsibility for the gospel along with him. From day one they became actively involved. They prayed for him, and sent financial support regularly. Paul had won their heart from the beginning, and they didn’t just give lip service to the gospel. They acted upon it. That was the reason for Paul’s confidence in them.

Philippians 1:6: Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ:

Paul was won over by their full sharing. Their complete participation in the gospel persuaded him. He had seen God work in them and knew that it would continue. Paul knew that all believers were created unto good works according to Ephesians 2:10, and that God would continue to perform them in their lives.

We should have the same confidence in our people. The more fully we share, the more confident we will be. When we pray with believing being confident, things happen. As servant-leaders we always maintain this mindset; we are always confident in our people. It doesn’t violate their freewill. The weak may fall by the wayside, but those that really want to move the gospel with us will get stronger because we believe in them and let them know we believe in them.

Our confidence is that God will finish what He starts. “Perform” means to bring to completion. This will happen on the day of Jesus Christ, at the time of the gathering together. The order of the words “Jesus” and “Christ” are switched in many of the critical Greek texts. It should read “Christ Jesus,” here. Verse seven continues:

Philippians 1:7: Even as it is meet [right] for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both [1] in my bonds, and [2] in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers [*sunkoinōnos*] of my grace.

“Meet” is KJV English meaning suitable, fitting, or proper. The Greek word is *dikaios*, meaning right, righteous, or just according to an established standard for justice or righteousness. In other words, Paul is stating that it is proper or right for him to think that way. That’s the standard of the Word. We are “to think this” or “to think in this manner” because this is the standard that the Word sets for us.

There is a demonstrative pronoun, “this,” in the first part of verse six that points ahead to the phrase “that He [God] which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ,” and there is the same demonstrative pronoun “this,” in verse seven pointing back to the phrase. Again, this is emphatic. The word “because” also gives another reason why it’s the right thing to do. . . “because I have you in my heart.” That’s the figure aetiologia, cause shown or reason given. His heart is the seat of his personal life where he makes decisions and directs his steps. They were never far from his thinking.

Prayer was not difficult for Paul because he had the Philippians in His heart. They were part of his life; they had moved the Word together; they had endured trials and afflictions in doing so. “Bonds” is the first reference in Philippians that Paul wrote this epistle while in prison in Rome. “Bonds” is juxtaposed to “the defense and confirmation of the gospel.”

Affirmations: It’s a joy to pray. I keep people in my heart.

Recommended Reading: I Timothy 2.

Philippians 1:7: Even as it is meet [right] for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers [*sunkoinōnos*] of my grace.

“Defense” and “confirmation” are both legal terms. “Defense” is the Greek word, *apologia*, which means an answer of truth in the face of accusation. “Confirmation” is the Greek word, *bebaiosis*, which means a verification or guarantee. It is what firmly establishes the truth or certainty of something. As a legal term it meant the vindication or clearing from an accusation.

Because he was in prison, he had to answer the accusations against him, and to do so, he used the gospel. He didn’t offer a defense for the gospel. We never need to defend truth; all we need to do is declare it. Truth is its own defense. He was required to defend himself, not the gospel. However, to do so, he used the gospel. Paul didn’t defend or attempt to clear the gospel. The gospel defended and cleared Paul. It was God’s Word with which Paul defended himself; it was God’s Word which cleared him of all the charges.

In both his imprisonment and his efforts to get out of prison the Philippians were partakers of Paul’s grace. That Paul continued to have the opportunity to speak the gospel was God’s grace, and the Philippians continued to partake of His efforts on their behalf. Paul continued to move the Word while under house arrest with his fellowlaborers whom he taught and trained and who went out and delivered the epistles and spoke on his behalf.

Philippians 1:8: For God is my record [witness], how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

“For God is my witness,” emphasizes how earnest and serious Paul is about this. It notes a solemn oath. It’s the figure of speech deasis. Similar phrases also occur in Romans 1:9, II Corinthians 1:23; and I Thessalonians 2:5. Here it calls attention to something that should not be overlooked. Paul called upon God to establish how dearly he loved them and yearned for them to have that for which he was praying.

“To greatly long after” is to intensely yearn for someone when you are separated. Until Paul was let out of prison, he would have to yearn for them and pray for them for he isn’t free to be with them which he so desires. He yearned for them in the bowels of Jesus Christ... with the same bowels... the same dear intense feelings of love and compassion that Jesus had.

“Bowels” is the Semitic idiom for tender affection, emotion, and deep inner feelings. In our culture we use “heart” instead of “bowels.” When we speak of from where deep or tender emotions come, we use “heart.” In Semitic cultures they used bowels instead of heart for the same reality. The use of heart before in verse seven showed how that the Philippians habitually occupied Paul’s thinking. The use of bowels here shows that they also occupied much of his compassion and tender emotional affection.

In the last part of this prayer, Paul again uses the demonstrative pronoun “this” to point to the object of his personal devotion.

Philippians 1:9: And this I pray [*proseuchomai*], that [*hina*; in order that] your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment;

The word “pray” in verse nine is the Greek word *proseuchomai*, the common word for praying that emphasizing one’s personal devotion. The purpose of the prayer was that their love would abound to the end that they approved things that were excellent so that they would be sincere and without offence until the day of Jesus Christ. Let’s look at each of these phrases.

It says he prayed that their “love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment.” Most people think that it means that when their love would increase so would their knowledge and judgment or that as their knowledge and judgment would increase so would their love. However, what it means is that, within the realm of their knowledge and judgment love would increase. They had plenty of knowledge and judgment, what they needed was love. Knowledge and judgment without love falls short of the godly standard of life to which we have been called.

They weren’t likeminded. They weren’t serving in love. Some were doing it out of contention. Paul wanted them back to the place where they were of the same mind and the same love. This also comes up later in chapter two.

Affirmations: I never defend the truth, I just declare it. My love abounds more and more.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 1 AMP.

Philippians 1:9: And this I pray [*proseuchomai*], that [*hina*; in order that] your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge [*epiginōsis*] and in all judgment [*aisthēsis*];

Their knowledge and judgment had surpassed their love. Their love needed to catch up. It needed to abound more and more. When they were using their knowledge and judgment, they needed to make sure love was there, too, energizing their actions. They weren't lacking in knowledge or judgment, they were lacking in love. Love is what brings joy to serving. When we serve out of love, it will produce joy.

Philippians 2:2: Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded [*autos phroneō*], having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind [*autos phroneō*].

The word for knowledge is *epiginōsis*. It means a full and precise knowledge gained through the exertion of effort and learned through experience. The word for judgment is *aisthēsis*. It occurs only here in the New Testament. Bullinger says it means "perception by external senses." Bauer says it means "insight, experience, feeling, perception." Thayer says it means "perception, not only by the senses, but by the intellect and is used of moral discernment in ethical matters." It is apparent that this word relates to information that comes through the senses and is perceived in the mind.

Although the noun is used only here, the same root, in other parts of speech, occurs in two other places. The verb form *aisthanomai* occurs in Luke 9:45.

Luke 9:45: But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived [*aisthanomai*] it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

Although they heard the words with their physical ears, their minds failed to grasp its import. They had the physical perception, but not the spiritual perception that should have produced the understanding. They lacked spiritual insight, spiritual perception and awareness. Another noun form, *aisthētēria*, occurs in Hebrews 5:14.

Hebrews 5:14: But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses [*aisthētēria*] exercised to [*pros*] discern both good and evil.

The end result of exercising the senses is to discern both good and evil. The word "to" is the Greek preposition, *pros*, which implies a view to an end implying an ultimate purpose. As we grow and mature spiritually, we develop spiritually... we develop spiritual perception and awareness. The word for "discern" is the same one translated "discern" in I Corinthians 12:10 used of "discerning of spirits." "Discern both good and evil" refers to spiritual insight, spiritual perception and awareness. If the senses are not exercised, then the individual becomes dull in perceiving spiritual matters as Hebrews 5:11 says.

Let's go back to Philippians 1:9, please. Notice it says "all" before "judgment." "All" before "judgment" is used in the sense of the greatest degree of judgment, capable of every nuance of spiritual insight. Then verse ten continues:

Philippians 1:10: That ye may approve things that are excellent...

This word, "that," is not the Greek word, *hina*. It is "*eis to*" and when used with the infinitive as it is here in Philippians 1:10 it means "to the end that," expressing purpose. "*Eis*" is a preposition that conveys the idea of "to the end," i.e. reaching the destination. We abound in love more and more with the purpose that we arrive at the place where we can approve things that are excellent. God wants us to not only move in that direction, but to reach the destination.

"To approve" is to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, or deem worthy. They needed love to abound so that they would be able to evaluate what was going on in Philippi accurately. They needed to see through the eyes of love. They were judging according to the knowledge that they had, but they were lacking in love. They needed to increase in love to the end that they could properly evaluate what was going on. Love is so very important for without it, our motives may be called into question.

They needed to approve "things that are excellent." "Excellent" means "things that differ." They were not only to distinguish between good and evil, but between good and best... between what is good and what excels that which is good... what surpasses good. They needed to make a difference between things that mattered, things of importance. They were doing good, but they needed to do better... to do what was best according to the Word.

As we walk and mature and our love abounds, our temptation becomes less and less choosing between good and evil. Rather, it will become more and more between choosing between good and better and better and best. We must never settle for good when God desires the best. [See poem "Good Enough" by Edgar Guest.]

The prayer continues. They needed to approve things that are excellent so that they would be sincere and without offence.

Philippians 1:10b: ...that [*hina*; in order that] ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ [the gathering together]; "Sincere" was to be pure when examined in sunlight. [Sock illustration] "Without offence" means that they would not injure or strike against anyone; they would not wound others physically or emotionally or fail to show regard for others. When our love increases and abounds even more with that full and complete knowledge and all spiritual insight so that we're able to distinguish those things which are spiritually the best. Then we will be pure and spotless without being offensive. We will not offend Jew, Gentile nor the church of God (I Corinthians 10:32) until Christ's returns at the gathering together.

Philippians 1:11: Being filled [*plēroō*; perfect participle] with the fruits [singular in the text] of righteousness, which are by [*dia*, through] Jesus Christ, unto [*eis*, all the way unto] the glory and praise of God.

The fruit of righteousness are the results of living out the righteousness that we have on the inside. They come through Jesus Christ, through the spirit that we operate in his name. They bring glory and praise all the way unto God. Well, that finishes the prayer in Philippians one. Remember the importance of prayer in unifying those who move the Word together. Paul established in this first prayer in Philippians how dear they were to him and introduces several of the key concepts he will expand upon in the rest of the epistle.

Affirmations: I approve things that are excellent. I have my senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 1 BSB.

Philippians 1:6,10: Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ. . . ¹⁰ That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.

The Bible speaks of the “day of the Lord,” the “day of Christ,” and the “day of God.” These three phrases must be understood in order to rightly divide the Word of God. The “day of the Lord” refers to a period of time when the Lord shall do the judging. The “day of Christ” refers to the gathering together. The “day of God” refers to specific times of war within the larger period of the “day of the Lord.” Let’s look at these in more detail.

Day of the Lord: The “day of the Lord” is the day when the Lord shall do the judging. It is used in opposition to “man’s day” which is when man does the judging. As such it refers to a time period longer than 24 hours. When reference to a 24 hour day in which judgment is rendered is made, it usually referred to as the “day of judgment.”

I Corinthians 4:3: But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment [day]: yea, I judge not mine own self.

The “day of the Lord” includes the tribulation, the appearing of Jesus Christ with his saints, and the period of God’s judgments. The “day of the Lord Jesus Christ” is a further elucidation of “day of the Lord” and occurs only in the Church Epistles. Adding “Jesus Christ” to “the day of the Lord” reminds the reader that although Jesus Christ came once as a servant who was humiliated and slain, this same Jesus Christ will rule and judge as lord.

The “day of the Lord” is specifically referred to in I Corinthians 1:8; 5:5; II Corinthians 1:14; I Thessalonians 5:2; II Thessalonians 2:2; II Peter 3:10; and Revelation 1:10.

I Corinthians 1:8: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Aramaic and the critical Greek texts agree on “Lord Jesus Christ.” The believer will be blameless in the day of the Lord, in the next administration.

I Corinthians 5:5: To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, [with the result] that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The Aramaic and some Greek texts read “Lord Jesus Christ.” The word “lord” is present in all the Greek texts, so there is a concurrence as to the time. It does not refer to the gathering together, but rather the next administration. Their service to the Body of Christ is unprofitable now in this administration, but their new birth spirit guarantees that after being made whole at the gathering together, their service in the next administration will be profitable. That has to introduce a result and not a purpose clause because they were not delivered unto Satan in order that they will be made whole in service, but they were delivered unto Satan with the result that they will be made whole in service in the next administration. The words “Jesus Christ” are necessary to clearly set the example of his life of service in front of the believer who has erred. Whether or not this believer ever straightens out his walk, he will still live and serve in the day of the Lord.

II Corinthians 1:14: As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The Aramaic and Greek texts all have the day of the “Lord”... the Aramaic adding “Jesus Christ,” while the Greek simply adds “Jesus.” The Aramaic reading “Lord Jesus Christ” is correct. There is no reason to add “Jesus” without also adding “Christ” to the day of the Lord here in II Corinthians, since “Jesus” emphasizes his humility only. We will rejoice together in what we get to do together in the next administration.

I Thessalonians 5:2: For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

The Aramaic and Greek texts all read “day of the Lord.”

II Thessalonians 2:2: That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

The Aramaic and the critical Greek texts read “day of the Lord” which is correct, instead of “day of Christ” as the King James Version does. The “day of Christ,” the gathering together, is always at hand. What we do not need to be concerned about is anyone saying, “The day of the Lord is at hand.” Why? Because we will be caught away at the gathering together and the “day of the Lord” will never catch us off guard.

II Peter 3:10: But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. [The Aramaic and Greek texts all read “Lord.”]

Revelation 1:10: I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

All the Greek texts read “day of the Lord,” which is correct. The Aramaic reads “the day of Sunday,” which is a later forgery based on the tradition that Sunday was the Lord’s day.

Day of Christ: The “day of Christ” is the day that Jesus Christ will come for the Church of the Body. It is the gathering together. Adding the word “Jesus” to the “day of Christ” has the same effect that adding “Jesus Christ” to “the day of the Lord” has. It reminds the reader of the life of service that the man, Jesus Christ, lived. The only place Jesus is added to the “day of Christ” is in Philippians 1:6.

The “day of Christ” is only found three times in the Word of God, and all three are in Philippians.

Philippians 1:6: Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

The Aramaic reads “Lord Jesus Christ.” However, the work that Jesus Christ is performing in each believer will continue until the return, at which time each believer will be made perfect. Thus, a proper understanding of the verse requires the “day of Christ,” not the “day of the Lord.” The Greek manuscript evidence is divided between “day of Jesus Christ” and “day of Christ Jesus.” The latter form is correct. The name “Jesus” emphasizes the humiliation that he endured. It would not be put in the first position when referring to the gathering together, but would rather be added to place emphasis on his service of love and what he did to make the day of Christ available. Thus, Philippians 1:6 should read “the day of Christ Jesus” and it refers to the gathering together.

Philippians 1:10: That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.

The Aramaic and Greek texts all read “day of Christ.”

Philippians 2:16: Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

The Aramaic and Greek texts all read “day of Christ.” The context here shows that the “day of Christ” includes the awarding of rewards to the believers for their faithful service at the *bema* [II Corinthians 5:10]. Whether or not this all occurs within one 24 hour period or takes a longer period of time are both covered by the use of “day” in the Greek.

Day of God: The phrase “day of God” appears only twice and refers to specific times of war within the larger period of the day of the Lord. In Revelation 16:14, the phrase “day of God” has the word “almighty” added to it. “God Almighty” emphasizes God as all-powerful and able to defend and protect His people.

Revelation 16:14: For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

The Aramaic and the Greek texts all read “day of God Almighty.”

“God Almighty” is God as the complete resource for every believer. The “battle of the great day of God Almighty” in Revelation 16:14 is the battle of Armageddon. It occurs just prior to Christ’s reign on earth for 1,000 years. At that battle the armies of God led by Jesus Christ will battle the armies of the adversary. That will be a time when God’s might will be displayed gloriously.

In II Peter 3:12, the “day of God” is a time when “the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat.” This record in II Peter 3 is referring to the war recorded in Revelation 20:8-9 in which the forces of the adversary are gathered together against the saints when fire comes down out of heaven and destroys the army of the adversary. This will occur after the 1,000 years that Jesus Christ reigns on earth, just before the white throne judgment.

II Peter 3:12: Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

The Aramaic and the critical Greek texts all read “day of God.”

Other “Days”: There are other phrases which add light to this subject.

- ♦ “day of judgment” occurs many times. In this phrase “day” has the meaning of time. The time of judgment will differ depending on whether the person is in the first or second resurrection.
- ♦ “day of wrath” (Romans 2:5; Revelation 6:17) is a period of time during the day of the Lord in which there is great tribulation.
- ♦ “day of salvation” (II Corinthians 6:2) refers to the present time. It is available to be saved now.
- ♦ “day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30) refers to the gathering together. The word “redemption” emphasizes that the believer has been bought back from the adversary by the work of Christ. Although already redeemed and sealed with holy spirit, the believer will be changed again at the gathering together and fully realize his redemption.
- ♦ “evil day” (Ephesians 6: 13) refers to this present administration. The word “evil” emphasizes the types of works which are prevalent.
- ♦ “last days” (Acts 2: 17; II Timothy 3:1; II Peter 3:3) the context determines what is meant. Acts 2:17 refers to the times during the day of the Lord that the prophecy of Joel will come to pass. II Timothy refers to the times of the mystery.
- ♦ “the day,” “that day” (for example, II Timothy 1:12; 3:1; 4:8) the exact time being referred to must be determined by context.

Affirmations: God’s not done with me yet. I do my best to be sincere and without offence.

Recommended Reading: All the verses not written out in this lesson.

Philippians 1:12: But I would [*boulomai*] ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

Philippians 1:12 begins the section of Philippians that deals with contending together for the furtherance of the gospel in the face of conflict and strife with joy and rejoicing. The key to success in the furtherance of the gospel is likemindedness among the leadership. We will always be tempted with strife and conflict. The devil wants to separate and divide the believers and thereby limit their effectiveness in moving the Word over the world. We must learn to identify and eliminate contention and strife when they arise so that we can maintain our unity of purpose.

If strife and contention are dealt with as soon as they arise, they are no big deal. But when strife and contention are allowed to continue, it often seems to take on a life of its own. They can be the cause of division that splits churches. It pits people against each other and gets out of hand. The same thing happens in marriages and any activity that requires unity of purpose. It is important to catch things quickly and deal with them effectively. God's Word has the answers.

Philippians is a reproof epistle, and the goal of reproof is joy. Joy is an encouraging fruit, and the cycle of reproof is not complete until there is a return to the joy that we are supposed to have. I and II Corinthians are the other reproof epistles. One of the key concepts in Corinthians is encouragement. "Encouragement" and related words are used with greater frequency in Corinthians than in any other epistle. The goal of Philippians is to return the believers to the place of having joy in serving.

In previous lessons we saw in Paul's prayer that he wanted love to abound more and more in all knowledge and judgment. Their problem wasn't in knowledge and judgment; it was in love. Without love in service, we never get to the joy in service. It's the motivation of love that allows us to arrive at the joy. If we do things out of strife and contention then our service can be burdensome and irksome.

In verses 12-30 we will see difficulties that arose from conflict and strife while they were contending together for the furtherance of the gospel. The goal was to work through the difficulties and to arrive at the point of joy and rejoicing. In verses 12-13 we will read of what Paul did, and in verses 14-17 we will read of what others were doing. In verses 18-26 Paul contends and tells us why, and in verses 27-30 Paul tells the Philippians what they'll need to do to contend and tells them why.

"Would" in verse twelve is the Greek word, *boulomai*. It means to will with determination. It is different from *thēlō*, which refers to an intense desire. *Boulomai* is more logical or deliberate. The difference between *thēlō* and *boulomai* is the difference between the natural impulse and the reasoned resolve. Paul thought it through and wanted the Philippians to understand what he was going through and its effect on the furtherance of the gospel. Contrary to what one might think, Paul's imprisonment did not hinder the gospel.

"Should understand" is the Greek infinitive *ginōskō*. *Ginōskō* is usually translated "know." Paul wanted them to know the result of the things that he went through. Yes, he was thrown in jail; yes, he was not free to move about, but the Word moved anyway. The words "fallen out" mean literally to "come unto." It is used in the sense that these things led to "the furtherance of the gospel."

"Furtherance" is the Greek word, *prokopē*, meaning progress, profiting, or advancement. It is only used three times in the New Testament and two of them are in this section of Philippians. Paul uses it concerning himself here and concerning the Philippians in verse 25 both translated "furtherance." The only other place it is used is in I Timothy 4:15 where it is translated "profiting." "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting [*prokopē*] may appear [become apparent, manifest, evident, or known] to all."

If we meditate on the word and give ourselves wholly to it, then our profiting, advancement, or furtherance will be obvious... it will be manifested to others. Paul gave himself wholly to the mystery and he profited from it. In I Timothy 4:15 he encourages Timothy to do the same. Paul like any good husbandman was first to partake. He proved the word by living it. Paul was like a scout or a point man who went before his troops. He pioneered and cleared the way. The things that he went through led to the advancement of the gospel.

Now don't make the leap in logic that it was God's will for Paul to be in prison, because the Word still moved while he was there. It was not God's will; God tried everything he could to keep Paul from going to Jerusalem. It was not God's will. But Paul's freewill choice ended up with an all-expenses paid trip to Rome in shackles. God didn't want that, but once things were set in motion God worked with what He had to see that His Word still advanced. The whole making lemonade out of lemons analogy can come in here. Don't feel sorry for Paul; what he endured he endured joyfully, and it advanced the gospel. Yes, Paul was bound, but the gospel was not (II Timothy 2:9). Verse thirteen will show us how the gospel advanced.

Affirmations: I deal with strife and contention quickly. I meditate on the word and give myself wholly to it.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 1 CSB.

Philippians 1:13: So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*;

The bonds to which he referred had a dual meaning. They were both physical bonds and bonds of commitment to the cause of Christ. Paul's commitment to Christ was evidenced by his physical imprisonment. "Manifest" here in Philippians 1:13 is the same Greek word that we read in I Timothy 4:15 as "appear." It's the Greek word *phaneros* meaning apparent, manifest, evident, or plainly recognized or known. Paul's commitment to the cause of Christ was plainly recognized or known in the "palace."

"Palace" is the Greek word *praitōrion*, *praetorium* is the Latin spelling. When I taught this in Philemon, I taught it as it is used in the KJV, "the emperor's palace." I tied it in with Philippians 4:22 where Paul sent greetings from the saints in "Caesar's household." However, when working it to teach Philippians I came across another option. It may refer to the praetorian guard.

The Praetorian Guard was a group of elite soldiers whose primary role was to act as a bodyguard to the emperor and serve as a quasi-police force in Rome. As soldiers, they had special privileges and special pay. As part of Paul's house arrest in Rome he was chained to a soldier, one of the praetorian guard. Since the guards were changed regularly (perhaps as often as every four hours) it would not take long before more and more of the guard became aware of Paul and his commitment to the cause of Christ. Because of their responsibility to protect the emperor and serve as a quasi-police force, it would be easy to see how the reputation of Paul's commitment to Christ would spread throughout the city.

Paul was on house arrest and was required to stay in his home chained to one of the praetorian guards. Although Paul was not free to come and go, the fellow laborers with whom he worked were free to come and go. What a strategic place for Paul to be. He had access to the elite praetorian guard and witnessed to them. This also allowed him access to the palace itself and to others of Caesar's household as the guards rotated through their shifts serving at different locations.

Indeed, Paul's presence in Rome as a prisoner awaiting trial had really served to advance the gospel. He was a distinguished prisoner, a Roman citizen exercising his prerogative to have his case heard by the emperor, and he made sure that everyone who came in touch with him knew that it was on account of the gospel that he was under house arrest, and not because of subversive political activity or criminal conduct. [New International Critical Commentary Vol. 11, Philippians, F. F. Bruce, p. 40.]

In Acts 23:11 the Lord told Paul that he would bear witness in Rome. Paul indeed did do that. The translation of *praitōrion* as palace necessitated the addition of "places" at the end of the verse. "Places" is in italics and is not in the text. The phrase "in all other places" could be translated "among all the rest" (i.e. of the people in Rome) or "among everyone else." Paul did indeed bear witness in Rome and verses 12 and 13 show the impact that he had. Paul's example also had an impact on the believers, as he notes as he continues.

Philippians 1:14: And many of the brethren ~~in the Lord~~, waxing confident [in the Lord] [The phrase *in the Lord* is used of believers who are faithful and committed to live for the Lord. Confident is the same word as verse 6.] by my bonds [Paul's example of commitment even though he was in chains], are much more bold [daring] to speak the word ["of God" is added in many mss and the Aramaic] without fear.

Paul's commitment was to speak as he ought, and they, too, refused to be afraid and spoke as they ought. Paul's commitment and dedication to the cause of Christ inspired others to speak without fear. His commitment to the gospel continues to be an example to all of us today.

Philippians 1:15-17: Some indeed [truly, certainly, surely] preach [*kērussō*, proclaim or herald] Christ even of [*dia*, on account of or because of] envy [ill-will do to a perceived advantage of another] and strife [conflict resulting from rivalry and discord] [Those are improper or wrong motives.]; and some also of [*dia*, on account of or because of] good will [The Aramaic text add "and love."] [That's the proper motive; they just want to do the right thing.]: ¹⁶ [The order of verses 16 and 17 are reversed in the critical Greek texts and most of the recent translations like NIV, NAS, & NLT] The one [preaching Christ even of envy and strife] preach [*katangellō*, to teach thoroughly taking people into the inner depth of the Word giving them a great foundation and understanding] Christ of [*ek*, out of] contention [It's a partisan and fractious desire to put one's self forward. It's a strenuous endeavor for superiority at the expense of anything or anyone that stands in the way. They seek their own benefit not the benefit of those they are supposed to be serving.], not sincerely [without a pure motive], supposing [thinking or expecting; Bullinger says it is used of something, yet doubtful, with the idea of wrong judgment or deceit] to add [inflict, increase, impose (used of accusers)] affliction [*thlipsis*, mental pressure] to my bonds: [This is what he was just praying about. They had the knowledge to fully deliver the message, but they didn't have love.] ¹⁷ But the other [preaching Christ of good will] of [*ek*, out of] love [*agapē*], knowing [*oida*] that I am set for [*eis*, all the way unto] the defence [*apologia*, an answer of truth in the face of accusation] of [by] the gospel. [He was using the gospel to defend himself; he was not defending the gospel.]

They knew Paul wasn't going to change. He always gave an answer of truth in the face of accusation, and these believers operating in the love of God would do the same. Paul was quite aware that there were people in Philippi doing it right with the right motives, and people in Philippi doing it wrong with the wrong motives.

Yes, people will disappoint us, and it's always good that we are a little shocked when it happens because it means we didn't expect it... we didn't contribute to it happening. We believe in our people and never think it will happen again. The problem is that it does happen again, and when it does it can be quite depressing. But we cannot allow ourselves to be discouraged.

Affirmation: I refuse to be afraid; I speak as I ought. I always give an answer of truth in the face of accusation.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 1 CJB.

Philippians 1:18-19: What then? [What does it matter? Paul is going to get into what really matters!] notwithstanding [nevertheless], every way, whether in pretence [false motive, out of envy and strife], or in truth [true motives, out of goodwill and love], Christ is preached [*katangelō*, to fully deliver the message]; and I therein do **rejoice**,[.] **yea** [*alla*, But], **and** [I] will [also] **rejoice**. [polyptoton, the repetition of same word in different forms] 19 For I know [*oida*] that this shall turn to my salvation [deliverance from prison after winning his court case] through your prayer [*deēsis*], and the supply [support, NEB] of the Spirit of [made available by or sent by] Jesus Christ,

It was precisely because of Paul's success that people were envious and contentious. Paul demonstrated a powerful spirit and spoke with authority. Signs followed his preaching which confirmed the words that he spoke. However, there were some who were jealous of him. His heart could have been broken over this; He could have been angry because of it. But Paul didn't allow what they were doing to deter him.

If we focus on people, we may easily be disappointed. If we focus on what really matters, the multitude of small annoyances that the weaknesses of people produce will not impact us as much. We must focus on what really matters which is what comes up in the next verse.

The challenge is to love one another and thereby cover a multitude of sins. That is what Paul is doing here. Yes, he's aware that there were those preaching out of impure motives, and he wanted the Philippians to be aware of it, too. They were missing the mark of the standard of the love of God, and Paul needs to reprove them. He wants them to return to the joy of serving. That will require operating out of the love of God. That's what Paul told us in the prayer we covered previously. He prayed for their love to abound more and more. We have the choice to either pull people up or put them down. Paul wanted them to come up to the standard of the Word... he expected them to come up to the standard of the Word. If they are not there yet, we pray for them with confidence because we know God is still at work within them. We are in the business of helping people to change. To do that, we don't ignore or condone their weakness, but we don't condemn or belittle them because of it, either.

I find it exciting that it is in this context that Paul should use "spirit of Jesus Christ." Of course, it refers to the gift. However, the exciting thing to me was that Paul was aware of John's presentation of the truth of the spirit as our *paraklētos*. What was the comforter Jesus promise to send in John chapter 14, 15, and 16? The spirit! What was that *paraklētos* called in I John 2:1? An advocate! Paul like Job was appealing to heaven, and his defense attorney is on the case. The intercessory prayer of the Philippians and the support of the comforter will get him through this.

This phrase, "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation," occurs in Job 13:16. Job is confronting his accusers and giving an answer of truth in the face of accusation; so is Paul. The quotation from Job is exact (NICC p. 53). Paul is quoting Job here because he knows that if he doesn't speak the Word, he will not make it through this difficult time any more than Job would have made it through his. The only thing Paul had to fight with and the only thing that would ensure his success was for him to boldly declare God's Word. If he held back or half-stepped, it would not be good.

Paul is alluding to the book of Job because he finds himself in the same situation that Job was in. Job was at the place where he would either live or die. He realized it, and knew the only way for him continue to live was to speak the Word. Paul also knew he was at the same point. Was he going to contend for the gospel, speak it and keep living, or would he give up the fight and fall asleep. There is no condemnation either way; we are all going to die sometime. He just needed to decide.

Job 13:13-19: Hold your peace, let me alone [you miserable comforters], that I may speak, and let come on me what *will*.¹⁴ Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth [we would say, "bite my lip" or "bite my tongue."], and put my life in mine hand? [He is saying, "Why do I keep silent, this is a matter of life and death."] ¹⁵ Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him [If God allows me to die, I would still trust Him until my last breath]: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. [If he died, he was going to go out fighting. He was going to keep speaking the Word like he always did.] ¹⁶ He also *shall be* my salvation [The LXX reads: "And this shall turn to my salvation..." just like Philippians 1:19.]: for an hypocrite shall not come before him. [Why should I allow you hypocrites to keep speaking or become a hypocrite myself by not continuing to speak the Word.] ¹⁷ Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears. ¹⁸ Behold now, I have ordered *my* cause; I know that I shall be justified. [Job was giving an answer of truth in the face of accusation, too.] ¹⁹ Who *is* he *that* will plead with me? for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost. [Speaking the Word was all that was keeping him alive.]

Paul alluded to that section of Job, because he, too, was at the point of death. Paul had to decide if he would give up the fight and fall asleep, or keep contending for the gospel. We will see that come up in the next few verses. But before we do that let's read some other verses that address this same topic. Although these verses refer to the latter days, the principles are still the same.

In other words, you take charge of your own life in patience, literally "with endurance." No matter what the adversary throws at you, you have to be ready to stand. That will take the patience, the endurance of Job. Paul is enduring the annoyance of the people and is still fighting. He wants to be delivered from prison and return to advancing the gospel. But he has a big decision to make.

Affirmations: Speaking the Word keeps me alive. I take charge of my life with patience.
Recommended Reading: Job 13.

Philippians 1:18b-20: . . .But I will also **rejoice** ¹⁹ For I know [*oida*] that this shall turn to my salvation [referring to deliverance from prison] through your prayer [*deēsis*], and the supply [Ephesians 4:16 says that every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.] of the Spirit of [made available by or sent by] Jesus Christ, [It's going to take every member operating the spirit and working together to accomplish it.] ²⁰ According to [This sets the standard for the deliverance.] my earnest expectation and *my* hope, [so] that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness [*parrhēsia*, boldness of speech], as always, *so* now [Right now while I'm in prison, which is all I have control over at this moment.] also [as it has always been, even so it is now] Christ shall be magnified in my body [put by metonymy for his personal life], whether ~~it be~~ by life [realizing his expectation and living free from prison], or by death [which would come in prison if his expectation was not realized].

Paul would be released or delivered from his bonds in one of two ways. First, he would be cleared of the accusation and set free, or second, he would die before he was set free. Paul was contending for the first.

“Earnest expectation” is the Greek word *apokaradokia*. It is a compound word of *kara*, head and *dokia*, to think in the sense of watching over. It means to watch with the head erect or outstretched as from a lookout post. Then the *apo* prefix intensifies it indicating a consistency or persistency of expectation. It is only used twice, here and in Romans 8:19. It is a concentrated intensity which ignores other interests; in other words, it indicates the stayed mind. You ignore other things because your mind is stayed on what you are expecting. It is a pressing expectation. It is combined with “hope.” If you take your eyes off the hope all other expectation that you have for the furtherance of the gospel and for your life and ministry is going to fall by the wayside. That is why the hope is such a part of our eager expectation.

If we keep our intense, earnest expectation coupled with the hope, we will not be ashamed. “To be ashamed” is to be disappointed in our expectation. When we do something that is not honorable we feel shame... we become disappointed in our expectation. The honorable, the righteous thing is to fight to stay our mind on what we want... what we expect. If we don't, we'll be ashamed because we quit.

“Whether by life or death” is a figure meaning totally. His entire existence is aimed at one goal whether in life or in death. It's a polar merismos where two extremes are given to represent the whole thing. Life/death represents the totality of his existence. He's totally sold out to the furtherance of the gospel. He'll do whatever will move the gospel..

That's the subject of this entire passage — the furtherance of the gospel, the advancement of the gospel. Paul's commitment is to do whatever will best further the gospel of Jesus Christ according to the mystery. The decision Paul has to make is the same one Job had to make... believe for his deliverance or die. For Paul it was to believe for deliverance from prison or to die in prison. Verse 21 builds upon verse 20 intensifying and clarifying it.

Philippians 1:21: For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

“For” is “*gar*,” a contraction of *ge*, (verily) and *ara*, (therefore, further) meaning “the fact is” or “in fact.” It has a more extensive meaning than the English word “for,” expressing the reason, cause, motive, or principle, etc. of what has been previously said. It could be translated “truly therefore...” or “indeed...” He has been building toward making a point, and he makes the point here. In verse 20 he says whether he lives or dies Christ is magnified. Then in verse 21 he clarifies how that is accomplished.

“To me” is in the dative case and could be translated for me. “Gain” is increase or advantage, and from the context we know the gain he is referring to is the furtherance of the gospel. The literal translation of verse twenty-one is: “Truly therefore for me to live (delivered from the bonds of prison) is Christ's gain (i.e. the advancement of the gospel), and if I die (still in bonds in prison) it is Christ's gain (the advancement of the gospel from prison until he dies).”

Death is never a “gain.” “Costly in the sight of God is the death of His saints” (Psalms 116:15). The gain he is referring to is what he can do before he dies. In verse 12 he said the gospel was being furthered while he was in prison. If he dies in prison the gain will be what he is able to accomplish before he does. You never gain anything by dying, so obviously he is referring to something else. The gain to which he is referring is what he can still do before he dies. It is like John 21:18-19 where Jesus spoke prophetically about Peter's life of which it says, “signifying by what death he should glorify God.” It meant signifying how the life he lived before his death he should glorify God.

Philippians 1:22: But if I live in the flesh, this [the furtherance of the gospel] *is* the fruit [result] of my labour [preaching the gospel]: yet what I shall choose I wot [know, but it's the Greek word *gnōrizō* meaning “to make known” or “declare.”] not.

If Paul lives, the furtherance of the gospel is the fruit of his labor (It says, “my labour.”) He committed himself to the furtherance of the gospel as long as he lived. When he died it would have to be the fruit of someone else's labor. But right now, he is still alive and he has a choice to make. He has already chosen to suffer in prison rather than succumb to the Jews who wanted him to teach legalism. “Shall choose” is the simple future tense. Right now, he has made a choice to labor for the furtherance of the gospel. But he admits that he doesn't know if he will still feel the same way in the future. If the lord tarries, eventually everyone gives up the fight and falls asleep, and it's their right to decide.

Affirmations: I have an earnest expectation and hope to further the gospel. I choose to live for the glory of God.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 1 CEV.

Philippians 1:23: For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart [return; it's not motion from here to there as depart would indicate; it's motion from there to here as return would indicate], and to be with Christ; which is far better [Literally from the Greek it reads, "much, more, better," it's an pleonasm (more words are used than are necessary) for amplification]:

Philippians 1:23 is a parenthesis, an addition to further explain the information already given. Therefore, we can read right from verse 22 to 24 without losing the context.

Philippians 1:22,24: But if I live in the flesh [stay alive], this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. ²⁴ Nevertheless to abide in the flesh [stay alive] *is* more needful for you.

Paul knew that at the present time the best thing for him to do was to keep contending for the faith and advance the gospel. Let's look at the parenthesis now.

Philippians 1:23-26: For I am in a strait [compressed, tightly constrained] betwixt two, [How did Paul deal with the pressure that came from choosing to live until he was delivered from prison or dying in prison? He considered a third option that was far better than either of them.] having a desire [a very strong desire, a driving force; if it were evil it would be translated lust.] to depart [for the return; it's not motion from here to there as depart would indicate; it's motion from there to here as return would indicate], and to be with Christ; which is far better [much, more better; it's an pleonasm (more words are used than are necessary) for amplification]: ²⁴ Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you. ²⁵ And having **this** confidence ["This" points back to the previous verse that abiding in the flesh *was* more needful for them. Since he knew the best thing for the believers was for him to believe for deliverance he concluded that...], I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; ²⁶ [Why?] [In order] That your rejoicing [boasting, not the usual word for rejoicing] may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

That brings us full circle. He was in this thing for God. He served and enjoyed serving, even when it was a fight to do so. Even when it would have been easier to give up and fall asleep; he did not. He knew he had more to do for the furtherance of the gospel.

That concludes the section in verses 18-26 where Paul addresses how he contends, also telling us why. The next section is verses 27-30 where Paul tells the Philippians what they'll need to do to follow his example and contend for the furtherance of the gospel (which he does in verses 27 & 28) and where he also tells them why (which he does in verses 29 & 30).

This section (verses 27-30) is really an exhortation to unity. This entire section, verses 27-30, is one long sentence in the Greek text with *politeuomai* as the main verb. It is also the only verb in the imperative mood in chapter one.

Philippians 1:27a: Only let your conversation be [*politeuomai*, conduct yourselves as citizens] as it becometh [in a manner worthy of] the **gospel** of Christ...

"Only" the Greek word, *monon*, is the first word in the clause and is therefore emphasized. Paul has done his best to conduct himself in a manner worthy of the gospel and now he commands the Philippians to do the same. The adverb "only" modifies this imperative, and adds a sense of urgency and focus to it.

"Conversation" is a unique Greek word used only twice in the New Testament. It means to "conduct oneself as a citizen." Will Durant in his book *Caesar and Christ* says it meant "to live as a citizen of a free state," "to take an active part in the affairs of state," or "to exercise your citizenship." The noun form is used only in Philippians 3:20, in the complimentary section of Philippians. That's where Paul declares them citizens of heaven. This term was very meaningful to the Philippians. You will remember from our study of the background of Philippi that Philippi was a military colony which was granted the Italic Right, and they were proud of the honor. [More on that tomorrow.]

Affirmations: I live as a citizen of heaven. I greatly desire Christ's return.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 1 ESV

Acts 22:22-23: And they [the antagonistic crowd] gave him [Paul] audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a *fellow* from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. ²³ And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,

This was a striking exhibition of rage and malice. Paul was guarded by Roman soldiers so the crowd could not injure him. Their only way of expressing their wrath was by these symbolic threats.

The “Italic Right” was granted to a community, not an individual, and in effect, made the community a part of the city of Rome itself. The free people in the city (not slaves) were granted Roman citizenship and the privileges that went along with it. These privileges included the right of ownership, and, the right to buy and sell land and property. Also, the citizens were exempt from both the land tax and the individual head tax. [International Critical Commentary, “Philippians,” p. 41] Among the most precious privileges of a Roman citizen was the right of civil action or lawsuit. This right safeguarded the person and property of a citizen and assured his immunity from torture of violence if he were ever to be tried (torture was commonly used on people accused of crimes, and even on witnesses. See Acts 22:24). [*Caesar and Christ*, Will Durant p. 395] Once citizenship was given to a person, it was transferred to his heirs by birth. Thus, by the time the Apostle Paul arrived at Philippi, more than two generations had been born as Roman citizens. Paul himself received his citizenship as a Roman by birth in Tarsus (Acts 22:25-28). The other occurrence of the word is in Acts 23:1.

Acts 22:24-23:1: [After the trouble that was stirred in Jerusalem surrounding Paul] The chief captain commanded him [Paul] to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. ²⁵ And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? ²⁶ When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. ²⁷ Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. ²⁸ And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free* born. [That was even more impressive politically.] ²⁹ Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him. [Paul didn’t conceal his citizenship on this occasion, and it was the reason for his deliverance from all the expectations of the Jews.] ³⁰ On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them. ^{23:1} And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived [*politeuomai*, conducted my life properly as a citizen] in all good conscience before God until this day. The rights and privileges of citizens of Rome were highly treasured and guarded. We already saw from Acts 19 how Paul concealed his citizenship when arrested, and how the magistrates apologized to him for their shameful treatment of him. Citizenship guaranteed the right to vote and hold public office. It also obligated them to public service and to spend time in the military if they were called. The biggest duty connected with citizenship was participation in the affairs of the city and upholding its laws.

This command, although carrying the idea of an individual taking an active role in the affairs of the city [*polis*], also has a corporate focus. It not only deals with individual responsibility, but it’s individual responsibility with a view to the good of the community. It deals with community or civic responsibility to the community as a whole. Of course, our community is the Body of Christ into which we have been placed.

“As it becometh” means “in a manner worthy of.” Paul has demonstrated how he conducted himself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, and he expects the Philippians to do the same. There is a responsibility that comes with our heavenly citizenship, and Paul is encouraging them to live up to it.

With this analogy Paul presses upon them their responsibility to God and one another. It is a call to honor the One Body in which they have been placed. If they were honored by Roman citizenship, how honored should they be to be citizens of heaven. If Roman citizenship demanded proper participation and conduct, how much more did citizenship in heaven. Do you see how that phrase “let your conversation” or “conduct yourselves as citizens” communicated powerfully? This exhortation would have had quite the impact. But, why the urgency? Why the singleminded focus? We’ll get to that in tomorrow’s lesson.

Affirmations: I’m thankful for the protection of civil authorities. I conduct myself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ

Recommended Reading: Acts 22.

The most frequently misconstrued scripture used to prove that a person is alive after death is perhaps Philippians 1 in which Paul addresses the followers of Christ.

Philippians 1:12-27: But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; ¹³ So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*; ¹⁴ And may of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. ¹⁵ Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: ¹⁶ The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: ¹⁷ But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. ¹⁸ What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. ¹⁹ For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. ²⁰ According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death. ²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die *is* gain. ²² But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour yet what I shall choose I wot [know] not. ²³ For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better ²⁴ Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you. ²⁵ And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith. ²⁶ That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. ²⁷ Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

The passage from verse 21 to 24 has caused confusion. Verse 23 is misinterpreted to say that when one dies he immediately departs to be with Christ which is far better than living. That this is a misrendering of the text is plainly visible when we rightly divide the Word of Truth.

We must apply a cardinal rule here: when there are an abundant number of scriptural passages which clearly state a specific tenet, and then one passage which is apply contradictory to this tenet, we must study that contradictory verse or verses most carefully. We dare not hold the one unclear verse and discard the plain teaching of the many passages. Yet that is exactly what has been done regarding certain contradictory verses, and thus we have cast out the many lucid verses which explicitly teach that when a man dies, he is dead until the return of Christ.

From only a cursory reading of verse 23, the verse would seem to stand in opposition to the many Scriptures which are very plain and clear. "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."

In Paul's statement one must first note that the subject of this passage of the Word of God is the Gospel and its furtherance: in verse 12, "unto the furtherance of the gospel"; in verse 18, "notwithstanding . . . whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached. . . ." (Paul is thankful that the name of Christ is preached, which is the furtherance of the Gospel.) In verse 25, the last phrase, "for your furtherance and joy of faith," is the furtherance of the joy and faith of the gospel. Verse 26, "That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ. . ." is again the furtherance of the gospel, as is also verse 27, "becometh the gospel of Christ. . . striving together for the faith of the gospel."

In the verses we are considering, the Scripture is teaching the furtherance of the gospel; it is not a question of Paul's own furtherance. The truth of the Gospel and its furtherance is set forth and taught plainly in verses 13 through 18. Paul indicates that some preach Christ of envy and strife, some sincerely, but Paul cares only that the name of Jesus Christ is proclaimed. Likewise, Paul according to verse 20, wants the gospel to be furthered as he magnifies Christ in his body. Verse 21, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." As long as it was for Christ's gain, the furtherance of the gospel, it was immaterial to Paul whether it should be by his living outside of prison or by his death in prison.

Affirmations: I rightly divide the Word of Truth. I care only that the name of Jesus Christ is proclaimed.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 1 MGI

1. Are the Dead Alive Now?, Chapter 3, Victor Paul Wierwille

Verse 22 says, “But if I live in the flesh, this [the work that I am doing] *is* the fruit of my labour. . . .” The fruit of Paul’s labor was the furthering of the gospel by preaching Christ. “. . . Yet what I shall choose I wot [know] not.” On the surface, as the verse reads in the Authorized King James Version, it seems to indicate that Paul was in a dilemma, not knowing which choice to make, “what I shall choose I wot not.” The word translated “I wot” is *gnōrizō* used 24 times in the A.V.: 16 times “to make known”; 4 times “declare”; and once each “to do wit,” “certify,” “give to understand,” and “wot.”

Thus clearly *gnōrizō* means “to make known.” Paul did know that his choice really was. The context indicates that while Paul’s personal preference was in one direction, his decision had to benefit others for Christ’s gain.

Verse 23 is parenthetical, that is, it’s a figure of speech where additional information further explains the information already given. Verse 23 is a legitimate grammatical insertion, an expression used as the Holy Spirit’s marking of that which is important in the Word. Therefore, verse 24 must be read immediately after verse 22 for true sequence. “Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you.”

What does Paul mean in verse 23 when he says, “I am in a strait”? These words are a translation of *sunechō* occurring 12 times in the A.V.² The word means to be “held in tightly” or “constrained” because of external situations. Paul was constrained by reason of three choices:

1. Christ’s gain, the furtherance of the Gospel by his being in prison.
2. Christ’s gain, the furtherance of the Gospel by his being out of prison with the believers.
3. “Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” than the furtherance of the Gospel in prison or out.

Verse 23 being a parenthesis is inserted for emphasis. The question is, what does verse 23 emphasize? The Apostle Paul did know whether to choose to live or to die; but he was faced with a third alternative, which was better than either living or dying. That alternative was the *parousia* of Christ at which time Paul would be with Christ in his changed body. So, the Apostle Paul concluded in verse 24 that it would be much better for the believers, since the *parousia* had not occurred, for him to get out of prison and to continue boldly fighting for the furtherance of the Gospel. But neither one of these choices, living for Christ’s gain or dying in prison for Christ’s gain, would be as good as Christ’s return, which would be best of all.

The word *depart* in verse 23 is in the Greek the word *analuō*. It is used only once in another passage in the Bible, namely in Luke 12:36: “when he will return from the wedding.” In Luke, *analuō* is translated “return.” Thus, the word *analuō* does not mean “to depart” in the sense of leaving the place where one is, but it is a return to the place which was left. The word *analuō* does not mean to depart in the sense of starting off from his place and going to another place, but it means to return to the place which has been left earlier. This gives as the absolute meaning of the word *analuō* without my private interpretation. The Apostle Paul was longing and waiting for the return of Christ when he would be with him.

It is most enlightening to note what Paul writes in II Timothy.

II Timothy 4:6: For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departures at hand.

The word *departure* is the Greek noun *analysis*, and again means “returning.” “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my ‘returning to dust’³ is at hand.” For further corroboration which can be checked in any good concordance, the words translated “depart” occur around 130 times in the New Testament. It is translated from no less than 22 different Greek words. But the word *analuō* occurs only twice: in one verse it is rendered “depart” and in the other it is translated “return.”

Certainly, the convincing evidence in harmony with the rest of the Scripture is that Paul was now talking about and reporting to them the best alternative of all the return of Christ. With Christ’s return, Paul would not have to live or die for the furtherance of the Gospel but would be changed to his immortal body. This would have been what Paul preferred if it had been available.

Affirmations: I choose and I’m at peace with my decisions. I think the way my savior does.

Recommended Reading: Day 36: Luke 10. Day 86: I Peter 5.

1. Are the Dead Alive Now?, Chapter 3, Victor Paul Wierwille

2. Matthew 4:24; Luke 4:38; 8:37, 45; 12:50; 19:43; 22:63; Acts 7:57; 18:5; 28:8; II Corinthians 5:14.

3. Genesis 3:19: “. . . dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Philippians 1:27: Only let your conversation be [conduct yourselves as citizens] as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Paul wanted to hear of how the Philippians were doing. Paul's plan was to send this letter to the Philippians with Epaphroditus, send Timothy later, and then come himself. He would hear of their affairs either personally or when Epaphroditus or Timothy would have returned and reported back. The last part of verse 27 tells us what Paul wanted to hear about. He wanted to know that they were standing fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the family faith of the gospel;

This usage of spirit refers to the spirit of man with all its issues (reasons, emotions, attitudes, etc.) This is another reference to the likemindedness they are supposed to maintain. They are to live as one man united in the issues of their lives.

The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery presents a cluster of images that "standing" represents. "Standing" is associated with commitment to a godly purpose. Exhortations to stand or stand fast evoke an image of fixed commitment to God as opposed to losing one's resolve. "Standing" is also associated with authority. Kings, prophets and priests "stand" with authority from God to accomplish His will. "Standing" also appears in contexts of warfare denoting conquest and victory. The ultimate defeat is "to have no power to stand before your enemies (Leviticus 26:37)," and the epitome of success is when "not a man shall be able to stand against you" (Deuteronomy 11:25; Joshua 1:5; I Kings 10:4). "Standing guard" is also a related image (Nehemiah 7:3; 12:25). Still yet other contexts use "stand" to denote permanence. Vows "stand" or remain in effect (Numbers 30:4, 7, 11). God's counsel "shall stand" (Proverbs 19:21; Isaiah 46:10). God's Word and God's kingdom will "stand forever" (Psalms 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; Daniel 2:44).

However, Hawthorne suggests another image, a military image. Knowing the historical background of Philippi, this military image may be the one that came to mind to the majority of the colony. *Stēkō* was used in the context of military battles referring to "soldiers who determinedly refuse to leave their posts irrespective of how severely the battle rages." Paul wants the Philippians to resolve to never leave their post no matter how fierce the battle becomes. They were to maintain the same mindset that Paul did and allow anything to alter their allegiance.

"Striving together" is the Greek word, *sunathleō*. It is only used twice in the New Testament, here and Philippians 4:3. It means to "struggle with" or "contend alongside" and is used of laborers working together in a common cause and athletes contending together in Olympic games. Friberg says it means to "earnestly cooperate with." The Louw-Nida lexicon adds that it implies opposition or competition.

The way in which Paul envisions the Philippians standing fast is by contending together as one man with one soul, that is, completely unified. With *sunathleō*, Paul changes the military image to an athletic one. From the image of soldiers each making a final stand at battle stations, it changes to athletes working together not as individuals but as a team functioning as one. Paul draws upon and presses toward a very unique image: individual commitment worthy of the sacrifice of one's life and corporate commitment worthy of the greatest of all possible goals. That goal is here described as "the faith of the gospel."

I mentioned earlier that "faith" refers to the family faith, the faith common to everyone born again of God's spirit. This is the spiritual reality that is unique and is held in common by all of those born again of God's spirit. This family faith is described and defined by God. We find what this family faith is in the scriptures addressed to our administration. The family faith represents the Christian community of the faithful and the doctrinal basis held by that community.

Do you see how the verse starts? It starts with *politeuomai*, a command to conduct oneself as the member of a community. Then it closes with the "faith of the gospel." This family faith refers to both the Christian community of the faithful and the doctrinal foundation that supports that community. What good news for our administration! There is community that's worth working toward and fighting for. What an emphasis on One Body. Well, how is this done? Verse 28 continues which we will see next.

Affirmations: I fight for my believing community. I won't leave my post regardless of how severely the battle rages.
Recommended Reading: Philippians 1 GNT.

Philippians 1:28: And in nothing terrified [startled, alarmed, intimidated, shook, frightened or troubled] by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token [a demonstration or proof] of perdition [destruction], but to you of salvation, and that of God.

“Terrified” is the Greek word, *pturō*. It is used nowhere else in the New Testament or the Septuagint. It’s related to the Greek word, *ptuō*. What’s that sound like? Sounds like someone spitting doesn’t it? It’s an onomatopoeia, where the word sounds like the action associated with it (like: buzz, hiss, bobwhite, or killdeer). In the Eastern culture spitting was an insult. You did it to make your disgust known and to elicit a reaction from the one you were insulting. It was a way to bring trouble to a head or to pick a fight. This is what the Jews did to Paul to try to get him to succumb and teach legalism. Paul withstood it even unto prison. We, too, should withstand the pressure to buckle to evil; we should stand fast on the truth.

This word, *pturō*, is used of an uncontrollable stampede of horses caused when they are alarmed or frightened for some reason. We should not be spooked and run off. The rationale for a stampede is not always known by the multitude. The fear of a startled handful runs quickly through the rest who may not even know why they are running. The infectious and compelling or driving nature of fear is something which must be resisted.

When we do this, it will be a demonstration of the power of God. Just like the same law of God that Deuteronomy 31:19 says could be a blessing and a cursing, when we refuse to be intimidated it demonstrates to us the power and victory that’s ours and to our antagonists their powerlessness and defeat. Why?

Philippians 1:29-30: For unto you it is given [graciously granted as a favor] in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer [to experience both good and evil] for his sake; ³⁰ Having the same conflict [*agōn*, athletic contest] which ye saw in me [when I was with you], and now hear *to be* in me [by this epistle]. [You’re in the fight with me now!]

“It is given” is the Greek *charizomai*, most often translated forgive. It is in the word family of *charis*, grace. The Emphasized Bible translates it, “it is given as a favor” and the New Revised Version reads, “He has graciously granted you the privilege.”

“On behalf of” is the Greek *huper*. With the genitive object Bullinger says it “has regard to feeling and implies the pleading of the case on behalf of another.” Christ suffered at the hands of those who opposed him to secure the salvation of the Philippians. Now, they can respond in kind, on his behalf or in his stead. It is not simply that they are suffering because they are associated with Christ and all Christians suffer. The genitive object regards feeling and passion, and makes this much more intimate than just an association. They are suffering (remember this word really means experiencing both good and bad) for the one whom they love and for whose return they are awaiting.

They saw Paul go through it in Philippi (He called it being shamefully entreated in I Thessalonians 2:2.), and now they are going through it themselves. Having conflict, *echō agōn*, is used in the same way as the verb *agōnizomai* is used. They refer to an intense struggling and relates to external as well as internal pressures. It means to fight or to compete in the contest expending our last ounce of strength with the intention of winning. This conflict refers not only to victory over our adversaries, but the aggressive mind-set of winning that insures the victory.

We saw a little bit of what the furtherance of the gospel requires. The key to success in the furtherance of the gospel is likemindedness. Paul admitted to difficulties that arose from conflict and strife while they were contending together for the furtherance of the gospel. The goal was to work through the difficulties and to arrive at the point of joy and rejoicing. That is only available when love is the motivating or driving force behind our outreach efforts.

Paul spoke of his personal situation, being in bonds. He was faced with two choices every day. He could either live or die. He also had a passionate desire to escape the pressure those two choices by the return of Christ which would be far better. He used his life as an example because the Philippians also were facing the same kind of challenges. Like Paul, they too could claim deliverance.

Yes, there were adversaries and conflict. Yes, people were preaching Christ with different motives and agendas. However, Paul rejoiced in that Christ was preached, and he prayed and believed for everyone to grow up and do it out of love. Paul showed the Philippians what he did to contend for the faith, and that gave them an idea of what would be required of them.

We have such a grand and wonderful privilege to be citizens of heaven and to live worthy of the gospel of Christ which we give our lives to advance. It advances one step at a time, as we each reach one with the greatness of God’s Word and will. Now we know what we’ll need to do to contend, and we also know why. Let’s be about our Father’s business on behalf of His only begotten son.

Affirmations: I’m not terrified by my adversaries. I contend together with the MFC for the furtherance of the gospel.
Recommended Reading: Philippians 1 MIT.

Philippians 2:1-2: If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit [the gift], if any bowels and mercies, ² Fulfill [*pleroō*] ye my joy, that ye be likeminded [*auto phroneō*], having the same love [*auto agapē*], *being* of one accord [*sumpsuchos*], of one mind [*phroneō*].

Philippians 2 is the central section dealing with likemindedness in the one body with joy and rejoicing. It is that to which chapter one builds and from which chapters three and four flow. We will not be able to handle the entire chapter, but we will get started.

“Therefore” is a logical connective that shows result. It shows cause and effect, how one statement grows out of or results from another rather than being the reason for it. There is a saying concerning the word “therefore.” It goes: “Whenever you read the word therefore, find out what it’s there for, because it’s there for a reason.”

In Philippians 2:1 “therefore” is the Greek word, *oun*, and although it never occurs at the beginning of the clause in which you find it in the Greek, it is often translated as the first word in the English. It is used at least three different ways in the Greek. When it is used inferentially and transitionally, as it is here, it introduces a practical application of a previously mentioned principle. The principle as stated in Philippians 1:27-30 is to conduct ourselves as citizens of a free state in a manner worthy of the gospel. We’ll find the practical application in verse two and following.

But before we get to verse two, I want to handle the figures in verse one. The simplest is the hendiadys formed by joining “bowels” and “mercies.” Although two words are used one idea is meant. It communicates the idea of “merciful emotions” or “compassionate feelings” or “merciful tenderness.” It refers to the great tenderness and lovingkindness that we have in our heart for one another.

“Therefore, if *there is* any...” is the way verse one should start. There are four conditional clauses in verse one and they each start with “if any.” This repetition is the figure of speech, anaphora (like sentence beginnings). This emphasizes the point being made each time it occurs, which strengthens the predominant figure, the meiosis.

Meiosis is the figure by which one thing is diminished in order to increase another thing. One thing is lowered in order to magnify and intensify something else by way of contrast. It is used for the purpose of emphasis, to call one’s attention, not to the smallness of the thing thus lessened, but to the importance of that which is put in contrast with it. It is used frequently in Philemon.

In Philippians 2:1 the thing diminished is the likelihood of the positive realities introduced by the anaphora “if there be any.” The thing magnified is the imperative, “fulfill ye my joy.” Through this figure Paul magnifies and emphasizes his request. His request is “fulfill ye my joy.” In order to emphasize that request he minimizes those things he introduces by the phrase “if there be any...” He lessens those things (as if consolation in Christ wasn’t important, as if comfort of love didn’t make our day, as if fellowship of the Spirit never happened, and as if bowels and mercies didn’t minister to us) to emphasize the importance of fulfilling his joy by being likeminded. Surely there is consolation in Christ, comfort of love, fellowship of the Spirit, and bowels and mercies — so fulfill Paul’s joy!

What exactly is Paul’s joy? Verse two elaborates on it. Just like the meiosis and anaphora has four parts [the consolation in Christ, the comfort of love, the fellowship of the Spirit and the bowels and mercies] the fulfillment of Paul’s joy as four parts also [that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, and *being* of one mind]. I don’t mean to suggest a correspondence between the lists. If there is one, I don’t know what it is. I just find it intriguing that there are four items in each list.

You can see that all four of these conclusions deal with the key concept of likemindedness. That is at the very heart of the epistle. The principle is to conduct ourselves as citizens of heaven, and we do it by fulfilling Paul’s joy. Like I said, fulfilling that joy is accomplished by carrying out the four qualities listed in verse two. However, Paul’s request is bigger than just “fulfill my joy...” “make me feel good.” Our joy in serving is not about us. Paul’s emphasis is not that the Philippians make him feel good. Why not fulfill your joy or the joy of the family of God?

Paul’s joy is associated Paul’s gospel. His joy is fulfilled when his ministry is operated and his gospel is practiced. You will notice this in people who have been called to specific ministries, their joy is fulfilled when they operated their ministry and what they teach is practiced. Teachers have no greater joy than that their people do what they are taught. That is the highest compliment you can give to a teacher is to do what he teaches you. To fulfill his joy is to live the mystery. His joy is fulfilled when the gospel he preaches is believed. He calls the Philippians his joy and crown later in 4:1, because they did. Paul said in I Corinthians 9:16, “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” When Paul describes how his joy is fulfilled, he says, “that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.” That simply means that they receive the truths of the mystery of the gospel regarding the One Body of Christ and live them in a unified, likeminded manner.

Affirmations: I recognize my authority. There’s power in the name of Jesus.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 2 KJV.

Philippians 2:3:

Let nothing *be done* through strife or [nothing through] vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

We know from Philippians 1:16 and 17 that strife was a problem in Philippi. Strife denotes an attitude of *self-seeking, selfish ambition, self-interest, and rivalry*. It's a partisan and factious spirit which desires to put oneself forward. Vainglory is empty conceit, vain pride, groundless boasting. These qualities are all about "me"... about what "I" want... about my selfish personal interests. The alternative, the answer is to not let it be about me. Hence the rest of the verse, "but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." That is quite the opposite of Diotrepes in III John 9 who loved to have the preeminence. (He wanted to be "the big shot.") It needs to be about others. We have a responsibility and accountability toward the rest of the Body of Christ. That's one way we make mistakes is that we do things without thinking about how those things will affect others.

"Better" was a word used of magistrates and others who were superior in position or rank. As we live the *doulos* lifestyle we should treat others as our lords. Remember the salutation when Paul specifically pointed out that this epistle was addressed to the bishops and deacons as well as every other saint. Even those with positions of service should not use them for selfish ambition and expect to be served. Everyone is to esteem others better than themselves and serve. It doesn't say that everyone is better than we are; it just says we should esteem them that way. "Esteem" means to lead ourselves about properly by controlling our thinking. The greater our responsibility, the greater our service ought to be.

Matthew 20:25-28:

But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. ²⁶ But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; ²⁷ And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your minister; your servant: ²⁸ Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Jesus certainly set a wonderful example for us to follow.

Philippians 2:4:

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

"Look" is the Greek word *skopeō*. It is also used in 3:17 where it is translated "mark." It's related to *skopos*, a goal, mark, or target, which is used only in 3:14. It means to consider, to look out for, to zero in on, to aim toward, to target. We hone in on the things of others (not in an envious manner) to the extent that they become important to us, without neglecting our own things as the word "also" indicates.

This is the kind of behavior that *politeuomai* describes. There is responsibility and accountability to the community. We cherish the community and invest our heart's best efforts on its behalf. Then verse five points the way to the ultimate example. The very best thing to do is to "Let this [*houtos*] mind be [*phroneō*] in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." The Aramaic reads, "And think this in yourselves which Jesus Christ also [thought]." As we mentioned previously the demonstrative pronoun *houtos* and the verb *phroneō*, to think occur together three times in Philippians. Each time they point to "a proper manner of thinking." We need to think like Jesus thought. He was never self-seeking or selfishly ambitious. This leads us to verses 6-11 and the example of Jesus Christ, the greatest bonds slave of all time, our *prime example of humility and obedience*.

The point of this section of scripture is to present the example of Jesus Christ. Instead of seeing this section as an example of service to follow, theological circles use it as a forum to promote Christ's deity. But forcing preconceived theological beliefs into these scriptures defeats the true meaning of the passage.

Affirmations: I say and do whatever God inspires in me. I faithfully do as God directs me.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 2 AMP.

Philippians 2:6-8: Who [Jesus Christ], being in the form of God, thought [*hēgeomai*, the same as esteem in verse three] it not robbery to be equal [*isos*] with God: ⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the like-ness of men: ⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself; and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Throughout the Church Epistles Paul uses Christ as an example of service (Romans 15:1-4; I Corinthians 11:1; II Corinthians 8:9; Ephesians 5:2; I Thessalonians 1 :6). This passage's purpose is clearly set by the immediate context which hinges entirely upon the ethical issue of service. Verse two encourages unity. Verse 3 contrasts strife or vainglory with humbleness of mind. In verse 4 believers are encouraged to look on the things of others rather than being self-centered. Verse 5 continues that we are to let the thoughts be in us which Christ had regarding humbleness as opposed to pride and vainglory. The contrast between pride and humility continues in verse 12 and following, showing the significance of obedience. In the midst of this section which contrasts pride and humility, are ethical issues of service, verses 6 through 11 point to the walk and life of Jesus Christ as the prime example of humility and obedience. The context is the key to understanding this misunderstood passage.

“Who” of course refers to Jesus. The word rendered “being” in verse six is the Greek word *huparchō* which means to exist with the root idea of “beginning” (*archō*). Jesus Christ had a beginning; God did not. The word, “form,” in verse 6 is the Greek word *morphē* meaning “a form or figure, an external appearance, that which strikes the eyes.” It differs from the Greek word *schēma* which means “the fashion, manner of life, perceptible mode, or air of a man.” The Latin word corresponding to *schēma* is *habitus*, from which we get our English word “habit.” *Schēma* makes reference to the fashions put on over the form (*morphē*). [Richard Chenevix Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966). PP. 261-67.]

Christ from his birth existed in the form (*morphē*) of God. He held “the supreme position as the only begotten Son of God.” Therefore, he could say, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9). Yet, he put on various fashions (*schēma*) over the external form. At no time did the fashions which Christ put on conform to the standards of evil; instead, they were a complement to the form of God he had as God's only begotten Son.

Both of these words are used in verses seven and eight. Even though Christ existed from birth in the supreme form (*morphē*) of God as God's only begotten Son, yet he took upon himself the form (*morphē*) of a slave (*doulos*, the lowest form of a servant) and he was found in fashion (*schēma*) as a man. He adopted a lower form and covered himself with man's fashions or modes of life. He did not live as a king. He lived and moved with the common people.

The word “thought” in verse 6 is the Greek word *hegeomai* which means “to lead or to consider.” Other translations have used the words “to esteem” or “to count.” Jesus Christ did not regard his supreme position as God's Son lightly; rather, he carefully considered every aspect of it.

In the next phrase “to be equal with God,” the word “equal” is the Greek word *isos* meaning equal, not identical (as two angles of an isosceles triangle are equal but not identical). It is used in Matthew 20:12 of men being equal who had received the same wages for different amounts of work. The equality, *isos*, in Matthew 20:12 is only with respect to wage, not to the amount of work. The equality is not in every quality. Jesus Christ's claim to equality with God was based upon the single aspect of his sonship as stated in John 5:18, “[he] said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.” A son is *equal* with his father as a member of a household, unlike a servant or neighbor. Yet, he is *not identical* with his father. The last words in Philippians 2:6, “with God,” further corroborate Christ's distinctness from God.

The words “to be” are an infinitive used as the direct object of the verb to think or thought. The word “robbery” is *harpagmos*, used here in the accusative case as the direct object of the verb *hegeomai* also. Therefore, we have a double accusative used in this clause which expresses equivalence between the phrase “to be equal with God” and the word *harpagmos*. In other words, Jesus Christ did not think that “to be equal with God” was *harpagmos*. The various interpretations of *harpagmos* have probably caused the most confusion in understanding the verse. According to Thayer it means the act of seizing or a thing to be seized. According to Gifford it means a prize and a treasure to be held fast.

The context deals with the contrast between pride and humility. Jesus Christ had a humble attitude. In John 6:15 when the people were about to seize (*harpazō*) Christ for their own gain (that is, to make him king) he withdrew himself from them. He always humbled himself. Lucifer did the opposite. He lifted himself up with pride in an effort to overthrow God as recorded in Isaiah 14:12-15. Satan has used every opportunity since that time to extort God's people. Even though Christ was in the form of God, and therefore equal with God, this was not something which he held over the head of others in a prideful manner.

In light of this context and previously cited meanings, *harpagmos* here can be best translated "a prize to be seized or used for one's own purposeful gain"; that's extortion. This is the only occurrence of the word in the New Testament; however, the usages of the verb form *harpazō* and the related noun, *harpax*, support the underlying meaning of extortion. The Aramaic word *chtuphya* meaning "extortion, rapacity" further corroborates this translation. [William Jennings, *Lexicon to the Syriac New Testament* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), s.v. "*ktwpya*." 13. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*. s.v. "*eritheia*."] Additional support of this translation comes from the word *eritheia* (strife) in verse three, which means "a drive to put oneself forward by trickery, partisanship, political favoritism, or selfish ambition."

Using one's supreme position for personal gain is contrasted with humility throughout the context. We are instructed to esteem others better than ourselves in verse three. The verse tells the reader that instead of putting oneself forward by trickery, partisanship, or selfish ambition, one should consider putting others above himself.

Verse 4 continues the encouragement to focus on the things of others and not to be self-centered. Next, verse 5, believers are told to let those thoughts which Christ Jesus had abide in them. He did not put himself forward through trickery, but humbled himself. He felt that equality with God was not a prize to be used for his own purposeful gain. Christ did not consider it proper to misuse his supreme position to extort material things from others as the scribes had done (Mark 12:40), but rather made himself of no reputation.

Philippians 2:7: But made himself of no reputation, and took [*lambanō*] upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

The first word "but" in verse 7 is the Greek word *alla* and is used to express an emphatic contrast. What follows is in direct contrast to the lifting up of oneself in order to extort from others.

The phrase "made himself of no reputation" is the one Greek word *kenoō* which means "to empty or make void." Jesus Christ did not empty himself in any physical or spiritual sense, but rather he emptied himself of a glorified position and accepted a humble position. The Authorized Version presents a good translation: "he made himself of no reputation."

The three Greek participial phrases following: "and took upon...", "and was made...", "and being found..." describe how he made himself of no reputation. He "took upon him"; he received into manifestation the form (*morphē*) of a slave — yet he was the son of God. It was easy for everyone to see. He "was made"; he came into existence, became or existed in the likeness of men — yet he had perfect, uncontaminated blood. He "was found in fashion (*schēma*) as a man"; he had habits and manners of men — yet he was without sin. He not only had the fashions on the outside as a man, but his form was that of a slave (humble), and he resembled all of mankind. Furthermore, all three of these participles are used in the aorist tense indicating the singleness of the action. Jesus Christ lived and died in this form, similitude, and fashion once and for all to make atonement for man.

The last part of verse 8 then begins a new clause introduced by the main verb "humbled." Some critical Greek texts actually place the beginning of verse eight at this point: "and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." The two words "death" appear together separated only by a comma in the critical Greek texts (*thanatos, thanatos*). This is significant because whenever a word is doubled, being separated only by a punctuation mark, it is the figure of speech *anadiplosis*. The word is doubled to emphasize the extremity of the word: he became obedient unto death. He humbled himself, becoming obedient all the way to the degree of death, and not just any death, but DEATH by crucifixion.

Affirmations: I cherish Jesus' example. I humble myself and obey like my lord.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 2 BSB.

Philippians 2:9-11: Wherefore (1) God also hath highly exalted him, and (2) given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee [synecdoche, part put for the whole person] should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth [underground, i.e. those who have been buried (like Acts 2:29)]; ¹¹ And *that* (3) every tongue [synecdoche, part put for the whole person] should confess [admit] that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Verses 6-8 express in three phrases what Jesus Christ did, and verses 9-11 express in three phrases what God did for Jesus as a result. Verses 6-8 state that Jesus Christ (1) considered equality with God a thing not to be seized upon for his own personal gain but, in contrast, (2) made himself of no reputation and (3) humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death. These three clauses in verses 6-8 correspond with three other clauses in verses 9-11.

They are introduced by the word “wherefore,” *dio*, which sets that which precedes in correspondence with that which follows after it. In verses nine through eleven God expresses in three clauses what He did for Jesus Christ because of Christ’s humble attitude. First, God highly exalted him. Secondly, God gave him a reputation, a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee must bow in three realms: heaven, earth, and under the earth. Finally, the third clause “and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father” is contrasted with Christ’s considering equality a thing not to be used to make others subservient to himself. In the context the glory in this verse is contrasted with the vainglory in verse 3.

The repetition of “name” three times in verses 9-10 is emphatic. It’s the figure *repetitio* or repetition, the repetition of words irregularly in a passage. Of course, it draws our attention to what is being said about the name. It’s an exalted name, and the reason it is exalted is at the center of the interpretation of the passage.

It has been repeatedly noted that there are remarkable correspondences between the concepts and words used in verses six through eight and its surrounding context. The accurate message of verses six through eleven can be organized in light of the following introverted structure.

A. Christ considered being equal with God a prize not to be seized for his own personal gain.

B. He made himself of no reputation in three ways:

1. Receiving the form of the slave,
2. Existing in the likeness of men,
3. Being found in fashion as a man.

C. He humbled himself unto death, death by crucifixion.

C’. God highly exalted him. **[This is God’s reward of exaltation for Christ’s humility.]**

B’. God gave him a name which is above every name, that at his name every knee must bow in three realms:

[This is God’s reward for Christ’s making himself of no reputation was to give him a name.]

1. Heaven,
2. Earth,
3. Under the earth.

A’. Every tongue shall confess Jesus Christ is lord to the glory of God the Father. Jesus Christ became our lord as God is Lord over all. **[This is God’s reward of lordship for Christ’s rejection of the possibility of usurpation.]**

If verses 6-11 can be considered as the central diamond in a beautiful ring, their surrounding verses are like brilliant baguettes symmetrically showing the perfection of humility of which Christ was the epitome.

“Let this mind [those thoughts] be in you which was [were] also in Christ Jesus” (verse 5). He did not use his position as the Son of God for his own purposeful gain. He made himself of no reputation. He humbled himself becoming obedient unto death. But God highly exalted him, gave him a reputation, and made him lord over all. May we work with this same attitude of humility and service as “sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (verse 15).

Verses 6-11 are the real diamond in chapter two. The obedient example (which is one of the key concepts in Philippians) of Jesus Christ and God’s response to it should be treasured by every believing saint as we do our best to live the mystery of the One Body of Christ to which we have been called. Like Jesus, we do not need to call attention to ourselves or promote ourselves. We are not after personal glory, vainglory as in verse 3. What we are after is to bring glory to God our Father. That’s what Jesus Christ accomplished, and that’s what we can accomplish, too, as we walk in his steps.

Affirmations: I exalt Jesus. I confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 2 CSB.

Philippians 2:12: Wherefore, my beloved [*agapētos*, in direct address], as [in just the same way that] ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence [*parousia*] only, but now much more in my absence¹ [*apousia*], [obey now and] work out [*katergazomai*] your own salvation [*sōtēria*] with fear and trembling.

In Philippians 2:12 the first word “wherefore” is a translation of the Greek word, *hōste*. This is a different conjunction than was translated “therefore” in verse one. It connects verses 12 and 13 with what immediately precedes them. Christ obeyed and carried out the Father’s will, and the Philippians also need to obey and do the same. However direct and pointed the exhortation may appear, it is tempered with love.

Paul addresses the Philippians directly again in 2:12. The Philippians were beloved to Paul, and he addresses them directly as beloved, *agapētos*. Their obedience had endeared them to Paul. Paul and the Philippians had demonstrated their love, *agapē*, for one another and established a relationship based upon it. The reciprocal nature of their love made them beloved to one another. This indicates the maturity and quality of their lives.

Paul expects that the same obedience that had endeared them in the past would continue; he counts on it. It doesn’t matter if he was there or not. In fact, his absence makes the obedience even more important. Their obedience to the gospel is what will allow them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

The salvation Paul speaks of here is wholeness in every category of life. They were already born again since Paul had called them saints in Philippians 1:1. The salvation he is walking about is wholeness. Paul is not giving the Philippians a formula for salvation; he is giving them specific instruction for deliverance from the situation he spoke of in chapter 1:27-30.

This is the third and final occurrence of *sōtēria*, salvation, in Philippians, and it relates back to the previous context. In 1:19 Paul speaks of his salvation, deliverance from prison, and in 1:28 he speaks of the deliverance of the Philippians from their adversaries. The usage of *sōtēria* here refers to deliverance from the physical and mental sufferings discussed in Philippians 1:27-30. It can refer to both the individual wholeness of each saint, and also to the wholeness of the community of believers. In which case, the salvation refers to the whole assembly’s deliverance from disunity evidenced by strife, vainglory, pride, and selfishness.

Once we understand this command to “work out your own salvation” correctly in its context, we may apply it to other situations that we face in life. It can be applied properly to any physical or mental suffering, affliction, or danger that we encounter. The simplicity of it all is that there are still things we need to do to manifest the wholeness that we have on the inside. Spiritually we have been made whole. Now we need to work out that wholeness so that it is manifested and demonstrated physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, and in any other area where it is needed or desired.

“Work out” is the Greek word *katergazomai* which means “to do something with success and/or thoroughness, to accomplish something, to perform something successfully, to do something thoroughly or achieve something.” It is a present imperative which is a command to continue something already started. They have already begun the process, and they should continue to completion.

“Fear and trembling” is an idiom meaning reverence and obedience. This oriental expression was used of slaves. How appropriate for it to occur here immediately following the example of Jesus Christ, our bondservant, the prime example of humility and obedience. “Fear and trembling” was a phrase used to describe a slave who worked out his wholeness in the household in which he served.

Ephesians 6:5: Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

Fear is used frequently in the Bible in the positive sense of reverence. We are encouraged throughout the Bible to fear God. That doesn’t mean fear in the sense of dread or terror, but fear in the sense of reverence and respect. One is positive, and one is negative. One Satan initiates, and the other God inspires. In a culture that embraced slavery this was well understood. When a slave ceased to be reverent, he had great cause to fear. When he ceased to be obedient, he had great cause to tremble.

According to eastern customs a slave or servant would stand inconspicuously watching his master with reverence and respect. He would look for even the slightest hand or eye gesture that would indicate what his master wanted. Because of the relationship he had developed over time, the servant would know exactly what to do when he saw them. He would never remove his eyes from his master lest he would miss a signal. He knew exactly what each signal meant, and he would obediently carry it out. Fear and trembling is an idiom that means reverence and obedience. It is used to describe the stayed mind necessary to wait on the Lord and carry out His desires.

Psalms 123:2: Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* unto the hand of their masters, *and* as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes *wait* upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

Waiting on the Lord guards against selfish and prideful desires popping up out of strife and vainglory. Servants should not pursue their own will or agenda, but rather desire to carry out that of their master. The use of the idiom fear and trembling communicates the necessity of waiting on the Lord and attending to His direction. If we are faithful to follow His lead we will work out our salvation. We see this clearly in the next verse. Why do we exercise reverence and obedience in waiting on direction from the Lord?

Affirmations: I work out my salvation with fear and trembling. I wait on the Lord and attend to His direction.
Recommended Reading: Philippians 2 CJB.

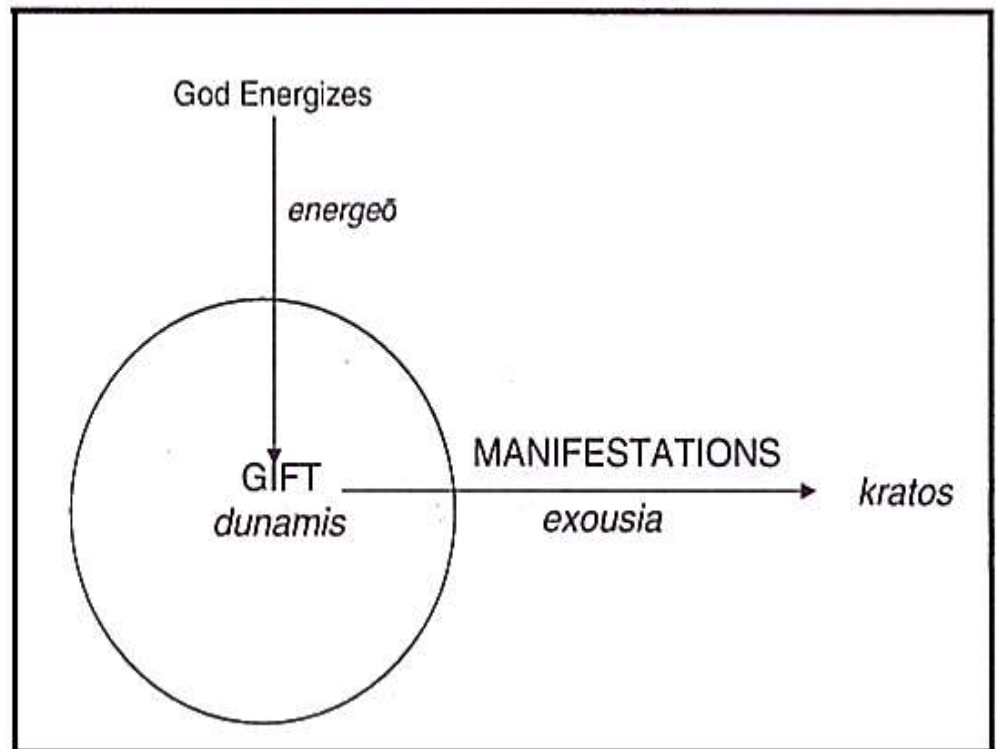
1. Presence/absence and *parousia/apousia* are the figure of speech paregmenon, the repetition of words derived from the same root.

Philippians 2:13: For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure [according to what pleases him].

“For” is the Greek word *gar* a contraction of *ge*, (verily) and *ara*, (therefore, further) meaning “the fact is” or “in fact.” Thayer says it is a particle of affirmation and conclusion. It has a more extensive meaning than the English word “for,” expressing the reason, cause, motive, or principle of what has been previously said. It could be translated “truly therefore...” or “indeed...” We pay attention and focus on God because He works in us to accomplish His good pleasure.

Just as “fear” and “trembling” refer to an internal mental attitude and an external physical manifestation (verse 12), so do “will” and “do” (verse 13). Just as we respond to our Master with reverence (manifested by staying our eyes upon Him) and obedience (manifested in doing what He directs), His working in us takes both knowing and action. He communicates His will through the revelation, knowing, or instructional manifestations, and accomplishes the doing through the impartation, power, or action manifestations.

God works in us. He energizes the manifestation as we exercise our authority as His sons. We will know what to do by way of word of knowledge word of wisdom, and discerning of spirits, and we will do it by way of faith, workings of miracles, and gifts of healings. Once we (as bondslaves attending our master’s table) see “the gestures” and understand what He wants done, we can act to carry out His good pleasure. God can get His good pleasure done if we respond with fear and trembling. Our reverence for His instruction and our action to carry it out will work out our wholeness and accomplish His good pleasure.



Both the divine enablement and the human response are required. He has enabled us, and we can do it. We must follow through and exercise our authority as sons to do as we are told. As seen in the chart, both the divine energizing and human response are necessary to get the work done as fellowlaborers with God. He enables us to know and act via the manifestations. We then must act upon what we know to make it a reality and bring His deliverance into being.

“Will” is the Greek word, *thēlō*. It refers to an intense desire or want that springs from natural impulse or intense emotion. It’s moving and not always logical or deliberate. When following these impulses, we do not subject them or ourselves to reasonableness. As we allow God to work within us “to will,” we are not bound by what is reasonable. Rather we are moved by intense desire which knows no limits.

“Good pleasure” is the Greek word *eudokia* and refers to that which pleases someone. It was used previously in Philippians 1:15 where it was translated “good will.” When describing God’s will, it refers to His good nature, kindly intent, and benevolence. When describing God’s delight, it refers to His pleasure and satisfaction. When describing God’s desire, it refers to the longing produced by the absence of the thing in which He delights.

Affirmations: God works in me to will with the revelation manifestations. I love to minister healing

Recommended Reading: Philippians 2 CEV.

Philippians 2:14-16: Do [This is also a present imperative, a command to continue what has already been started.] all things without murmurings and disputings: ¹⁵ That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; ¹⁶ Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

Both “murmurings” and “disputings” are indications of disunity and evidence of the lack of likemindedness. “Murmurings” are bad attitudes expressed in grumblings. They are signs of displeasure done quietly. This is what happened in Acts 6:1 when the Grecians murmured against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected. It’s secret displeasure not openly displayed often evidenced by hidden whisperings. “Disputings” are more vocal outwardly expressed dissatisfactions. This is what happened among the twelve in Luke 9:46 when they disputed among themselves which of them should be greatest. It is the first of eight evils listed in Matthew 15:19 that proceed from the heart and defile people. It is also the first of thirteen wickednesses listed in Mark 7:21. It is what Jesus confronted in Luke 5:22; 6:8; 9:47; and 24:38. Murmurings and disputings are so counterproductive. People act in that fashion thinking that they are better off for it, but it’s not true. They must be eliminated in order to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. When that unity exists, murmurings and disputings don’t come up. When we seek to maintain the proper unity through discipline to one’s purpose and commitment to goals upon which we agree, our interactions and questions never sink to the level of murmurings and disputings. The importance of eliminating these disrupting activities and remaining likeminded is presented in verses 15 and 16.

The word for sons in verse 15 is *teknon*. It is not the legal term for sons, (*huios*) but rather the intimate and affectionate word for child or offspring emphasizing the reciprocal relationship formed by the bonds of love, friendship, and trust. The emphasis is on intimacy and relationship not legal standing. “That” at the beginning of verse 15 could be read in order that, giving the reason. Eliminating murmurings and disputings and getting things straight in their own community of believers would enable their testimony for Christ in the greater community in which they lived to be more effective. Their strifes and contentions could be used by some as reason enough to not listen to their message about One Body with Christ as the head. They were to be sons of God shining as lights in the world. “Blameless,” “harmless,” and “without rebuke” are all Greek words beginning with the negative particle “a” in the Greek. The force of the reading could be kept by translating them in the same manner in English. “Blameless,” “harmless,” “rebukeless” does not read well, but “without blame,” “without harm,” and “without rebuke” might read a little better. “Blameless” is the Greek word, *amemptos*, meaning free from fault or defect or deserving no censure. “Harmless” is the Greek word, *akeraios*, meaning: unmixed, pure, free from guile, innocent, or simple. It is used literally meaning pure or unmixed when used of wine or metals, and it is used figuratively in the New Testament of character marked by integrity and innocence of evil. It was the word used when Jesus told the twelve to be “harmless” as doves in Matthew 10:16. The only other use is in Romans 16:19.

Romans 16:19: For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple [*akeraios*] concerning evil.

We should obey from hearts wise unto that which is good and unmixed when it comes to evil. We are not to mix evil and good together. In this context of the preaching of the gospel *akeraios* refers to our motivation. We should preach out of love and not mix strife and contention in with it. If we keep our motives and agenda pure or unmixed we will be harmless and not have a negative affect on those with whom we serve. “Without rebuke” is the Greek word, *amometos*, used of that which cannot be censured. The critical texts support another related word *amōmos*, which means without visible defect. It was the word used of sacrificial animals and of priests under the law of Moses. Both animals and priests were rejected because of defects and were not allowed to be used in sacrifice or to offer sacrifice. This idea of sacrifice will also come up later. As sons of God we should allow nothing to mar us and cause us to be rejected from serving God. “Crooked” is the Greek word, *skolios* literally meaning crooked or curved. Have you heard of scoliosis, lateral curvature of the spine? That’s this word in the Greek. It is used figuratively meaning wicked, unfair, surly, or forward. It was what Peter called this generation in Acts 2:40. “Perverse” is the participle *diastrephō* meaning to pervert, corrupt, distort, turn aside, mislead, or turn away. It is used of that which opposes the purposes and plans of God.

We are set like a diamond on black velvet fabric. Surrounded by the wicked who oppose the purposes and plans of God, we shine as lights, the stars of heaven. Just as the stars were arrayed in the heaven and set in place and named by God to tell the story of redemption and salvation, we too have been set in the Body of Christ as it has pleased Him and given the awesome privilege to tell the story of redemption and salvation to our generation, however crooked and perverse it may be. We, like the stars, have a purpose. We are to shine.

Affirmations: I refuse to murmur or dispute. I hold forth the word of life;

Recommended Reading: Philippians 2 ESV.

II Corinthians 4:4-7: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. ⁵ For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. ⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

We are the light of the world. We are to give the light of the glorious gospel of redemption and salvation to the world. People do well to take heed to a light shining in a dark place; the light really cannot go unnoticed. God has supplied the ability. We must respond to that ability; that's our responsibility. Then we must make ourselves available to God; that's our availability. Our ability will not make much of a difference in people's lives until our availability is synchronized with it. So, we see that we are to shine; verse 16 then tells us how we do it.

Philippians 2:16: Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

"Holding forth" is the Greek word, *epechō*, meaning literally to have or hold upon. Its meaning is actually closer to "hold fast" than "hold forth." It is used 5 times in the New Testament, and it is translated five different ways. In the King James Version, it is translated "mark," "give heed unto," "stay," "hold forth," and "take heed unto." It is used of observing or giving attention to something with the intention of doing something with it. Often the thing done is to hold it forth or present it to others. Let's look at the four other places it occurs in the New Testament.

Luke 14:7: And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked [*epechō*] how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

Jesus observed something and held fast to it because he used it as an occasion to teach. In verses 8-10 Jesus gives specific instruction about wedding etiquette and summarizes the principle in verse eleven saying, "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." He observed improper behavior and used it as an occasion to teach a true principle of life.

Acts 3:5: And he gave heed unto [*epechō*] them, expecting to receive [*lambanō*] something of them.

Here the lame man at the Temple Gate Beautiful held fast to Peter's words, "Look on us." His expectation and the word *lambanō* tells us that he was planning on doing something with what he heard. If you remember the entire account, not only did he receive, but he told everyone about it as he was walking and leaping and praising God.

Acts 19:22: So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed [*epechō*] in Asia for a season.

Paul sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia ahead of him, but he didn't follow immediately. He held fast or stayed put in Ephesus for there was obviously things he had to do before he left. This is when Demetrius stirred up the assembly to defend the honor of his god Diana. That's when Paul tried to intercede and speak to the assembly but the disciples wouldn't let him and sent him on.

I Timothy 4:16: Take heed unto [*epechō*] thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Here Paul exhorts Timothy to hold fast to what he knows about himself and the doctrine. The translation take heed properly supplies the idea holding fast to it so that it will influence what is done in the future. Doing so would not only bring wholeness to himself, but it would also bring wholeness to those he presented it to.

So now when we go back to Philippians 2:16, we'll apply what we learned from the word study and see that *epechō* is used of observing or giving attention to something with the intention of doing something with it. In this context we will see holding it forth or holding it out or presenting it to others.

Philippians 2:16a: Holding forth [*epechō*] the word [*logos*] of life [*zoē*]. . . .

Holding forth is a good translation of *epechō* here. Although we are to hold it fast, the idea of doing something with it makes “hold forth” or “hold out” a better translation here. This is the only transitive occurrence of the verb in the New Testament. *Epechō* is used transitively in secular Greek of offering wine to a guest at a banquet. You hold it fast so you don’t drop it, but you hold it forth so that they receive it.

The direct object which receives the action of the verb is “the word of life.” The only other place “word of life” occurs in the KJV is I John 1:1.

I John 1:1: That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

The phrase “word of life” is an objective genitive. It is the word, (*logos*, communication) which brings or gives or provides what is necessary for life (*zoē*, life in all of its abundance and manifestation).

John 5:24: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word [*logos*], and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life [*zoē*], and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life [*zoē*].

God’s word allows us to live a full and meaningful life. We have the best now and in eternity it can only get better.

Philippians 2:16: Holding forth [*epechō*] the word [*logos*] of life [*zoē*]; that I may rejoice [*kauchēma*, boast] in the day of Christ [the gathering together], that I have not run [*trechō*] in vain [*kenos*], neither laboured [*kopiaō*] in vain [*kenos*].

“Run” brings the athletic analogy into the picture again. “Running is an image of speed or haste and strenuous exertion in a momentous event.” Running is used to show both a more than ordinary desire to get away from something negative or threatening and eagerness to achieve something positive. It is often accompanied by joy. Often running is used figuratively to sum up the essence of godly living. In this case it is much like “walk.” However, walk communicates the mastery of the basics whereas “run” (with the idea of haste and exertion) communicates the mastery of more advance principles. This holds true in both the Old and New Testaments.

The Psalmist commits himself to obediently following a godly lifestyle saying in Psalms 119:32, “I will run the way of thy commandments...” Isaiah speaks of both analogies in Isaiah 40:31 saying, “They that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.” In the New Testament Paul speaks of the Galatians “running well” (Galatians 5:7) and expresses his personal concern and desire that he “not run in vain.” “Vain” is the Greek word *kenos* meaning empty or without substance. He labored, *kopiaō*, to the end of fatigue to ensure his effort was worthwhile. At the *bēma*, the judgment seat of Christ, Paul will rejoice with the Philippians for they are his joy and crown (4:1).

Affirmations: I preach Christ Jesus my Lord. I don’t run or labor in vain.

Recommended Reading: II Corinthians 4

Philippians 2:17-18: Yea, and [But even] if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me. [These verbs are not in the indicative mood describing what is going on. They are present imperatives, commands to continue something already started. “Do joy” or be glad and “rejoice” are commands.]

Paul brings up a very intense image which is not easily recognized in the English. The word “offered” is the Greek word *spendō*. It is used only twice in the New Testament, and both times it is an allusion to the possible end of life. Its only other use is in II Timothy where it is translated “ready to be offered.” In both verses it is in the present indicative.

II Timothy 4:6: For I am now ready to be offered [*spendō*], and the time of my departure is at hand.

It literally means to be “poured out” like a drink offering. Paul was not only willing to hazard his life, but to pour it out completely. As Christ laid down his life as a willing sacrifice, Paul, too, was willing to do the same. The Philippians would of necessity ask themselves, “Is it not worth my labor, if Paul thought it worth his life.” We see the reciprocal nature of ministry relationships. If the minister loves the people, and is willing to spend and be spent for their welfare, the people have reason to love the minister and to *joy and rejoice with him*.

The use “pour out” is the figure of speech hypocolastasis. It is a comparison by implication. Paul compares how he spent his time and life to a drink offering. Drink offerings were not only part of the Old Testament sacrificial service, but also a common practice of pagan religions. This idea would not have been foreign to them. As Paul said earlier in chapter one, he is in a straight between living and dying but has chosen to live because that was best for them. They still needed his love and support. However, Paul knows that his time is limited, and he is willing to give his all as long as the time he has left allows.

What Paul pours himself out upon is the “sacrifice and service” of their faith. That couplet “sacrifice and service” is the figure of speech hendiadys. Two things are said, but one thing is meant. “Sacrifice and service” is used of sacrificial service. “Sacrifice” is the Greek word, *thusia*. It is used five times in the church epistles and twice in Philippians. Its first occurrence in the epistles is in Romans 12:1.

In Romans 12:1 Paul makes a total shift in the way we are to think about service. We are living sacrifices who are free to live for Him. We no longer serve, as Hebrews 9:14 says, through dead works. The blood of Christ should “purge us from dead works, so that we can serve the Living God.” Our perspective is entirely different. We do not serve God through dead works that we do in the flesh. Our old man is dead, and we are to live and serve in newness of life following Christ’s example.

Ephesians 5:2: And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Jesus lived a life of love, and therefore he gave of himself. So did Paul. Jesus Christ personified God’s love and that is the example we are to follow. In him, we see God’s love demonstrated and lived out and benefiting people in their daily lives. Yes, Christ loved us and gave himself for us, and we, too, should so love that we give of ourselves. Jesus always did his Father’s will. He submitted his will to his Father’s. Remember in the garden he said, “Not my will but Thy will be done.”

There are times in life when our wills are not in alignment with God’s will. When His goals are not our goals... When our vision for our lives is not the same as His vision for our lives... When our desires are not His desires... At those times we make those tough decisions to do His will instead of our own. I John 2:6 says that we are to walk “even as he [Jesus Christ] walked.” I Peter 2:21 also says that he left us an example so that we “should follow his steps.” He lived for God, and so should we.

The Christian walk is characterized by dedication and obedience. It is a life subjected to the will of another, namely, to the will of God. Therefore, it is stamped with humility and dependence. The Law, with its sacrifices, has ended; it closed when Christ, “our Passover,” was sacrificed for us. But a new order of sacrifice has come in. We should love and give ourselves. As the victim on the altar was surrendered wholly to God, so our bodies with all their members should be consecrated to His service: not as slain, but as “living sacrifices.”

The consecration of oneself to God is not an outward act, like the sacrifice on the altar, but an act of the mind, or reason; an act of believing obedience, hence it is called “a reasonable service.” It is thought through and thought out. The sacrifice we make is logical and reasonable. It is something that transpires and transforms us in our minds as we think properly. That’s why it is important to know the Word, so that we can make logical and reasonable decisions in life.

The repetition of “joy and rejoice” in successive sentences in the same order and the same sense is the figure of speech symplece. It’s a double-barreled approach to make sure the point is not missed and to insure that “sameness” is maintained throughout. It shows the reciprocal relationship. Paul does it with them, and they do it with him.

The hendiadys calls our attention to his *sacrifice and service*, his “sacrificial service,” and symplece calls our attention to the joy he had doing it. This is the essence of the joy of serving. We are willing to sacrifice personal ambitions and agendas for the sake of the One Body of Christ. It is the motivation of love that puts the joy in serving. When strife and contention exist, they steal the joy from the service. Paul wants the Philippians to follow the example of Jesus and himself and thereby have the joy they both had in their service to God and God’s people.

Paul wanted the believers at Philippi to experience the same joy that he had and be glad and rejoice with him. Joy in service comes from love motivation and unity of purpose. Living as One Body has benefits we haven’t even begun to understand and enjoy. Let’s be on our quest to make God’s way our way and to give our lives in sacrificial service like Paul.

Affirmations: I am glad and rejoice with those who serve me. I benefit from living as One Body.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 2 ETH.

I Timothy 1:2:

Unto Timothy, *my* own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Certainly, you are familiar with the advertisement by the Marine Corps where they say they are looking for “a few good men.” They want good men and offer them the opportunity to be better men. Well, the Marines are not the only ones looking for good men. In fact, God is looking for good men. He will take any man and make him good and take a good man and make him better. In the next few lessons, we’ll look at three good men, men of whom, to borrow a phrase from Hebrews 11:38, “the world was not worthy.”

We have all been touched by God’s transforming power. We have been changed from the inside out. We are not where we want to be or where we are going to be, but praise God neither are we where we were before. We are authentic; we are genuine; we are the real deal... sons of the Almighty God and servants to our fellow man.

Timothy and Epaphroditus are singled out by Paul as true examples of what servants of the Lord should be. They are examples God puts before us so we can follow. They are men who are authentic and genuine in the way they conduct their lives. They are men of good character. They are good men. They are men who allowed God to make them better. They are naturally gifted and talented of course, but more than that, they are lowly and meek and led by the spirit of God.

Philippians 2:19-30 addresses serving in the gospel after the example of Timothy and Epaphroditus. We will see how they had proven themselves. Paul points to them and shares with us some of the reasons why they are worth emulating. If we long to see the furtherance of the gospel through our lives we will want to emulate these devoted followers of Christ.

In this section we see Paul’s care for the Philippians by this epistle and the personal visits he has planned. First, he purposes to send Epaphroditus to comfort their hearts and to deliver this epistle. Later he plans to send Timothy, and finally he intends to go himself once he is released from prison.

Although it may seem obvious, I want to make the point of how important Paul thought personal visits were. He longed to be with them, but he could not be at this time. So, he did the next best thing, he sent others to them who had the same care for them that he did. Paul’s fondness for the Philippians was shown in his eagerness to send others whom he trusted to them.

There is no more beautiful chapter in the history of the early Church than the story of Paul and his companions. They were many, and they gathered round Paul with such devotion, and followed him with such love. There were many who traveled with him on his outreach itineraries. These were Aquila, Aristarchus, Barnabas, Epaphras, Gaius, Justus, Luke, John Mark, Onesimus, Philemon, Priscilla, Secundus, Silas, Sopater, Tertius, Timothy, Titus, Trophimus and Tychicus. He also had many coworkers and supporters among whom were Andonichus, Apphia, Archippus, Carpus, Demus, Epaphroditus, Erastus, Lucius, Lydia, Jason, Junia, Nymphus, Onesiphorus, Phebe, Tyrannus, Urbane.

Among all these Timothy seems to have held a special place. The bond between these two was evidently very close, and the Apostle felt something of a paternal interest in Timothy whom Paul called his true child (I Timothy 1:2). He first found him on his second journey either at Derbe or Lystra. His mother, Eunice, was already a believer, his father was a Greek. Timothy seems to have been converted on Paul’s first visit, for on his second he was already a disciple well reported of, and Paul more than once calls him his “son in the faith.” He seems to have come in to take John Mark’s place as the Apostle’s “minister,” and from that time to have been usually Paul’s trusted attendant. We hear of him as with the Apostle on his first visit to Philippi.

Affirmations: I am authentic and genuine. I support my leadership.

Recommended Reading: I Timothy 1.

Philippians 2:19: But I trust [*elpizō*] in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state [the things concerning you].

In Philippians 2:19-24 Paul offers Timothy as an example. Verse 19 gives us the reason for sending Timothy to them. Verses 20-22 tell us of Timothy's character. Finally, verses 23 & 24 explain the plan. In this lesson we'll see how Paul's trust in the Lord Jesus allowed him to send Timothy to the Philippians.

"Trust" is the Greek word, *elpizō*. It is used 32 times and is translated "trust" 18 times and "hope" with variants 14 times. Thayer's lexicon lists two usages (1) to hope and in a religious sense, to wait for salvation with joy and full confidence (2) hopefully to trust in. Liddell & Scott says when it occurs with a present infinitive, as it is here, it means "little more than to think, deem, suppose, believe that."

Although *elpizō* may mean little more than to think, deem, suppose, or believe when used before an infinitive in secular Greek (for which Liddell & Scott is a very credible source) when used biblically it refers to hope for something in the future provided it is a well-grounded expectation. However, between *elpizō* and the infinitive "to send" in Philippians 2:19, is the phrase "in [*en*] the Lord Jesus."

En is a primary preposition, usually translated "in" or "by" denoting (fixed) position and instrumentality. When it denotes fixed position, it indicates a relation of rest in either place, time, or state. When it denotes instrumentality, it indicates means or agency. It refers to something through which an end is achieved or occurs and something that serves as an intermediary or agent through which one or more functions occur.

The trust of which Paul speaks is achieved through the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus is the agent through which the trust is accomplished. Without him there is no trust possible. It is an example of Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. This kind of trust of which Paul is speaking is accomplished through the Christ in him. It may indicate that he is operating the manifestations; this may be the revelation he received upon which he expects to act in the near future.

This word *elpizō* followed by the preposition *en* occurs in three other verses. In these verses the agency for our trust is either Christ, God, or God's Word. There is no biblical foundation for *elpizō* in anything else.

I Corinthians 15:19: If in this life only we have hope [*elpizō*] in [*en*] Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

If there is no resurrection, there is no hope in Christ, and we are most miserable. Thank God, Christ has been raised. Our trust is sure; it's absolute.

John 5:45: Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in [*en*] whom ye trust [*elpizō*].

Moses is put for the Word of God he wrote. Moses was dead and couldn't accuse anyone. However, the Word of God he wrote still spoke loudly and clearly. It, too, provides a means for trust or hope.

I Timothy 6:17: Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust [*elpizō*] in [*epi*] uncertain riches, but in [*en*] the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

The living God also provides a means of our trust. It's God in Christ in us, and God works within us to will and do of His good pleasure. The Greek word for "in" before uncertain riches is not *en*; it's *epi*. *Epi* means upon, as laying on a foundation. Our trust or hope is not based upon uncertain riches. That cannot provide any sure foundation for life. The only sure foundation is the living God Who provides richly all things for us to enjoy. *Elpizō* is used with *epi* in four other scriptures. Let's look at them next.

Romans 15:12: And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in [*epi*] him shall the Gentiles trust [*elpizō*].

The Messiah was the hope of the Jews, and he was also the only hope of the Gentiles.

I Timothy 4:10: For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust [*elpizō*] in [*epi*] the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

At the gathering together we will all be changed, *allassō*, and received receive the fullness of which holy spirit is only a token. Until then we appropriate our wholeness by believing.

I Timothy 5:5a: Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth [*elpizō*] in [*epi*] God....

A widow indeed has no family, she trusts and hopes in God to provide for her.

I Peter 3:5: For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted [*elpizō*] in [*epi*] God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

Although they subjected themselves to their husbands, their hope or trust was in God not their husbands. They knew their husbands weren't always right; they didn't always do the wise thing. However, the women were taught and learned to trust God to take care of them.

The last part of verse 19 tells us why Paul sent Timothy.

Philippians 2:19b: ...that [*hina*, in order that] I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

The words “may be of good comfort” are a translation of one Greek word *eupsucheō* which means “to be glad or cheered (up), or to become encouraged.” It is used nowhere else in the New Testament and in secular Greek culture it is used on gravestones and in letters of condolence. Thayer says it's the imperative that's used in epitaphs, “May it be well with your soul!” “Rest in peace!” is a common English epitaph carrying a similar sentiment. I think it is interesting that Paul would use a word he had never used anywhere else in the New Testament, especially one that is used in epitaphs right here. Paul mentions death in chapter one on more than one occasion, and he mentions Jesus' death earlier in chapter two. Then as late as 2:17 he alludes to death in the pouring out of his life as a drink offering. He knows when Timothy returns he will find out how the Philippians are doing so he can, “Be encouraged” or as we might say, “Rest in peace.”

Paul would be cheered up when he heard the good report Timothy would return with. From these words you can tell that he was expecting a good report. A bad report would not have provided the same comfort. Paul wanted to know their state. He already knew their standing; he wanted to know specifically how they were doing. “Your state” literally means, “the things concerning you” i.e. how they were doing. Paul knew Timothy would provide an honest evaluation and communicate the truth to him. That's not always the case. People frequently don't get the help they need because they do not honestly communicate. They hide things behind positive confessions and good intentions, when a simple, “I have a problem would you help me.” could change things almost immediately.

Affirmations: I communicate regularly with those I serve. I trust the revelation I receive.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 2 GNT.

Philippians 2:20-21: For [Indeed] I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. ²¹ For [Indeed] all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

Verses 20 and 21 tell us further information as to why Paul could count on Timothy to accomplish his mission. It deals with his character. In verses 20 and 21 "for" is "*gar*," a contraction of *ge*, (verily) and *ara*, (therefore, furthermore) meaning "the fact is" or "in fact." It has a more extensive meaning than the English word "for," expressing the reason, cause, motive, or principle, of what has been previously said. It could be translated "truly therefore..." or "indeed..." He wants to communicate why he sent Timothy, and he does it in two distinct phrases that indicate the great quality of his life.

The first reason Paul tells them is that he has no one more likeminded with him than Timothy. Timothy would genuinely care for them just like Paul has. Both the NIV and the NLT translate that phrase, "I have no one else like Timothy." Timothy was indeed unique. "Likeminded" is the Greek word *isopsuchos* which occurs only here in the New Testament. It means "of equal soul."

In 1:27, Paul encouraged the Philippians to stand in one spirit with one mind (*mia psuchē*). He commanded them to be as one man with one mind. Now here in 2:20 he tells them that he and Timothy are such men. In the verse before he used "*eupsucheō*" and in this verse he uses "*isopsuchos*." Both are used only once, only here in Philippians. This word "soul" is also used of Paul being of good comfort (well-souled, *eupsuchos*) upon receiving a report from Timothy who is likeminded (*isopsuchos* — equal souled) with Paul. Paul and Timothy were equal souled, mirror images of one another. *Isos* also occurs in Jesus Christ's likemindedness with God (2:6).

Paul goes on to say of Timothy that he "will naturally care for your state." "Naturally" is the Greek word *gnēsios* meaning genuinely, faithfully, or sincerely. It is an adverb which modifies the word "care." Although this adverb form is used nowhere else, the adjective form *gnēsios* is used four times. Friberg says it is used in three ways in the New Testament. It is used literally of legitimate, lawful children, born in wedlock. It is used figuratively of spiritual children having a true, genuine relationship. It is also used of the commendable quality of integrity genuineness, sincerity that characterizes that kind of relationship. Let's look at those four occurrences.

II Corinthians 8:8: I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity [*gnēsios*] of your love.

Paul expected them to respond with the obedience of true dear children by which they would prove their love.

Philippians 4:3: And I intreat thee also, true [*gnēsios*] yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life.

Paul entreated those who genuinely yoked themselves with him in service to help these ladies out.

In the last two occurrences Paul calls both Timothy and Titus his true children.

I Timothy 1:2: Unto Timothy, *my* own [*gnēsios*, genuine or true] son [*teknon*, the endearing form of child carrying all the sentiments of familial love and compassion.] in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Timothy was Paul's true child as was Titus.

Titus 1:4: To Titus, *mine* own [*gnēsios*] son [*teknon*] after the common faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Timothy would genuinely or authentically care for the Philippians because he was a true child of Paul with the same care for them that Paul had. "Care" is the Greek, *merimnaō*. It has both positive and negative usages. On the negative side it means to be anxious or to be troubled with cares. On the positive side it means to care for, look out for (a thing), or to seek to promote another's interests. Although both carry the connotation of distracting care, when it's negative, it is undue concern, and when it's positive it is appropriate concern or oversight.

It is used 19 times in the New Testament and six times in the church epistles. Four of those are in I Corinthians 7 regarding the care of a husband and wife for each other and the things of God, and two of those are in Philippians here in 2:20 and again in 4:6 where it tells us to be careful for nothing. So, of course it has to have two usages. Paul couldn't commend Timothy for his care, and then command the Philippians to not care

unless he referred to two different kinds of care.

The noun form *merimna* occurs six times in the New Testament. Four times in the gospels of the cares of life three of which occur in the parable of the sower and are used of how the cares of the world can choke the Word. Paul also uses it in II Corinthians 11:28 of the “care of all the churches” which he carried. The final occurrence is in I Peter 5:7 which directs us to cast all your care upon God; for he cares for us. Paul carried the care of all the churches and Timothy learned from him what it was and how to do it. That is the care of which Paul speaks in Philippians 2:20. Verse 21 continues further elaborating on Timothy’s character and suitability for his mission.

Philippians 2:21: For [Indeed] all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.

Timothy didn’t have ulterior motives. He didn’t have a personal agenda. He wasn’t greedy; he didn’t have selfish ambition. All he wanted to do was what Jesus Christ wanted him to do. That’s the example of service Paul sets before God’s people. We will never get to the place where we succeed spiritually and serve as Timothy did, if we are always concerned about our selfish ambitions and how we can get ahead. Paul held out Timothy as an example because he had the true heart of serving. He had learned it from Paul as they served together in the gospel.

Timothy followed the example of service of both Jesus and Paul. He mirrored Paul heart and soul and wanted to do the things that Jesus Christ had instructed him to do as Paul did also. To work with someone with this kind of commitment and dedication is a privilege that a believing man or woman appreciates so much.

After Paul gives Timothy’s credentials, he follows up with a closing comment that would seal the deal. Paul’s words were nice, but they knew Timothy personally. Timothy had been there, and had served with Paul in Philippi.

I find it very interesting and enlightening that when Paul commends Timothy to the Philippians he does not say he was sending him because he was such a good teacher or evangelist or healer. He did not laud him for what he did, but rather for who he was. It was not his past achievements that qualified him for the task at hand; it was his character. We all have different long-suits and abilities, but the care of the churches is more a function of commitment and character than it is of any set of giftings, personal long-suits, or unique or particular functions we perform.

God wants people with integrity... people who are sound and whole; people who have a sense of uncorrupted virtue; people who are the same in private that they are in public settings. People who think, as the Word says we should think... as servants with humility.

Timothy had become a man Paul could trust because he was a man who didn’t play around on the peripheries of God’s Word. Timothy had integrated his faith into every area of his life. He shaped and formed his character by keeping his motives pure and simple. He had learned a joy in serving and found great return and blessing in giving. He was a man of integrity. Integrity means that you are an integrated whole—that you are who you appear to be. A person of integrity lives the faith he proclaims reflecting it in his lifestyle.

Philippians 2:22: But ye know [*ginōskō*, learn by experience] the proof [*dokimē*] of him, that, as a son [*teknon*] with the father, he hath served [*douleuō*, as a bondsman] with me in the gospel.

They knew Timothy was genuine because they saw him in action. He had been there and moved the word with them. Timothy demonstrated the proper heart and commitment. The Philippians welcome him back because he had proven himself to them. “As” introduces a simile, a comparison by resemblance.

In eastern culture a father would often teach his son his trade, and the son would learn from his father. Joseph was a carpenter, and Jesus was a carpenter too, by trade. In Jewish culture it was said, that a father who does not teach his son a trade, teaches him to be a thief. The son would serve as an apprentice under his father’s tutelage until he could work unsupervised on his own. Timothy had been with Paul and had learned by hearing and doing. He had demonstrated competence, and Paul was able to send him out unsupervised because Timothy had instilled the same heart of serving into himself that Paul had. They worked as father and son, with intimacy and commitment and unity of purpose.

The word served, *douleuō*, means to serve as a bondsman. It is related to the noun, *doulos*, used of both Paul and Timothy in 1:1 and of Jesus in 2:7. One becomes a “*doulos*” by “*douleuō-ing*.” The emphatic quality brought to the front by the use of *doulos* was the love in the relationship that endeared them one to another. They served together in the furtherance or advancement of the gospel

Affirmations: I seek the things of Jesus Christ. I’m a man of integrity people can trust.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 2 MIT.

Philippians 2:23-24: Him therefore I hope [*elpizō*] to send presently [immediately], so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.²⁴ But I trust [*peithō*] in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.

Finally, Philippians 2:23-24 explains the rest of the plan. Hope is *elpizō*, which we already handled in our lesson on day 41. This occurrence is the 2nd of 4 in this section of Philippians. Paul fully intended to send Timothy to them, but he had to wait to find out how things would turn out for himself. Paul was a prisoner in Rome, and at the time of the writing of this letter, he was uncertain as to whether he would be condemned or acquitted. He was convinced that sending Timothy to them was the best thing to do, but he was not sure of when it would be best to do so. If Paul was condemned and put to death, he would, of course, have no further need for Timothy's assistance, and if he was released from his present incarceration, he could spare him for a season.

"See" is the Greek word *apeidō* in the Stephens text. Other critical texts have *aphoraō*, which is what I believe it should be. It's a compound of *apo*, away from, and *horaō*, to see. It means to turn the eyes away from one thing and fix them on something else. The only other place this word is used is in Hebrews 12:2.

Hebrews 12:2a: Looking [*aphoraō*, away from all else] unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith....

We are to keep our eyes off other things and fixed on Jesus. We can only look at one thing at a time. When our eyes are fixed on him our vision will be focused and our focus will be single. Our likemindedness is according to Christ Jesus. Without his example of serving, we will never be able to unify around anything. To have genuine unity of purpose we must be focused on the example of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What Paul is saying in verse 23 is that he will send Timothy when he is able to get his eyes off of what is going on with him and his legal case and get it back to what God's will concerning Timothy's trip to the Philippians is. Paul is confident that when he has some time to think it through, God will show him the best course of action. Remember he said in verse 19, "I trust in the Lord Jesus." He's waiting for the guidance to make sure everything is done according to the will of God. He is just not quite sure yet, when it will be.

However, his plan also has a second part (verse 24). "Trust" here is not *elipzō*, it's *peithō*. It means to be confident or persuaded. It was used already in 1:6, 14, & 25 and it will be used again in 3:3 & 4. He is convinced and confident. He has a believing image of victory that he will be released and be free to travel to them. Paul talks in other places about the care of all the churches. Part of this care is his oversight. Without spending time together personally he couldn't care for them as he wanted. While he is not free to go, he will send Timothy and Epaphroditus. However, he anticipates being free to go himself soon.

Messengers were often sent as personal representatives to be received with the same on received with the same honor accorded to the sender. Teachers and disciples often referred to themselves as father and son and developed intimate relationships described in those terms. News was difficult to send because it had to be carried by messenger which was sometimes a dangerous undertaking given travel conditions at various times of the year. It seems Paul wants to wait until he can give a full report of the outcome of his trial with the envoy. Letters were used not only as surrogates for one's personal presence but also often announced one's upcoming visit.

Affirmations: I love spending time with God's people. I keep believing images of victory.
Recommended Reading: Philippians 2 MGI.

Acts 16:1-5: Then came he [Paul] to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek: ² Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. ³ Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. ⁴ And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. ⁵ And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Timothy's name means honored of God and it occurs 24 times in the New Testament. He was a native of Lystra who was won by Paul on his first missionary journey. In II Timothy 3:10-11 Paul mentions that Timothy had fully known the persecutions and afflictions which came to him at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra. These persecutions occurred during the apostle's first visit to these towns; and Timothy was likely to have been one of those who were converted at that time, since we find that on Paul's next visit to Lystra and Derbe, Timothy was already one of the disciples there. It was there on Paul's second itinerary that Timothy was now chosen by Paul to travel with him, and Timothy remained faithful to Paul to the end of the apostle's life.

Paul trained Timothy and ordained him to the Christian ministry. I'm not sure when this happened, but when Paul writes back later in both of his epistles to Timothy he mentions it. In I Timothy 4:14 he said, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." Later in II Timothy 1:6 he said, "I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands." There are logical places it could have been done like Acts 14:23, 16:3 or 20:4, but it really could have happened at any time since we are never told specifically when.

Paul selected Timothy to go with him on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-5). We find Timothy mentioned next in Acts 17:14 where he is with Paul in Berea. Although unnamed, He evidently accompanied Paul to Phrygia, the region of Galatia, Mysia, Troas, Neapoils, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, and Thessalonica, ending up in Berea. Timothy knew first hand the trouble Paul endured at these places, particularly Philippi and Thessalonica.

Acts 17:10: And the brethren [of Thessalonica] immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews. ¹¹ These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. ¹² Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few. ¹³ But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people. ¹⁴ And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still. ¹⁵ And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

Because of the persecution at Berea Paul went on alone to Athens sending a message back to Silas and Timothy at Berea, that they should come to him at Athens with all speed. They quickly came to him there, and although it is not recorded in Acts, they were immediately dispatched to Thessalonica.

I Thessalonians 3:1-3: Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; ² And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith: ³ That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.

Timothy accomplished his mission and returned to the apostle, bringing him good tidings of the faith of the Thessalonians, of their love and of their kind remembrance of Paul, and of their ardent desire to see him; and Paul was comforted. This mission was similar to what Paul had planned for the Philippians that we read earlier.

I Thessalonians 3:5-7: For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain. ⁶ But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also *to see* you: ⁷ Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:

Paul had left Athens before Silas and Timothy were able to rejoin him. Paul had proceeded to Corinth. It was while the apostle was in Corinth, that Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia. Timothy evidently remained with Paul during the year and six months of his residence in Corinth, and also throughout this missionary journey to its end.

Acts 18:1-11: After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; ² And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. ³ And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. ⁴ And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. ⁵ And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ*. ⁶ And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. ⁷ And he departed thence, and entered into a certain *man's* house, named Justus, *one* that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. ⁸ And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. ⁹ Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: ¹⁰ For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. ¹¹ And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Timothy again accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey, although he is not mentioned until Ephesus was reached. This journey was intensive involving a great deal of traveling and time. It was during this time that all Asia heard the word of the Lord. They were together as the Word grew mightily and prevailed reaching the apex of its outreach in the seventh section of Acts. They spent more than two years at Ephesus, and as Paul's time there was coming to an end, he decided to go to Jerusalem, after passing on route through Macedonia and Achaia. So, he sent Timothy on before him.

Acts 19:20-22: So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. ²¹ After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. ²² So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Timothy then heads up an outreach team, and he and Erastus move out on their own.

Affirmations: I receive the word with readiness of mind. I reason with people out of the Word.

Recommended Reading: Acts 17.

I Corinthians 4:17: For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

While at Ephesus Paul wrote I Corinthians in which he mentions Timothy twice (I Corinthians 4:17 above and I Corinthians 16:10 below). From what we learned earlier we see how uniquely suited Timothy was. Paul calls him here a beloved son (as in II Timothy 1:2) and faithful in the Lord. Timothy was uniquely suited to bring the Corinthians into remembrance of Paul's ways, because no one knew him better or was more likeminded with him.

I Corinthians 16:10: Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also *do*.

It could be that Paul is saying, "Put him at ease so you'll get the most out of his ministry." That's how most of the translations handle it. However, I don't believe Paul is saying, don't give him reason to fear, but rather something of the essence that *you'll see how fearless he really is*. "Without fear" is the Greek word *aphobos* meaning fearless. It is used four times. We read it earlier in Philippians.

Philippians 1:14: And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Certainly, if the other believers were inspired by Paul's example to act fearlessly, Timothy most assuredly would have been, too. Paul was fearless, why wouldn't we expect Timothy to be also. That last phrase certainly indicates such saying, "for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also *do*." To get the fullness of Timothy's ministry they needed to afford him every opportunity to serve.

Soon after the riot surrounding Demetrius and Diana, Paul left Ephesus and went to Macedonia and Greece. In Macedonia he was rejoined by Timothy, whose name is associated with his own, in the opening salutation of II Corinthians. (See also II Corinthians 1:19.) After writing Corinthians Timothy accompanies Paul into Greece, where they stay three months.

Acts 20:1-6: And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto *him* the disciples, and embraced *them*, and departed for to go into Macedonia. [This is when II Corinthians was written.] ² And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, ³ And *there* abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia. [Paul writes Romans from here.] ⁴ And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. ⁵ These going before tarried for us at Troas. ⁶ And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

From Corinth Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, including in the salutation greetings from Timothy, his workfellow (Romans 16:21). Besides the end of Romans, Timothy and Silas or Silvanus are both mentioned in the salutations to I & II Thessalonians. Timothy is also included in the salutations to II Corinthians, Colossians, Philemon (where he is called a brother) and in Philippians 1:1 (where is called a *doulos*). In the letters addressed to Timothy Paul calls him his dearly beloved child and true child.

Acts 20:4 is the last mention of Timothy in Acts. From Greece Paul once more set his face toward Jerusalem with Timothy and the others mentioned in Acts 20:4 accompanying him. Later on, in Acts 21:8 they were referred to as "we that were of Paul's company." as Luke joins them again. After spending seven days at Troas they continued on to Jerusalem, where Paul was apprehended. However, we find Timothy among them who continued with Paul and functioned as his fellowlaborer in the continued movement of God's Word.

As Hebrews 13:23 indicates Timothy was free to move about while Paul was imprisoned. However, that Timothy is included in the opening salutations of Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians which were written from prison, shows Timothy's faithfulness to Paul throughout those tough times. Even at the end of his life after Paul declares that he had finished his course and fought the good fight, he requests that Timothy join him for one final fellowship.

As we read before, Paul intended to send Timothy to Philippi, and then visit them personally when he was freed from prison. Eventually Paul’s hope was realized and he was set free. Timothy was once again his companion in travel, but it is difficult to track their course. All we know is that Paul left Timothy as his delegate or representative in Ephesus according to I Timothy 1:3. Paul soon thereafter wrote I Timothy, in which he gave Timothy precise direction as to how to conduct the affairs of the Ephesian church. Paul intended to revisit Ephesus himself according to I Timothy 3:14.

We could read all of I & II Timothy to get a more complete picture of the life and ministry of Timothy, but there is no time for that now. Let’s just read the verses where Timothy is addressed directly in them.

I Timothy 1:18: This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

I Timothy 6:20: O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

Paul encouraged Timothy to fight the good fight and to keep those things which he had committed to him. The closeness and the bond of love that developed between Paul and Timothy was not only vital to the first century church, but it has been O so important to us as we do our utmost to live in the steps of our Lord Jesus Christ and other of his servants, (*douloi*) who did the same.

It seems that Timothy’s responsibility to oversee the churches of Asia may have been due to his experience as Paul’s helper in the service of the gospel. Timothy was acting as Paul’s representative of at Ephesus, as he had done earlier in Corinth (I Corinthians 4:17), Thessalonica (I Thessalonians 3:2) and Philippi (Philippians 2:19-23). II Timothy has further information. Paul was again imprisoned, and he wrote from Rome to Timothy at Ephesus, affectionately requesting him to come to him.

The sad documentation in II Timothy shows how many had forsaken Paul and left him on his own. However, Paul’s request for Timothy to be diligent to come to him was quite pressing. He asks in II Timothy 4:9, and it is repeated in verse 21. As Paul is finishing up his ministry he encourages Timothy to make full proof of his (II Timothy 4:5). Paul’s request in II Timothy 4:13 is very touching.

II Timothy 4:13: The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring *with thee*, and the books, *but* especially the parchments.

Paul wanted Timothy to bring the books and the parchments. It seems probable to me that after Timothy arrived with them, he and Paul canonized the writings, at least those written by the hand of Paul before he fell asleep.

What a man Timothy was. He was described as:

a certain disciple	one who brought people into Paul’s	one who worketh the work of the Lord, as one
well reported of the brethren	ways in the Lord	Paul did
a true child	one of like mind and soul with Paul	one who genuinely cared for God’s
a fellowlaborer	a brother in the truest sense	people
a beloved son	a preacher of the gospel	a <i>doulos</i> of Jesus Christ
one faithful in the Lord	one who sought not his own	a minister of God
a comforter	one who served as a son with Paul	one who sought the things of Jesus Christ
who warred a good	in the gospel	one who proven himself and his ministry one
warfare	fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ	one who established and comforted the
	believers concerning their faith	

Let’s do our utmost to follow the examples set for us in God’s Word. Regardless of our long-suits or unique giftings, our commitment to God and the godly character we form as we faithfully live God’s Word day by day is what equips us for the care of the churches. If you want to care for God’s people, we must continually monitor our motives of heart. Purity and honesty are key concepts in the Pastoral Epistles. We will understand more and more of God’s Word, His heart for us, as we keep our motives pure and let the mind be in us that was in our Lord Jesus Christ

Affirmations: I do the work of the Lord fearlessly. I war a good warfare.

Recommended Reading: I Corinthians 4.

Philippians 2:25a: Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus. . .

Epaphroditus is another example of a fellowlaborer that Paul sets before the Philippians in chapter two. He was a messenger (*apostolos*) sent to Paul from the Philippian church which Paul sent back to them with this epistle. His name occurs two times, both of which are in Philippians. The name means “handsome” or “lovely” and was very common in the Roman period. It was frequently used as one devoted to Aphrodite. The name occurs very frequently in both Greek and Latin inscriptions, whether at full length, Epaphroditus, or in its contracted form Epaphras. (Lightfoot, Philippians, p. 123). Epaphras is a contraction of Epaphroditus, but Epaphroditus of the Philippian church is probably distinct from Epaphras of the Colossian church. The two different forms of the names may have been used to distinguish between the two fellowlaborers.

Epaphroditus was sent from the Philippians to deliver their gift to Paul and to assist him in the work of the ministry during his first Roman imprisonment. On his arrival at Rome, Epaphroditus devoted himself to “the work of Christ,” both as Paul’s attendant and as his assistant in missionary or outreach work. He labored with such intensity that he lost his health, and “was sick nigh unto death.” He recovered, however, and Paul sent him back to Philippi with this letter to quiet the alarm of his friends, who had heard of his serious illness. Paul besought the church to receive him with joy and to hold him in honor.

“Supposed” is the Greek word *hēgeomai*. This is the third time it is used in chapter 2. It occurred earlier in verse three where we were encouraged to **esteem** others better than ourselves. It was also used of Jesus in verse six where we are told that he **thought** it not robbery to be equal with God. *Hēgeomai* with this usage is used of making a decision after weighing the facts or circumstances. It denotes a more deliberate and careful subjective judgment based more on compassion or feelings rather than pure logic.

Paul considered it necessary to send Epaphroditus back to the Philippians. “Necessary” is the Greek word *anankaaios*. Paul used it previously in 1:24 saying it was “more needful” for the Philippians that he live and continue to minister to them. In 2:25 Paul uses the same word of sending Epaphroditus back to Philippi. Thayer says the necessity is based on one of three things: 1) something indispensable that one cannot do without, 2) something connected by bonds of nature or friendship, and 3) what ought according to the law of duty be done being required by the circumstances.

Paul felt he had no option, but to send Epaphroditus back to Philippi. This was due to the nature of the relationship between Epaphroditus, Paul and the Philippians and the circumstance of Epaphroditus’ sickness. Their friendship and the sickness required Paul to let them get together again. Verses 26-30 explain:

Philippians 2:26-30: For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick [weak or powerless].²⁷ For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.²⁸ I sent [*pempō*] him therefore the more carefully [form of *spoudē*], that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. [What would make Paul less sorrowful? The Philippians being the more joyful.]²⁹ Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation [in honor]:³⁰ Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

It is possible to work so heartily that it is detrimental to one’s health. When the need requires that we go beyond what is wise physically, we must be smart spiritually. At those times when we have to push hard, we must shift into what I call God-gear. In God-gear you can do whatever God asks of you regardless of what it is.

Sometimes we can violate physical principles and overcome the physical consequences by applying spiritual principles. We see this frequently in gifts of healings. Doing the work of the ministry many times requires workings of miracles. Once one has the revelation, he must operate the manifestation of faith to bring the miracle to pass. That’s what I call shifting into God-gear, doing something that’s impossible by operating manifestations of the spirit. The problem is that it doesn’t always work the way we want it to. Our zeal and fervor for the things of God sometimes pushes us to act without revelation, impetuously or presumptuously. When that happens, we can get into trouble.

I’m not saying that’s what happened here. This may have been a case where God let Epaphroditus know what the consequences would be beforehand and gave him the option to do it if he wanted to pay the price. What happens when the price is our physical life? God asked Christ to lay down his life promising him he would have it back again. There have been many martyrs of the faith you paid with their lives. I’m not saying what they did was wrong or that they were out of fellowship. We even see the example of Stephen in Acts 7 who paid the ultimate price. God didn’t want him to die; God could have delivered if he had believed. But the fact is that Stephen paid with his life. That’s what could have happened here with Epaphroditus. I think Paul says mercy here, because both he and Epaphroditus erred. They missed the mark and went beyond what they should have and only God’s mercy got them through.

Affirmations: I devote myself to the work of Christ. I request and enjoy the mercy of God.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 2 MSG.

Philippians 2:25b: . . . Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour [*sunergos*], and fellowsoldier [*sustratiotes*], but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

Let's go back and finish verse 25 and see what else Paul had to say about Epaphroditus. Paul called him, "my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier," but the Philippians' messenger, who ministered to his wants as they had asked him to do. Again, we see how dear Paul was with the Philippians. He calls Epaphroditus, who was one of them, his brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier. These are words that denote a strong bond of togetherness. The three terms build in the intensity of the camaraderie. They were brothers, equals in the family of God. They were companions in labor [*sunergos*], that is fellowlaborers in the work of the ministry. They were fellowsoldiers [*sustratiotes*] associates not just in labor, but in conflicts for the cause of Christ.

"Brothers" meant they were equals in the family together. *Sunergos* and *sustratiotes* both have the prefix *sun* attached. *Sun* is a primary preposition denoting union, accompaniment, or togetherness. They were united and together in their labor and in their soldiering for the gospel. Paul acknowledges that Epaphroditus was one of them, but he proudly claims Epaphroditus as his own brother, fellowlaborer and fellowsoldier. You can see the intensity build as each word is used. They were united in their family life, their work on all levels, and their spiritual warfare. Paul was proud to acknowledge a man who was so wonderful and valuable to him, God, and the furtherance of the gospel.

The climax that builds through the first three terms reaches its peak in the fourth. "Your messenger" or apostle and he who ministers to my need. Epaphroditus was an apostle sent on a mission from the Philippians. He was sent with the love offering to help Paul and the furtherance of the gospel. Epaphroditus' assignment was to deliver the gift which Paul calls in 4:18 "the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God."

After delivering the gift he remained with Paul to assist in the furtherance of the gospel. As we have seen before Paul was not free to move about. He was restricted, but he taught Timothy, Epaphroditus, and others who assisted him in Rome and traveled on his behalf delivering epistles and communicating Paul's heart and care for the believers.

Paul is very direct in speaking of Epaphroditus as an apostle of the Philippians who fulfilled his mission with great personal sacrifice. Paul also called him a *leitourgos* which was used of people in public service, in military service, those in service of the temple, and those in service to a king. The Loew-Nida says it is used of one who renders special service of any kind. Arnt and Gingrich say it has special reference to accountability before God. Its use here in Philippians is because of Epaphroditus' special assignment to be a personal aide to Paul and how he felt so accountable to God to perform the service with the utmost of diligence and personal sacrifice.

"Wants" in verse 25 is the Greek word *chreia* meaning necessity, need, duty, or business. It is also used in Philippians 4:16 and 19. In 4:16 of Paul's need, and in 4:19 of the Philippians' need. That was Epaphroditus' special assignment, to do whatever Paul needed to have done. We see that Paul's need was so great and Epaphroditus' service was done with such commitment that it nearly cost him his life.

Affirmations: I take my special assignments seriously. I do whatever needs to be done.
Recommended Reading: Philippians 2 NAS.

Philippians 2:26-30: For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick [weak or powerless]. ²⁷ For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ I sent [*pempō*] him therefore the more carefully [form of *spoudē*], that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. [What would make Paul less sorrowful? The Philippians being the more joyful.] ²⁹ Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation [in honor]:

Verses 26-29 lead up to the reason given in verse 30. This is the figure aetiologia, cause shown or reason given.

Philippians 2:30: Because for the work [*ergon*, part of the root of *sunergos* in verse 25] of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply [*anapleroō*, to fill up to capacity, to refill or to resupply] your lack of service [*leitourgia*] toward me.

The words “not regarding” mean literally, “handing over.” It is used idiomatically of “exposing oneself to danger or boldly risking one’s life.” Why would he do such a thing? It says, “to supply your lack of service toward me.” They sent Epaphroditus to help, but that wasn’t really enough. Paul needed more help than Epaphroditus could supply. Now, Epaphroditus didn’t complain, he just did everything he could to help. He worked himself sick. He didn’t take the time to properly take care of himself and attend to his needs because he was too busy taking care of Paul. Whether it is due to lack of sleep or the unhealthy conditions or something else it doesn’t say. All we know that Epaphroditus did everything he could and it almost cost him his life. “Lack” is the Greek word *husterēma*. It occurs nine times in the New Testament. Let’s read the other eight:

The first occurrence concerns the widow and her mite. Jesus is contrasting the widow’s giving and the rest of the people and he says:

Luke 21:4: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury [*husterēma*] hath cast in all the living that she had.

In I Corinthians 16 it is used of people’s lack of service.

I Corinthians 16:17: I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking [*husterēma*] on your part [of or from you] they have supplied [*anapleroō*, to fill up to capacity, to refill or to resupply].

In I Corinthians 16:17 we find both *anapleroō* and *husterēma* as in Philippians 2:30. There was a need and God saw to it that the need was met. Although it may have been proper for the Corinthians to have met the need, they didn’t. However, God saw to it that the need was met with the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus. Regarding financial giving and the use of the abundant sharing we read in II Corinthians 8:

II Corinthians 8:14: But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their want [*husterēma*], that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your want [*husterēma*]: that there may be equality:

This kind of ebb and flow is a natural part of life. Paul sets the principle before the Corinthians that he will do later in Philippians. The body helps itself and supplies for one another at those times of abasing. It will also come up later in Philippians 4:11-13 where Paul says:

Philippians 4:11-13: Not that I speak in respect of want [*husterēsis*, feminine noun form of the neuter noun *husterēma*]: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. ¹² I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me

II Corinthians 9:12: For the administration of this service [the love offerings] not only supplieth the want [*husterēma*] of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

One area gives so that another area receives. Our travel expenses to new areas are covered by our love offerings from the other areas. This is what makes outreach efforts possible. New areas do not always provide sufficiently for themselves, and the older more established areas meet their needs and help them out. It works that way with finances, people and other resources.

II Corinthians 11:9: And when I was present with you, and wanted [*hustereō*], I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking [*husterēma*] to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*.

Paul didn't want the Corinthians to think that he was there for the money; he wasn't. God would supply his need, and he would help supply the need of the Corinthians out of the abundance he had.

Colossians 1:24: Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind [*husterēma*] of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

Paul suffered to move the Word, and he asks that the Colossians also do their part.

I Thessalonians 3:10: Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking [*husterēma*] in your faith?

We always do our best to help people believe, for when they do, they will receive. We do the work required to see that God's people get the blessing they deserve.

That finishes up this section on Epaphroditus. We saw what a wonderful fellowlaborer he was and how he put his life in jeopardy to make sure Paul had what he needed to move God's Word. The lives of both Timothy and Epaphroditus are fitting examples of true service. Both the regular *douleuō* service of Timothy who served Paul in the gospel faithfully for many years, and the special assignment *leitourgeō* service of Epaphroditus for a more limited length of time are vital and necessary. Who knows what God has in store for us? What special assignments await us? If we remain faithful, we will see.

Affirmations: I practice sacrificial giving. God supplies all my need.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 2 NIV.

III John 5-8: Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; ⁶ Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: ⁷ Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. ⁸ We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers [*sunergos*] to the truth.

The Greek word *sunergos* is a great Biblical word. You can take great pride in using it of yourself. It describes people who are active in the furtherance of the gospel. They are comrades and coworkers who have proven themselves and were held in reputation among the believers. It is a compound word made up of *sun*, a primary preposition denoting union, and *ergos*, the most generic word for work. As a prefix *sun* is often translated using “fellow,” “joint,” “together,” and “with” all of which show union. The union or unity of the fellows as well as the work they are unified in doing is what gives the word its impact. Let's look at several of those whom Paul identified as “fellowlaborers.” We'll see that they were intimately involved with Paul

Romans 16:1-5a: I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant [*diakonos*] of the church which is at Cenchrea: ² That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer [*prostatis*, guardian] of many, and of myself also. [In English prosthesis comes from *prostatis*. A prosthesis like an artificial leg, is a support that allows one to walk on their own.] ³ Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers [*sunergos*] in Christ Jesus: ⁴ Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵ Likewise greet the church that is in their house.

The first thing we see is that they were both male and female. Next, it says, “Who have for my life.” They acted in consort on the behalf of someone else (here Paul). Not only did they act on behalf of someone else, but the extent of their commitment was to lay down their own necks. They hazarded their lives to protect and support Paul. Their service merited the thanks of not only Paul, but of all the churches to whom Paul ministered. They had a church in their house.

Romans 16:5b-11: Salute my wellbeloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. ⁶ Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour [*kopiaō*, labored to the end of fatigue] on us. ⁷ Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen [*suggenēs*, of the same blood. It is also used in a wider sense of a fellow countryman or someone of the same race.], and my fellowprisoners [*sunaiχmalōtos*], who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. ⁸ Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. ⁹ Salute Urbane, our helper [*sunergos*] in Christ, and Stachys my beloved. ¹⁰ Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. ¹¹ Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

From this we learn that fellowlaborers are “in Christ,” in an exalted position of privilege and blessing and protection.

Romans 16:12-16,21: Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour [*kopiaō*, labored to the end of fatigue] in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured [*kopiaō*, labored to the end of fatigue] much in the Lord. ¹³ Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. ¹⁴ Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. ¹⁵ Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. ¹⁶ Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you. . . . ²¹ Timotheus my workfellow [*sunergos*], and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen [*suggenēs*, of the same blood. It is also used in a wider sense of a fellow countryman or someone of the same race.], salute you.

From this we learn that fellowlaborers are distinct and different from countrymen. Being a fellowlaborer is not based on blood, race, or nationality or any other natural or genetic factor. They come from the hills and the big cities. They come in extra large and small. They come in black and white and red and yellow. You see it's the quality of their lives and their commitment to a common purpose distinguishes them as fellowlaborers.

I Corinthians 3:9: For we [Paul and Sosthenes] are labourers together [*sunergos*] with God: ye [the church of God] are God's husbandry, ye [the church of God] are God's building.

Paul doesn't say that we all are fellowlaborers with God. He says that he and Sosthenes were. However, the fact that Paul used it of himself and Sosthenes, means that it's available for us to use it of ourselves, too. We just have to follow his example and live that way.

Like I've said many times before you can be a laborer with God by yourself, but you cannot be a fellowlaborer with God by yourself. You need other fellows around to be fellowlaborers. Perhaps a case could be made from the context that the "we" refers to Paul and Appollos, but regardless it is an limited number, not all believers. The believers are represented by the "ye" in these verses. These fellowlaborers will display a togetherness and unity of purpose in their labor for the Lord.

II Corinthians 1:24: Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers [*sunergos*] of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

From this we learn that fellowlaborers do not rule over or exercise dominion over others. Rather they help nurture joy through encouragement and relationship.

II Corinthians 8:23: Whether *any do enquire* of Titus, *he is* my partner [*koinōnos*, full partner, one who shares in full] and fellowhelper [*sunergos*] concerning you: or our brethren *be enquired of*, *they are* the messengers of the churches, *and* the glory of Christ.

From this we learn that fellowlaborers and full partners are not incompatible. We handled Philippians 2:25 earlier, but let's review it briefly.

Philippians 2:25: Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour [*sunergos*], and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

Paul calls Epaphroditus his brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier. These are words that denote a strong bond of togetherness. The three terms build in intensity of the camaraderie. They were brothers, equals in the family of God. However, the term "brother" says nothing about the kind of responsibility they had within the family. They were companions in labor [*sunergos*], fellowlaborers in the work of the ministry. They all had responsibility in the work of the ministry. Finally, he was a fellowsoldier [*sustratiotes*] associates not just in labor, but in conflicts for the cause of Christ. Like we read earlier in Romans 16:4, fellowsoldier conveys the idea of hazarding their lives.

Affirmations: I nurture joy and encouragement in my relationships. I love my comrades.

Recommended Reading: Romans 16.

Philippians 4:3: And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow [*suzugos*, those yoked together], help [*sullambanō*, to take hold together with others, to assist, help, to succor] those women which laboured [*sunathleō*, to strive at the same time with another] with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers [*sunergos*], whose names *are* in the book of life.

Philippians 4:3 has another occurrence of *sunergos*. We will get into in greater detail later when we get to chapter four, but let's look at it briefly now. In this verse Paul exhorts those who were fellowlaborers with him, to be fellowlaborers with each other. If they were willing to unify and commit to a course of action with Paul, they should be willing to commit to one another in the same way. It should not be personality driven, but mission driven.

At the end of Colossians Paul lists helpers and fellowlaborers in much the same manner as at the end of Romans.

Colossians 4:7-11: All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, *who is* a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant [*sundoulos*] in the Lord: ⁸ Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts; [That's exactly what we read last week Timothy was to do in Philippi.] ⁹ With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They shall make known unto you all things which *are done* here. ¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellowprisoner [*sunaichmalōtos*] saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) ¹¹ And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These **only** *are my* fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

The word "only" is a strong word. It is a limiting word. Not everyone qualifies as a fellowlaborer. Fellowlaboring is not part of our standing; it's part of our state, or estate like verse eight said. I can't infer from the Greek whether Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Marcus, and Jesus were the only fellowlaborers of Paul at the time of this writing or whether they were the only ones who were a comfort to him at the time of this writing. I'm inclined to suggest the later, but I don't know Greek well enough to say authoritatively.

Paul, like any good minister, took great comfort in fellow-workers in the kingdom of God. The work of the ministry can be lonely at times and having others willing to join themselves to you in the furtherance of the gospel can be comforting beyond description. Having others' friendship and camaraderie are greatly refreshing in the work of the ministry that results not only in fatigue but distress at times. The rest of Colossians reads:

Colossians 4:12-18: Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently [*agōnizomai*] for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. ¹⁴ Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. ¹⁵ Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. ¹⁶ And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea. ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. ¹⁸ The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

The next three occurrences of *sunergos* identify six fellowlaborers, of Paul.

I Thessalonians 3:2: And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister [*diakonos*] of God, and our fellowlabourer [*sunergos*] in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

Philemon 1: Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy *our* brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer [*sunergos*],

Philemon 24: Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers [*sunergos*].

The last uses of *sunergos* identify another important aspect of the life and commitment of fellowlaborers. Not only do they commit themselves "with" one another; they commit themselves "to" the truth."

III John 8: We therefore ought to receive such [as those who walk in the truth from verse four], that we might be fellowhelpers [*sunergos*] to the truth.

There is no preposition for “to” in the Greek. “Truth” is in the dative case. It functions like an indirect object. We are fellowlaborers to or for the truth. The truth is what makes a difference in the lives of God’s people, and our commitment to it is what demonstrates that we are fellowlaborers.

We saw that the Greek word *sunergos* is a great Biblical word. It describes people who are active in the furtherance of the gospel. They were comrades and coworkers who had proven themselves and were held in reputation among the believers.

It is a compound word made up of *sun*, a primary preposition denoting union, and *ergos*, the most generic word for work. As a prefix *sun* is often translated using “fellow,” “joint,” “together,” and “with” to show union. The union or unity of the fellows as well as the work they are unified in doing is what gives the word its impact.

As we tracked *sunergos* through the scriptures we found the following concerning fellowlaborers.

They were both male and female.

They acted in consort on the behalf of someone else.

They hazard their lives to protect and support the movement of the Word.

They make great fellowship coordinators.

They all had responsibility in the work of the ministry.

They know and enjoy their exalted position of blessing and protection in Christ.

The quality of their lives distinguishes them.

Their lives display a togetherness and unity of purpose.

Fellowlaborers do not rule over or exercise dominion over others.

They were full partners.

Their lives comfort and refresh one another.

Their service merited the thanks of all those to whom they ministered

They are dedicated to the truth.

Their commitment is not personality driven, but mission driven.

They help nurture joy through the encouragement of and relationship with others.

These are characteristics of Biblical fellowlaborers. I pray God they also become characteristics of our lives, as we do our utmost for His highest as fellowlaborers with God.

Affirmations: I take great comfort in fellow-workers. I do not rule over or exercise dominion over others.

Recommended Reading: Colossians 4.

Philippians 3:1: Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed [truly, certainly, surely] *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe.

Chapter three starts a new section in the structure of Philippians. This section (3:1-4:9) relates to contending together for the high calling with a view to our joy and crown. It is the corresponding or complimentary section to (1:12-30) which relates to contending together in the face of conflict and strife with joy and rejoicing. We will see many complimentary words and concepts occurring in this section that also occurred in 1:12-30.

We will see in the first three verses of chapter 3 how Paul's concern for the Philippians continues to motivate him to communicate everything they need to enjoy the fullness of joy that's available in Christ. In verse one Paul tells them why this is important enough for him to repeat himself. In verse two Paul, in the most emphatic and dramatic way, warns the Philippians to "beware of dogs, yes destructively evil-working, mutilating dogs." Then in verse three he gives them the reason for the warning and shows them what is at stake. When we identify with Christ Jesus, we are the true circumcision. We will know that we are walking as such by worshipping by the spirit of God, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh.

Verse one introduces the warning. "Finally," doesn't mean that this is the last thing Paul is going to handle. It means "henceforth" or "as to what remains" and introduces a new subject based upon what has already been presented. After everything we have discussed, let's proceed in this manner.

"My brethren" is a term of equality and camaraderie. This not only shows the respect he had for them, it also sweetens what he was about to subjoin. Paul had just called Epaphroditus his brother, and now he refers to all the Philippians in the same manner. It is in the vocative case which is direct address. He is both drawing them to him and addressing them directly. He directs them to rejoice in the lord which is a command in the imperative case. Joy is a choice we must make. Indeed, it is our duty to rejoice in the Lord.

Joy and rejoicing is a key concept in Philippians. "In the Lord" is a phrase that relates to serving in the household of God. The phrase "rejoice in the Lord" occurs here, in 4:4, and 4:10. Following on the examples of Jesus, Timothy, and Epaphroditus as servants who kept an attitude of humility and served without strife and selfish ambition, this command carries an implicit direction to serve their lord as a *doulos* who takes the greatest joy and rejoicing in the opportunity.

Paul wrote the same things that he told them when he was present with them. The "me" and the "you" in the verse shows us that Paul was acting for the benefit of the Philippians. Repeating himself was not grievous. It should never be tedious for a teacher to repeat himself. He who loves to teach must acknowledge the need to repeat things to encourage learning. The staple of Christian teaching must be old truths reiterated, and that it is not time to stop proclaiming them until all men have begun to practice them.

"Grievous" is the Greek word, *oknēros*. It only occurs three times in the KJV and the other two times it is translated "slothful." According to the Louw-Nida lexicon it pertains to shrinking from or hesitating to engage in something worthwhile, possibly implying lack of ambition or laziness. Paul didn't hesitate; he wasn't reluctant to do it, and he didn't find it tedious. To neglect to do it would have been slothful and wrong, because the Philippians needed it. We act on the behalf of others and for their benefit. If we are honest, we need the repetition as much as they do.

"Safe" indicates that Paul wanted the Philippians "free from danger." In order to ensure that, he continues, giving a very emphatic warning, which we will find in the following verses.

Affirmations: I act on the behalf of others and for their benefit. I keep those I serve free from danger.
Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 KJV.

Philippians 3:2: Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

Paul left Timothy at Ephesus, when he went into Macedonia, so that he might charge some that they teach no other doctrine (I Timothy 1:3). It comes back to the issue of truth, of doctrine. But there would be no issue at all, unless there were people pushing the wrong stuff. However, if it were just “wrong stuff,” it wouldn’t be so bad. It is not just wrong; it is detrimental. Paul says beware because there is danger involved.

The biggest danger to our liberty in Christ comes from both those who believe they have license to do anything and legalists who prescribe behavior in detail. Those given to license recruit others to join them in their illicit activity and use addiction to pleasure to control others. Legalists control with rules and regulations designed to breed condemnation and self-righteousness. Both sides attack our liberty, our freedom in Christ. Never let anyone beguile you of your freedom in Christ.

“Beware” in the Greek word, *bleptō*, one of the words meaning “to see.” A more literal translation would be “watch out for,” or “look out for.” In each of the three places in verse two “beware” is a present imperative. That means it’s a command to continue to do something already started. It’s continuous action; so, continue to beware don’t just beware once and then forget about it. The warning is so emphatic because the danger is so great.

There is an element of being “proactive” to it. Think of it like walking in a mine field. If one of them goes off, it’s already too late. Paul is telling them they are walking through a mine field. We must watch every step; we must look carefully at every place we put our feet. We do it ahead of time; we do it proactively. We must continually be aware of the danger and beware as we walk. It has the urgency of an APB (an All Points Bulletin). “Be on the look out for. . . !” You can look at this as a big dose of preventative medicine.

The Holy Spirit marks out this verse by loading it with figures. There are so many figures that it is difficult to retain them all in translation. Each translation sort of picks and chooses which ones are retained. We will see this as we read some different ones as they come up. This makes verse two very poignant, very pungent.

The repetition of “beware of” at the beginning of each of these phrases is the figure of speech anaphora. This triple play is a very big deal. Of course, the emphasis is on the command “**beware.**” The shortness of each phrase makes the anaphora even more powerful. The fact that each of the words following “Beware!” begin with a “k” also adds to the intensity. That’s not the proper figure alliteration which is the repetition of the same letter or syllable at the beginning of successive words. However, when combined with anaphora as it is here this is the form it takes by necessity.

In the Aramaic the word “safe” and the word “beware” come from the same root. That’s the figure of speech anadiplosis which is the repetition of the same word at end of one sentence and at the beginning of the next. (Eg. Genesis 1:1-2: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void. . .” Ephesians 6:13-14: “Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth. . .”). In the Aramaic it could read “. . .they caution you. Be cautious. . .”

The use of “dogs” is the figure hypocatastasis. It’s the most poignant of the figures of comparison. Don’t beware of people like dogs. Don’t beware of people who are dogs. Beware of dogs! Do you see how the force of the figures increased as we went through them? It refers to backbiters, vicious gossipers, those outside not allowed into the house. Here it is used of the legalistic Judeans. It was a term of distain used in Jewish culture of the Gentiles. So, for Paul to turn it around and use it on them was deliberate and very powerful.

“The concision” is another figure; it is a play on words. It’s a knock off of the word “circumcision.” “Circumcision” is the Greek word “*peritomē*.” “Concision” is the Greek word “*katatomē*.” It literally means a *cutting down into* and was used of hacking or chopping up sacrificial meat. It was also used in the LXX for the worshippers of Baal who cut themselves in I Kings 18:26. It is a contemptuous word for circumcision (a hyperbole for circumcision) with the connotation of *mutilation*. Then by metonymy for those who practice such mutilation. Paul uses similar disparaging language in Galatians 5:12.

Galatians 5:12: I would they were even cut off [*apokoptō*, cut themselves off] which trouble you.

A literal translation of this verse is: “I wish those seditious agitators who want to circumcise you would emasculate themselves.” “Cut off” here is a different word, but you get the idea of how Paul was so dead-set against these circumcision boys who always wanted to go around cutting everybody. But here he takes it a step further. He’s not referring here to just snipping off the end. He wants them to cut back much further. . . take the whole thing off. Later in Galatians 6:13 he says of these people that they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

Paul uses this very blunt language in Galatians because they were familiar with it and the religious bastardization of such ritual. Galatia was near Phrygia where they worshipped Cybele. It was the practice for priests and devout followers to mutilate themselves by castration. It’s as if Paul is implying that if you go this way in which circumcision is the beginning, you might as well go all the way to castration like these heathen priests.

Galatians 5:12: [NAS] Would that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.

Galatians 5:12b: [NEB] They had better go the whole way and make eunuchs of themselves.

Galatians 5:12: [Jerusalem Bible] Tell those who are disturbing you I would like to see the knife slip.

Let’s not forget the context in which we find this verse. We just finished reading about the excellent examples of Jesus, Timothy, and Epaphroditus, and they are juxtaposed with these three epithets: dogs [*kuon*], evil workers [*kakos ergatēs*], and the concision [*katatomē*]. Paul commits to Timothy and Epaphroditus, his fellowlaborers, but he warns the Philippians to avoid contact with these evil laborers at all costs.

Just who are these people of whom Paul is speaking... these dogs... these evil workers... these mutilators of the flesh. Paul is not speaking about three different groups of people. These are not distinct epithets; they overlap. In fact, they overlap so much that all three are referring to the same people. This is similar to a hendiatis, where three things are said, but one thing is meant. It could be translated: “Beware of dogs, yes destructively evil-working, mutilating dogs.” Calling someone who prides himself on good works a evil worker is like calling a surgeon a butcher or an opera singer a hog-caller

The Complete Jewish Bible (CJB) drops the anaphora and keeps the hendiatis: “beware of the dogs, those evildoers, the Mutilated!” The NIV retains both by substituting those for beware. That causes one to lose the impact of the warning and shift it to the people we need to beware of: “Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh.” The New International Reader’s Version drops the anaphora, adds the hendiatis and tries to explain the play on words regarding the circumcision: “Watch out for those dogs. They do evil things. When they circumcise, it is nothing more than a useless cutting of the body.” The New Living Translation adds a historic comment to explain the reason for Paul’s disparaging comment: “Watch out for those dogs, those people who do evil, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved.” That’s exactly what was going on. These circumcision boys were going around saying that in order to be saved they had to be circumcised. This is what was addressed at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15.

Acts 15:1-2: And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. ² When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

Paul doesn’t have issues with the Jews in general. He loves them. His heart was so big for them that it got him into trouble by going to Jerusalem when he should not have. He didn’t have a problem with circumcision either or with people wanting to continue to circumcise their sons. I circumcised by son. Not so he would get the blessing of the covenant or so that he could be saved later, but because of health reasons.

The people the Gentiles needed to be warned about and prepared to oppose were those who subverted fellowship saying that circumcision and other forms of legalistic practices in the flesh were necessary for salvation. In verse three we will see just the opposite. As we go through Philippians it is important to remember what we just read and keep the context fresh in our thinking.

Affirmations: I stay on guard. I choose liberty over legalism and license.

Recommended Reading: Galatians 5

Philippians 3:3:

For [gar] we [hēmeis] are [esmen] the circumcision, which worship [*latreuō*] ~~God in the spirit~~ [by the spirit of God], and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

“For” introduces the reason for the warning in verse two. This is what they stand in danger of losing if they do not watch out for themselves. This phrase “for we are” seems pretty commonplace in Paul’s epistles. It occurs 14 times in the KJV: Romans 8:24, For we are saved by hope. . . I Corinthians 3:9, For we are labourers together with God. . . I Corinthians 4:9, . . .for we are made a spectacle unto the world. . . . I Corinthians 10:17, . . .for we are all partakers of that one bread. II Corinthians 2:11, . . .for we are not ignorant of his devices. II Corinthians 2:15, For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ. . . II Corinthians 2:17, For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God. . . II Corinthians 10:14, . . .for we are come as far as to you. . . II Corinthians 13:9, For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong. . . Ephesians 2:10, For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. . . Ephesians 4:25, . . .for we are members one of another. Ephesians 5:30, For we are members of his body. . . Philippians 3:3, For we are the circumcision. . . Hebrews 3:14, For we are made partakers of Christ. . . .

However none of these other verses has the same three Greek words as are in Philippians 3:3. The three Greek words *hēmeis*, *gar*, and *esmen* do not appear together in any other New Testament verse (let alone appear in this order). Three of these have *gar* and *esti*, the verb to be: II Corinthians 2:15: For [gar] we are [esmen] unto God a sweet savour of Christ. . . II Corinthians 2:17: For [gar] we are [esmen] not as many, which corrupt the word of God. . . Ephesians 2:10: For [gar] we are [esmen] his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus. . . However, none of these three have the first person plural pronoun *hēmeis* in the verse. All Greek verbs carry an implied pronoun, and when the Greek language uses the pronouns in addition to the verb it is always emphatic.

Paul has no problem with circumcision. He says we are (present tense) the circumcision. Paul understood circumcision. Even in the Old Testament circumcision was not to be just a ceremonial act. It was to carry an appropriate attitude of heart. Of course, the attitude was not apparent in the boy being circumcised, but it was to be part of the parents’ responsibility to understand what circumcision was and to teach their son what it meant and how to live “circumcised lives.” Circumcision was an outward symbol of an internal attitude of heart.

Deuteronomy 10:16: Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.

Jeremiah 4:4: Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench *it*, because of the evil of your doings.

Jeremiah 9:25-26: NIV “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will punish all who are circumcised only in the flesh”²⁶ Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab and all who live in the desert in distant places. For all these nations are really uncircumcised, and even the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart.”

Paul also talked about it before in Romans 2.

Romans 2:28-29: For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: ²⁹ But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

True circumcision is the circumcision done by Christ, and is a matter of inward purification and consecration.

Colossians 2:10-11: And ye are complete in him [Christ], which is the head of all principality and power: ¹¹ In whom [Christ] also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.

Those who are the true circumcision render devotion to God from a pure heart. We will read that in just a moment in Philippians 3:3. We worship by the spirit of God. There is no other way. We can no longer worship by as Hebrews 9:14 says, “the dead works of the flesh.” This is what Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well was on its way. Well, we have it available to us today. It takes both spirit and truth or it’s no deal.

Affirmations: I am the true circumcision. I render devotion to God from a pure heart.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 AMP.

Philippians 3:3: For [gar] we [hēmeis] are [esmen] the circumcision, which **worship** [latreuō] ~~God in the spirit~~ **[by the spirit of God]**, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

We do not worship God in the external forms and fashions that they did in the Old Testament. Why, because God made something better for you and I. Circumcision is not true worship anymore. We don't have to light candles; we don't have to genuflect; we don't have to bring sin offerings, grain offerings, love offerings. We don't have to go through all that. Why? Because He said, "Here's my spirit, use it to worship me. I'm equipping you to do for me what I've always wanted." He made it available and simply asks us to do it.

Part of the reason to get spirit, besides what it does for us individually (I mean salvation is pretty neat, we know we're going to live forever, that's a nice benefit.) We get to give back to God that which He wants. . . that which He longs for. . . that which He gave His son to make available. God paid an awesome price so we could do so.

In the Old Testament they didn't have holy spirit; they were, with the exception of certain individuals who had spirit upon them, natural men of body and soul. They could not worship in spirit and in truth. They obeyed all the external forms of worship that God prescribed to show their reverence for Him. They showed their reverence by their obedience. They had no other means available to do so.

You and I today do not have to jump through those legalistic hoops. We do not have to do all the different things they were responsible to do. Our responsibility is very simple. We, too, show our reverence by our obedience... our obedience to worship God in spirit and in truth... our obedience to use the gift and walk by the spirit. All we have to do is worship God in spirit and in truth.

Not only did God put spirit within us as an incorruptible seed. We will never lose it; it will never decay or die; it will never alter or fade; it will never wear out. You do not even have to buy new batteries for it. Not only did He give it to us; He allows us to operate it at our freewill. He allows you and I to decide how much worship we give Him. He allows you and I to decide how much thankfulness we want to express. Whenever we want, we can use it. Whenever I want, I can give thanks well. I can speak of His mighty works. I can magnify Him. I can offer perfect praise. How? Simply by speaking in tongues. By worshipping Him in spirit and in truth.

God was involved in their praise in the Old Testament. He gave revelation to David and others who wrote it in Psalms and the people sang it back to Him in songs of praise. Now He gives us the words personally and specifically whenever we choose to do so. Whenever we want to worship Him in spirit and in truth, He provides the words. He gives the meaning and the substance to our hearts desires so that we can express to Him the praise and worship we so long to do. Our thankfulness, our adoration, our praise, our awesome respect for Him, He gives us the words to say.

We can communicate with Him. We can express the deepest longings of our hearts. And just so we know that He is always there. . . that we are always God-connected. . . He allows us to determine, when and where and how much and how often. It's all up to us. He still wants to be actively involved in our prayer and praise. Just so we know that He is always there, and we are always God-connected. He also allows us to determine when and where and how much and how often. He equipped us, and trusts us to use the spirit for our common good.

Speaking in tongues is the external manifestation in the senses realm of the internal reality of the presence and power of the holy spirit. Whenever we need a reminder of His presence or a demonstration of His power, we can speak in tongues. It's nice to do homage to God, but what He really wants is our total devotion and reverence. He wants us to use the spirit He has given us to give back to him the love and worship He longs for. He waited for it from creation until the Day of Pentecost.

While in Colorado on a break a lady came up to me and said it's kind of like us with our kids at Christmas. We give them \$50.00 so they have money to buy presents for us. And I said, "Oh, that's a cool way of thinking of it." God gives to us so that we can give back to Him. It's His heart's desire. He wants us to use the spirit He's given us to give Him the love and the worship that He longs for. Not only does He make that available, we get rewards for doing it. He just heaps blessing upon blessing, because everything we do in love gets rewarded. When we operate the spirit, we will get rewards for eternity. This is a win, win and keep on winning situation!

Not every believer before Pentecost had spirit. They could only worship through the senses realm. They had no other option. Today we all have holy spirit, and we can use it to do what God wants done.

Affirmations: I worship by the spirit of God. I speak in tongues to express the deepest longings of my heart.
Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 BSB.

Philippians 3:3: For [gar] we [hēmeis] are [esmen] the circumcision, which **worship** [latreuō] ~~God in the spirit~~ **[by the spirit of God]**, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Speaking in tongues is one kind of true worship in our administration. However, true worship is bigger than just speaking in tongues. True worship is operation of the manifestations of the spirit and obedience to what they direct us to do. According to I John 5:1-3, if we love God we keep His commandments. I Corinthians 13:1-3 states that without love nothing profits us not even the manifestations. So, we show God our love and devotion by our obedience.

According to the dictionary, worship is used not only of the reverent love and devotion we give God, but also the ceremonies, prayers, or other religious forms by which that love and devotion is expressed. But that's not the Biblical definition for our administration. We need to be able to distinguish between its current usage and its Biblical usage.

Hebrews 9:14 says, "the blood of Christ would purge our consciences from dead works to serve [latreuō, worship] the living God." With what the blood of Christ provided for us our conscience, our thinking patterns, the habitual ways in which we operate are changed from dead works to serve the living God. We no longer serve by doing dead works. Circumcision in the flesh is a dead work.

Dead works. . . that's bowing down, doing the sacrifices, all the hoops they had to jump through in the Old Testament, we don't have to do that anymore! He's made something better available, not dead works, not physical things that we do, but the operation of the spirit, the manifestations of the spirit. We no longer serve by dead works. Our worship is to transcend the external forms that were part of what they did in the Old Testament.

It's not about where we put the candles on the altar or whether we lift holy hands or whether you wear a shirt and tie. It's not about if I genuflect before I sit down. It's not about any other external form of worship. Worship in our administration is not done with the dead works of the senses realm. Worship in our administration is done through the spirit. There are nine ways to do that. What are they?

Speaking in tongues, interpretation, prophecy, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, discerning of spirits, faith, miracles, gifts of healing, it's all worship.

Now, if God told me to put on a coat and tie, and I obey—that's worship or service! Why, because I'm deferring to Him. You notice I haven't worn one this week because I don't prefer it, but if God told me to do it and I obeyed it would be worship. It would be me recognizing that God knows better than I do. When I defer to Him, acknowledging that He knows what's best, my loving obedience to that word of knowledge is worship. In other words, I'm showing God that I think He's smarter than I am. . . that He knows better than I do. I am using His spirit to accomplish His will. A heart of worship is a heart that's willing to do whatever He says.

So, when I operate word of knowledge, word of wisdom, discerning of spirits, that's worship. If He says heal somebody and I go heal them, that's worship. Why? Because God asked me to do it, and I'm doing what God wants done. That's worship. Remember what happened to the man at the temple gate Beautiful? When he got healed, he started walking and leaping and praising God, look at what that healing did. It was not only worship, but it inspired more worship! You revere His revelation and show your reverence and love by doing what He says. When God gives us revelation, we defer to Him, and do what He says. He's God. He knows more than I do, and when I acknowledge Him and defer to Him and obey the words of wisdom He gives that's true worship in spirit and in truth.

When we operate the spirit and defer to what He asks. . . when we respect His working in us and demonstrate it with obedience. . . when we develop the attitude of not my will but Thine be done, that's an attitude of worship that we should maintain.

He's so gracious to give us holy spirit, and let us use it. What an exciting way to live. We are worshipping God. Jesus demonstrated his reverence saying, "Not my will but yours be done." That's the attitude of worship that we should maintain. We live in such freedom, not with rules and regulations, but in loving relationship with our heavenly Father.

Sometimes going to fellowship is the right thing to do and sometimes it isn't. Sometimes we need to stay home and take care of what God has asked us to do. How do we know what to do? God tells us, and if He doesn't tell us, He allows us to use our brain and figure it out. But if He does tell us; if it's important enough for Him to say, "Hey, you need to stay home with your family tonight." Then our obeying is worshipping God. Our obeying is saying you know more about my life and you know best what I need and what my family needs. I'm deferring to You, that's worship. That's putting God where He should be in our lives! To let Him direct us, that's worship.

Operating the manifestations is true worship. When we work miracles or give a gift of healing it's an act of worship or service to God. When it comes to God, worship and service can't be separated. We are always free to do as He leads. We just obey, and we do not need to check it with anybody else, unless God says so.

If we are sitting in a fellowship meeting and someone teaches something that electrifies us and sets our heart free and we by inspired action and utterance say, "Hallelujah!" or raise our hands or shout, "Yea!" That's worship. But to carry out a prescribed, preprogrammed, choreographed, behavior by rote, just doesn't qualify.

Acts 27 is an account about Paul in the shipwreck. At the beginning of the incident God tells Paul to tell them not to go, but they go anyway. Paul tells them there would not only be loss of the ship but also of their lives. But God keeps interceding and the revelation changes.

Acts 27:23: For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am [present indicative], and whom I serve [*latreuō*, present indicative, also translated am serving or am worshipping],

We worship God by serving Him. We worship God by doing what He asks and Paul is going to tell them just what God told him to tell them. When it comes to God we really cannot separate worship and service. We worship by serving by giving of ourselves. Jesus Christ is the absolute greatest example of that.

Acts 27:24-25: Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. ²⁵ Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

God told me what to do, and I'm going to do it. Therefore, we are all going to make it safely to land. God's given me my life and because you're sailing with me, you're going to make it, too. His obedience to the revelation saying cut the lifeboats away we are not going to do that. . . is worship to God. He brought deliverance to all those people. Was Paul speaking in tongues during this ordeal? I imagine he was, I would have been after 14 days of not seeing the sun or the moon or anything else. He was also operating the other manifestations, too. His service or worship in this account includes getting every one of these people safely to shore. That was worship to God. God said do it and he did it.

So, when we read, "for we are the circumcision," Paul is saying, "The truth is in fact that we (the church of God) are the circumcision." However, Paul isn't saying everyone in the church of God comprises this "circumcision." Just like not everyone in the Old Testament who had the sign in the flesh had the sign in their hearts, not everyone in the New Testament Church of God has it either. Well then, who are the circumcision? Who does Paul identify as "the true circumcision?" These wonderful folks are identified not by the absence of their foreskin, but by another triumphant trio of characteristics. They worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. These are the marks of a true believer, not what you see in their foreskin.

There is a polysyndeton joining and emphasizing each of these three parts. You can identify the true circumcision by these three things. That's a trilogy that sets the standard for our administration. It says [1] we worship God in spirit.

The word worship there is the Greek word *latreuō*. It is always used properly of God, never of man. On two occasions it is used improperly of worshipping devils. This kind of worship is reserved for and provided to the One True God. It is loving and serving Him with our whole heart soul, mind and strength.

Acts 24:14: But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship [*latreuō*] I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.

"Believing" is a present participle which means that the action of believing goes on the same time as the main verb in the sentence which is "to worship." We worship and serve God as we believe the truth.

Romans 1:9: For God is my witness, whom I serve [*latreuō*] with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

Let God be our witness, too, because we serve Him with our spirit in the gospel of his Son and make intercession by praying for one another.

II Timothy 1:3: I thank God, whom I serve [*latreuō*] from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day.

We are to serve with pure conscience, operating the spirit. Well, that's the first point. The entire context sets worshipping God by spirit and worshipping God by the flesh in opposition to one another. The true circumcision worship God by spirit and have no confidence in the flesh. But I'm getting ahead of myself

Affirmations: I serve with pure conscience, operating the spirit. I operate the spirit and defer to what God asks of me.
Recommended Reading: Acts 27.

Philippians 3:3: For [*gar*] we [*hēmeis*] are [*esmen*] the circumcision, which worship [*latreuō*] ~~God in the spirit~~ [by the spirit of God], and **rejoice in Christ Jesus**, and have no confidence in the flesh.

The second part of the trilogy that identifies the true circumcision is that they “rejoice in Christ Jesus.” The Greek word in verse three is not *chairō* the one used in verse 1. The Greek word for “rejoice” in verse 3 is *kauchaomai*, meaning to glory or boast. *Kauchaomai* expresses with great vividness the high level of life the believer should live “exulting in Christ Jesus.” It contributes to the triumphant lifestyle we should enjoy. It alludes to a joy emphatically triumphant; such as would find its parody in a proud and eager boastfulness.

We worship God and we rejoice in Christ Jesus; we boast of Christ Jesus; we glory in all Christ Jesus has accomplished for us. He is the object of our exultation. We brag about our big brother, and what he has done for us and what he can do for them.

He can save to the uttermost, and we’ll talk to anybody about it. He’s provided forgiveness through the shedding of his blood and healing through his broken body. We minister it to people. We talk about him. We brag about him! His name is always on our lips! He’s the cause for rejoicing, but our worship is for God alone! Jesus Christ did not come to stand between us and God, he came to bring us closer together. We have access to God. He can save to the uttermost. He’s provided forgiveness. He’s provided reconciliation.

We rejoice in the ability that we have because of what he has done! He is always on our lips. We speak about him with passion and pride. We emulate him, and do our absolute best to walk in his steps. We consider the things that he endured, and are strengthened through his presence in our lives. We declare that we can do all things through him who is our living lord and savior.

Yes, we have every reason to glory for we have a Lord worth boasting about. Afterall he is the procuring cause of all our blessings, and the source of all our comfort. We make our boast in Christ Jesus alone, not in Moses and the law also which was the ground of the boasting of those destructively evil-working, mutilating dogs.

Romans 15:17: I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

Indeed, if we glory at all for any reason let us glory in the Lord (I Corinthians 1:31; II Corinthians 10:17). In Galatians 6:14 we have a still more distinctive expression, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” To glory in Christ is something different than even to believe and to trust in Him; it expresses a deep sense of privilege, both in present thankfulness and in future hope. Those who have a true sense of themselves, and a genuine appreciation of Christ, will not glory in themselves, in their wisdom, strength, riches, or righteousness, but in Christ, in his wisdom and strength, in his riches and righteousness, and in his person and grace only.

“In Christ Jesus,” when it is the proper text, means in our union or identification with Christ Jesus. We rejoice in the fact that we are as he is. He became as we were so we could become as he is. That happened in our new birth. We rejoice in what he did, not what we do, because we are weak in the flesh. Therefore, we have no confidence in it. That’s the next point.

Affirmations: I rejoice in Christ Jesus. I speak about Jesus with passion and pride.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 CSB.

Philippians 3:3: For [*gar*] we [*hēmeis*] are [*esmen*] the circumcision, which worship [*latreuō*] ~~God in the spirit~~ [by the spirit of God], and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and **have no confidence in the flesh**.

Thirdly, we have no confidence in the flesh, in our natural abilities. Our strength and confidence come not from our natural ability, but from our ability to walk by the spirit. Of course, we use our natural ability and everything else we have to bring glory to God. But our performance is not the basis of our confidence. Like that last three people I ministered to were healed so you better come see me now while I'm on a roll. Or the last two people I ministered to died so maybe you want to go to somebody else now.

John 6:63 says, "the flesh profits nothing." Having confidence in the flesh causes us to accept or value one man as being better than another on the basis of appearance. All men are equal in God's eyes and they should be equal in our eyes, too.

There are many things going on in the guise of Christianity which are nothing more than having confidence in the flesh and really has nothing to do with true Biblical Christianity. There are a lot of people deceiving and being deceived. Not every experience being promoted as being genuine really is. We can't be afraid to condemn the counterfeit. In Paul's day people misrepresented Christianity and were promoting all kinds of stuff that he had to stand against. Why would we think that our day and time would be any different? There are no works of the flesh that are profitable for salvation. Everything we need has been totally and completely provided by Christ.

Galatians 3:2-3: This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ³

Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

There is nothing we can do in the flesh that will perfect us. We are already perfect spiritually. We were not saved by our good works, and we will not be brought to maturity by our own power. That's why our confidence is in not in the flesh. Our confidence is in God, and we operate all the manifestations. We rejoice in what Jesus Christ did for us. His name is on our lips, and we don't have any confidence in the flesh. Paul had every reason to have confidence in the flesh, but he didn't allow himself to. That's the way in which we are supposed to live.

I'm not going to have a good day today because I read my Bible. I'm not going to have a good day today because I did my lift list. I'm not going to have a good day today because I spent time in prayer. I love to do those things, and they sure bring great profit to my life. Yes, those things are great, and I sure encourage you to do them. . . but what happens on the days we don't. Are we doomed to have a bad day? Is our confidence in our performance, or in the fact that we are God's kid and we know He is going to take care of us whether we read our Bible or we do not. So, we get up late, is our whole day doomed to calamity.

Our confidence is in who we are in Christ. God is my Dad; Jesus Christ is my big brother; I have holy spirit power, and I'm part of the greatest family there has ever been. My confidence comes from knowing that God works within me to will and to do of His good pleasure. I operate the spirit to glorify Him. . . to worship Him.

Philippians 4:13 doesn't say that you can do all things through Christ which strengthens you. Paul said he could do it. However, it gives me the right to say the same thing, because I have the same God as my Father and the same spirit to operate. But I still have to say it. I have to boldly declare it just like Paul did.

I used to hear people quote the first part of the verse all the time. It started to bother me because I never heard them quote the whole thing. They would say, "I can do all things." That's a great confession. But why stop there? Why not quote the entire verse? "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." Now that declaration is rejoicing in Christ Jesus and having no confidence in the flesh. That declaration brings the focus where it needs to be. . . not on me and my ability, but on the Christ in me that I operate to be more than a conqueror. That reminds me of Jeremiah 9.

Jeremiah 9:23-24: Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: ²⁴ But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

We delight not in our brains, our bodies, or our bucks. We delight in the fact that we understand and know Him, that He is the Lord that exercises lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth. Our confidence is not in the flesh, but in Him. Paul's concern for the Philippians continues to motivate him to communicate everything they need to enjoy the fullness of what they have in Christ. In verse one Paul introduces the warning giving reasons for why he is repeating himself. In verse two Paul, in the most emphatic and dramatic way, warns the Philippians to "beware of dogs, yes destructively evil-working, mutilating dogs." Then in verse three he gives them the reason for the warning. This is what is at stake.

When we identify with Christ Jesus, we are the true circumcision. We will know that we are walking as such by worshipping by the spirit of God, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh. In our next session we will see all the reasons Paul gives for why he could have confidence in the flesh. We will also see that he did not allow them to cause him to fall into the error of doing so. God bless you.

Affirmations: I have holy spirit power. I'm part of the greatest family there has ever been.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 CJB.

Philippians 3:4: Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust [have confidence] in the flesh, I more:

We saw in Philippians 3:1-3 the identifying characteristics of those whom Paul described as the true circumcision in our administration. Those three characteristics were that they (#1) worshipped God by the spirit (#2) they rejoiced, boasted or gloried in Christ Jesus, and (#3) they had no confidence in the flesh. In Philippians 3:4-11 Paul elaborates on the point of having “no confidence in the flesh.” As we go through those verses, we’ll see an unconditional dedication to Christ in verses 4-9, and an unquenchable desire to know Christ in verses 10-11.

In verse four (above) Paul asserts his claim that no one has more reason for confidence in the flesh than he does. Verses 5-6 list the reasons Paul could and should have confidence in the flesh.

Philippians 3:5-6: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

In verses 7-8a Paul refutes any reliance on the reasons he just gave.

Philippians 3:7-8a: But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung...

Then Paul gives the reason why he refutes any the confidence in the flesh.

Philippians 3:8b-11: . . .[Why?] that I may win Christ, ⁹ And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: ¹⁰ That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; ¹¹ If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

“Though” (in verse 4) is the Greek word *kaiper*. It is a compound word made up of *kai*, “and,” and *per*, “very much” or “however much.” “I” is the pronoun “*egō*” in both places in verse three. Like I showed you previously where Paul said “we are the circumcision,” whenever the pronoun is used it is emphatic. Paul is emphasizing himself and his claim.

“Have confidence” is a present participle in Greek, but it’s past tense in Aramaic. If it were present tense it would have to be in the sense of “I could have” indicating the possibility. That’s why the word “might” was added. In reality Paul didn’t have confidence in the flesh. That’s why I’d go with the past tense here, “. . . I had confidence in the flesh.”

“*Kai*,” when used to mean “also,” precedes the concept it emphasizes in Greek. In this verse it emphasizes “the flesh.” Usually in English it follows the element it emphasizes. It would read, “Though I had confidence in the flesh also.”

Then beginning with the phrase “If any man thinketh. . .” and going through the end of six is a parenthesis. This parenthesis is also an antithesis. As a parenthesis it can be logically read over and still retain the context. Though I had confidence in the flesh also, but was gain to me I counted loss on account of Christ. This section also sets up an antithesis in which Paul speaks of his gains. He contrasts “his gains as a man and an Israelite which included the hope of resurrection and righteousness of course” for what he now has as a Christian which is far better. Paul is contrasting his gains as an Israelite with his gains as a Christian. In this comparison what he now has wins in a landslide.

Affirmations: I have no reason to have confidence in the flesh. What was gain to me I counted loss on account of Christ.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 CEV.

Philippians 3:5-6: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Paul lists seven reasons that he could have confidence in the flesh. This is the figure of speech mimesis which is when one mimics the words another typically would use “to delicately but yet acutely direct him aright.” It is a way to use what someone typically says to emphasize a point. These were all claims Paul heard over and over again from those trying to derive authority for their action from their background or pedigree. He understood why they wanted to keep what they had already gained in Judaism. But he also knew that they could not have grasped all they had in Christ for it was far better.

1. **“Circumcised the eighth day:”** This means he was born a Jew and circumcised according to the covenant of Abraham and in exact compliance with the law of Moses, too (Genesis 17:12 and Leviticus 12:3). Paul affirms that, in his case, the law had been literally complied with and, consequently, all the advantage which could be derived from such a compliance, was his.
2. **“Of the stock [nation] of Israel:”** Paul was descended from the patriarch Israel, and able to trace his genealogy back as far as any Jew could. This made him one of God’s chosen people by birth.
3. **“Of the tribe of Benjamin:”** Paul’s lineage was documentable which many of the Judeans of his day could not do because of intermarriage. Benjamin was the tribe of the first king, whose name the apostle bore. Benjamin was the one tribe faithful to the house of Judah in the apostasy of the rest.
4. **“An Hebrew of the Hebrews:”** When a plural genitive noun follows the noun in singular it shows the superlative degree. Paul was an Hebrew by both his parents, with no admixture of Gentile blood. On this fact — that no one of his ancestors had been a proselyte, or of Gentile extraction — a Jew would pride himself much. Paul was entitled to all the advantage which could be derived from it.
5. **“As touching the law, a Pharisee:”** The Pharisees were distinguished among the Jewish sects for their rigid adherence to the letter of the law, and had endeavored to guard it from the possibility of violation by throwing around it a vast body of traditions, which they considered to be equally binding with the written law. So, Paul knew not only the law, but also the oral traditions. Paul was proud of this particular aspect of his background. He brought it up twice in Acts saying in Acts 23:6 “I am a Pharisee, and the son of Pharisees;” and in Acts 26:5 “according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.”
6. **“Concerning zeal, persecuting the church:”** Zeal was an honorable tradition among the Jews dating back to Phinehas (Numbers 25:7-13; Psalms 106:30,31; Deuteronomy 13:6-11; I Kings 18:40,41; 19:10,14; Romans 10:2). Paul was recognized by his cronies in Jerusalem for his ardor in embracing, pursuing and defending Judaism. According to Galatians 1:14 Paul profited in the Jews’ religion above many of his peers because he was exceedingly more zealous of the traditions of the fathers.
7. **“Touching the righteousness which is in the law, [Greek texts add *ginomai*, becoming] blameless:”** “Becoming faultless” is an idiom meaning working or endeavoring to become faultless. Paul was working toward being faultless with respect to his walk by the law. So were Zacharias and Elizabeth according to Luke 1:6. When it came to performing the law, this was the absolute best that anyone could do.

“Seven” is a perfect number. He could have added more things, but these seven were certainly representative. They are listed without a conjunction. That is the figure asyndeton, no conjunctions. The emphasis with an asyndeton is on what follows the list not the list itself. In this instance it’s what Paul did concerning those things he just listed, those things which were gained by him from practicing Judaism.

Affirmations: I am zealous for the Lord. I am blameless.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 ESV.

Philippians 3:7,8a: But what things were gain to me, those I counted [*hēgeomai*] loss [*zēmia*] for [on account of] Christ. ⁸ Yea doubtless, and I count [*hēgeomai*] all things [those previously listed and any other one might want to add] but loss for [on account of] the excellency [*huperechō*] of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for [on account of] whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count [*hēgeomai*] them but dung...

Those very things that Paul just listed in verses 5-6. . . those things that made him stand out among his brethren in Pharisaic Judaism, is what Paul now refutes. Do you think that Paul missed all the things that were gain to him in the past? I don't think so. He calls them dung. "Dung" refers to table scraps, leftovers, garbage, and excretion. When they come every Tuesday to take my trash, I never miss it. I'm never sorry it leaves. I feel the same way when I flush the toilet. Paul never missed this stuff. Christ had a profound effect on him. Paul's life was dramatically changed, and once he put his shoulder to the wheel he never looked back. That was his freewill decision, and it was one he made gladly.

There is a progression in verses 7-8. Paul moves from considering (1) whatever was gain to him as loss, to (2) regarding all things as loss, to (3) actually suffering the loss of all things and (4) in the end he regards them all (present tense) as dung!

Hēgeomai is the Greek word that came up three times in chapter two. It comes up three times in these two verses. It was in the exhortation in 2:3 to esteem, *hēgeomai*, others better than ourselves. In 2:6 Jesus also thought, *hēgeomai*, that it was not robbery to be equal with God. In 2:25 Paul supposed, *hēgeomai*, that it was necessary to send Epaphroditus to the Philippians. Paul says twice in 3:7 and again in 3:8 that he counted, *hēgeomai*, those things that were gain as loss on account of Christ.

The great lesson here is to follow Paul's example. We must consider, deem, account, or think properly, too. However, *hēgeomai*, also carries the connotation of leading or ruling over. It flavors the thinking with an element of control. We must exercise controlled thinking on account of Christ. Dedication to Christ demands controlled thinking. That's a key concept in Philippians. "Yea doubtless" is the Greek word *menounge* which is used to emphasize or correct or both. It could be translated "moreover on the contrary," "yea rather" or "yes indeed." It only occurs four times in the New Testament. Let's look at the others.

Luke 11:27-28: And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. ²⁸ But he said, **Yea rather**, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

Jesus emphatically corrects what this lady has said and keeps the focus where he wants it.

Romans 9:19-20: Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? ²⁰ **Nay but**, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Again, Paul corrects the improper thinking and keeps the focus where it should be.

Romans 10:18: But I say, Have they not heard? **Yes verily**, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

This Greek word for "gain" is used only three times in the New Testament. We found it in the complimentary section in 1:21 referring to the furtherance of the gospel. It is used in 3:7 regarding Paul's success in Pharisaic Judaism. It is also used in Titus 1:11 of those who taught things which they should not have, "for filthy lucre's [gain's] sake." Many people do what they do because of the advantage they perceive that they will receive from it. There are things in the flesh that we have learned to rely on and trust in. They have brought us gain. Many people have difficulty giving those things up. Paul gives reasons why he did which will be helpful to us should we want to choose to follow his example. They are listed in 8-11, and we'll handle them tomorrow.

The phrase "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" could be translated "the exceedingly superior knowledge pertaining to Christ Jesus my Lord." "Excellency" is a verb that means to extend beyond the prescribed bounds or to stretch out beyond measure. This knowledge of Christ is superior or more excellent than what he knew before. It extends out beyond the things he just listed and covers so many more things than what he briefly is handling here. "Of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" is a dual genitive which brings emphasis to the last item, "Christ Jesus my Lord." Not only is this knowledge profound, the "my" makes it personal and intimate. Paul isn't taking about a laundry list of information but details concerning his intimate family relationship.

Like Paul, we all need an unconditional dedication to Christ; he was totally committed and had burned his bridges behind him. Everything that was gain to him, he counted as loss. He had learned an important lesson — nothing is as important as Christ.

Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). He also said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). An unconditional dedication to Christ will allow us to keep our focus where it should be.

Affirmations: Christ has a profound effect on me. Everything that was gain to me, I counted as loss.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 ETH.

Philippians 3:8b:

...do count them but dung, that [*hina*, in order that] I may win [gain, verb form of gain] Christ,

When we are born again we gain ever so much. Everything that Christ accomplished is ours. The “the excellency **of** the knowledge **of** Christ Jesus my Lord” goes way beyond anything the Jews had available to them. It overflows into all areas of life. This gain is called in Ephesians 3:8 “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” The things that were gain to Paul before his encounter on the road to Damascus he now counts us dung because he has the unsearchable riches of Christ to compare them to. He also provides us with 3 reasons he did so.

The first is in verse 8: “that I may win [gain] Christ.” The second is in verse 9: “to be found in him [Christ], not having mine own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God by faith.” The third is in verse 10 and has 3 parts of its own: “That he might know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship [*koinōnia*] of his sufferings.”

“Winning” or gaining Christ corresponds to the previous loss for Christ.

Philippians 3:9: And be found [discovered, eureka!] in him [identified with him], not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law [This is what he gained in the Jew’s religion.], but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Why did he want to gain Christ and be found in him? Why get born again and identify with Christ?

Philippians 3:10-11: That I may know [the genitive article with the infinitive [to know] shows result in Greek] him, and the power [*dunamis*] of his resurrection, and the fellowship [*koinōnia*] of his sufferings [*pathēma*, passion – the things experienced both good and bad], being made conformable unto his death; ¹¹ If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Verse 11 is spoken from a Jewish point to view. The Pharisees believed in righteousness and resurrection. They wanted to be in the resurrection of the just. Paul wants to skip the resurrections all together and enjoy the out resurrection with the church of God. “Resurrection” is *exanastasis* a Greek word occurring only here and referring to the raising of the dead regarding those in the church of God.

The antithesis in verse 9 is called an enantiosis because the contrast is expressed by affirmatives and negatives. Do you see the contrast in righteousness? One’s from the law and one’s from Christ. Do you see Paul’s unquenchable desire to know Christ? As an outsider an Israelite, Paul had to make some tough decisions. His conversion to Christianity totally changed his life. His unquenchable desire to know Christ and what Christ made available through his accomplished works blew Paul’s mind. His prayer for all of God’s people was that they would be able to comprehend with him the breadth, and length, and depth, and height and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:18-19).

Paul had every reason to be confident in the flesh, but he refused to allow himself to be. His confidence came from his new birth and his identification with Christ. We, too must not only be born again but identify fully with Christ’s power and passion. We must have unconditional dedication to Christ and unquenchable desire to know him. Then we must add to that an unstoppable determination to follow Christ. That’s what we will get into in our next lesson.

Affirmations: I identify with Christ’s power and passion. I have the righteousness of God by faith.
Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 GNT.

Philippians 3:12-14: Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after [*diōkō*], if [so] that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of [by] Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth [*epekteinomai*] unto those things which are before, ¹⁴ I press [*diōkō*] toward the mark [*skopos*] for the prize [*brabeion*] of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Previously we worked Philippians 3:4-11. We saw an unconditional dedication to Christ in verses 4-9, and an unquenchable desire to know Christ in verses 10-11. Next, in verses 12-14 we'll see an unstoppable determination to follow Christ. We'll see that Paul was placed in the race, and he will allow nothing to stop him from finishing his course with joy.

Philippians 3:12-14 contains a beautiful athletic analogy the purpose of which is to show the strenuous effort and focus with which Paul moved the Word. This is not the first time Paul uses the athletic analogy in Philippians. It first came up in Philippians 1:27 when Paul told them to “strive together” as athletes for the faith of the gospel. Paul told them in 1:30 that they were in the “same conflict” or athletic contest that he was. In 2:16 Paul exhorts them to hold forth the word of life as he has so they too would not “run in vain.”

The words “follow after” are one Greek word, *diōkō*. It means “to follow with haste, and presumably with intensity of effort, in order to catch up with (Loew-Nida).” The words “reaching forth” are from the Greek word, *epekteinomai*, which is found only here in the New Testament and means “to stretch oneself forward to,” as a runner would stretch forward to the finish line. The word “press” is again, *diōkō*, which Thayer says means “to run swiftly in order to catch some person or thing” and aptly portrays a runner on a racecourse. The word “mark,” (*skopos*), is the mark the racer looks at, the goal, the end in view. Thus, *skopos* portrays the finish line. The word “prize” (*brabeion*) is the award to the victor in the contest.

It is possible that this athletic analogy refers to the chariot race. The chariot races would have been popular among the Philippians since they were Roman citizens, many of whom had served in the Roman army. However, the footrace more perfectly fits the analogy.

The nature of the chariot race requires the driver of the chariot to know what is going on behind him in order to avoid serious wrecks. The speed of the chariots and the presence of other chariots made fatal wrecks a very real possibility. John Lightfoot points out that “not looking back, which showed a right temper in a runner, would be fatal to the charioteer.”

The man in the footrace must push his mind to look ahead at the goal and forget what is behind, while the charioteer must divide his attention between the course ahead of him and the rest of the chariots behind him. There was an example in the Olympics of someone, whom I don't remember, who had the race all but won and at the last moment looked back to see someone else pass him and break the tape.

The word picture in Philippians 3:12-14 is of men straining to win a foot race, an especially long race where the runner must sustain a winning frame of mind over a greater period of time. We cannot run our race like the hare of the “Tortoise and the Hare” fable, in which the hare lost focus, didn't see the challenge, and took a nap during the race. Although Paul urges us on to perfection, he was admittedly not completely there himself, just fully committed to be in its pursuit. Part of the process is maintaining a proper attitude — a mind ready, willing and seeking after the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul expresses his determination to do whatever it takes to attain this glorious goal. It is interesting that “that I may apprehend” (verse 12) more literally means to take hold of *with decisive initiative or* eager self-interest, to grasp something in a firm, forceful manner; or simply “grabbed.” It is almost as if Christ grabbed him by the scruff of the neck out of the herd of humanity, jerking him out to be perfected and become an apostle. At the very least, this suggests God will take determined, even stern measures to give us this wonderful opportunity. In no way is He passively just letting things happen as He observes His creation, and Paul reflects the same sense of strenuous action to fulfill his part.

Affirmations: I am determined to follow Christ. I will finish my course with joy.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 MIT.

Philippians 3:12: Not as though I had already attained [*lambanō*], either were already perfect: but I follow after [*diōkō*; to pursue or to seek after eagerly, or earnestly endeavor to acquire], if [so] that I may apprehend [*katalambanō*] that for which also I am apprehended [*katalambanō*] of [by] Christ Jesus.

Paul was committed to do whatever he needed in order to fully follow Christ. You can see his focused attitude in verses 12-14. “Attained” is the Aramaic word meaning to receive or gain the victory. “Perfect” refers to being fully mature which will culminate at the gathering together, the out-resurrection he just talked about. Our race, our contest, our fight is not over yet; we’re in the middle of it. Christ finished his course and placed us in ours. That’s why we “follow after.”

“Follow after” is the Greek word *diōkō*. In this athletic context, it means to run or pursue the prize. “Apprehend” is the Greek word *katalambanō*. We just had *lambanō* in the word “attained.” Now it steps up in intensity to *katalambanō*.

The *kata* prefix is used with *lambanō*, “receive” or “take” in three ways. First, it adds intensity to the taking and could be translated “seize,” “grasp with force,” “overpower,” or “gain control over.” Second, it adds suddenness to the taking and could be translated “catch,” “overtake” or “come on.” Third, it can add certainty to the taking and could be translated “attain,” “win,” or “make one’s own.” It means to seize, overtake or win as in a battle or race. Paul wanted to lay his hands on it. He wanted to grab hold of it. Christ won us; he grabbed hold of us and placed us in the race, and now we run so that we can win and grab hold of the prize awaiting us in the future. The use of *katalambanō* in two different moods is the figure polyptoton, and since *lambanō* also occurs, it is also a paregmenon.

“That for which” is the prepositional phrase *epi hos*. It can be translated “because” or “for which.” “Because” is more common in Paul’s epistles. It indicates that Paul wants to lay hold of Christ *because* Christ had already taken hold of him. That’s how the ESV translates it, “but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.” Translating it this way indicates the *ground* on which Paul can pursue Christ. We do it because he did it. “For which” would mean that Christ laid hold of Paul *for the purpose of* Paul pursuing him. That’s how the NAS version translates that last phrase, “. . . But I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.” We run the race because we recognize that’s why Christ put us in the race. This was the purpose he did what he did, so we can do what we ought to do. Though both translations work, the latter one seems to be better here. Paul’s point is not merely that it is because of Christ that we can seek Him, but that Christ saved us *for this purpose*.

Yes, it’s true. The reason for our confidence in making the Word our own is because Christ Jesus has made us his own. The standard or criterion for our laying hold of spiritual things is that Christ Jesus laid hold on us. We can get it because he got it. When Christ seized us, grabbed us, took hold of us we were given everything we would ever need. Now we can grab hold of those things with the same certainty that Christ has grabbed hold of us.

One reason people quit running this race is because they forget who grabbed them and put them in the race in the first place. When we remember what he did for us, we have reason to keep running. Hebrews 12:3 says to “consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” When we stop thinking about what he went through and stop allowing the example of his obedience to God to seize our hearts and capture our allegiance, we wimp out! He grabbed us and jerked us out of the muck and mire of the world, we can all, too easily, grow weary and faint.

The theme of Philippians is *joyfully serving together*, and when people begin to lose a heart of service, they slow down in the race. Instead of enjoying the run and putting their all into it, they run without any intention to grabbing hold of Christ. . . they run without desiring to follow in his steps. . . to tread where his feet had trod. They lose sight of the prize, the reward at the end of the race. I know we all may have different images and mind pictures that spur us on. For me it’s my longing to see him and be like him. I can’t wait to be like him when I see him face to face. What a reward!

Another reason people don’t run to obtain is because they don’t value the reward. God forbid that ever happen to us. We must not fail to recognize what Christ did for us. We must not lose our joy to serve. We must esteem the reward worthy of the effort.

Philippians 3:13: Brethren, I count [*logizomai*, logically conclude] not myself to have apprehended [*katalambanō*]: but *this* one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,
¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

“Brethren,” this is direct address. He wants to get their attention again so they do not miss what he is saying. “I myself” is, of course, emphatic. Paul is using himself as an example again. Remember, that is a key concept in Philippians. Paul was focused on the one thing, Christ. Christ was his goal. Our identification with him keeps us in our lane and on course. Furthermore, Paul tells us what we are going to need to do in order to reach that goal. **We must deal with the past effectively, reach for the future deliberately, all while we press for the mark resolutely.**

Affirmations: Christ grabbed hold of me. I’m running my race.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 MGI.

Philippians 3:13: Brethren, I count [*logizomai*, logically conclude] not myself to have apprehended [*katalambanō*]: but *this* one thing *I do*, **forgetting those things which are behind**, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

We all have a “past.” On the light side there are many good memories. Friends and family provide many good times. Sharing love, working together, helping others, moving the Word, walking by the spirit. . . They all make good memories. It’s great to recall them. . . relive them. . . to tune them in and play them back. It brings smiles to our faces and joy to our hearts. We can certainly thank God for the good memories.

Unfortunately, the past also has a dark side. The past can be a prison. Prisons don’t all have iron bars. You see, along with the good memories, there are the memories of times of failure, hurts, rejection, and disappointments. . . memories that haunt us. They can cause us to see ourselves as failures. . . make us think we are unable to break the patterns of failure in our lives.

We don’t have to be plagued by our past. We don’t have to be trapped by the things that have been. We don’t need to remain in the mold our past attempts to freeze us into. Philippians shows us that there are basically three things we must do to effectively conquer our past.

- (1) The first is that we must recognize that the past is *past*. It is over and we can’t change anything that has happened. It doesn’t matter what it was; there’s nothing we can do about it.
- (2) The second thing that we must do is recognize the satanic strategy in reminding us of the past. His strategy is to keep us living there. He wants to make the past such a big deal that we can’t get passed it. We mustn’t let it discourage us or defeat us. We can’t run forward when we are looking backward.
- (3) The third thing we must recognize is that while we can’t change the past, we can change the way we respond to it. We cannot erase it from our memories, but we can move beyond it. We can divest the past of its power to control us.

Forgetting what is behind. . . :

Paul is saying that the way to deal with the past is to forget it. However, forgetting doesn’t mean erasing it from our memory. In verses 5-6 Paul just listed things from his past. He didn’t actually forget them, but he didn’t allow them to control him now.

God created our minds to be incredibly powerful. Even though we might not remember something consciously, sub-consciously it is always there. Every hurt, every disappointment, every failure, every word, act, and situation is embedded forever in our minds. When Paul speaks about forgetting the past, he means that we must forget it in the sense that we no longer allow it to control our lives. Unless we do, we will always be on a leash. We will be tethered. We will attempt to move forward in life, only to be snatched back time and again.

In the *Living Sacrifices* teaching series hour seven I share on *Release From Your Prisons*. It is the absolute will of God for every person to be released from every prison or fetter, which encases and binds. Christ is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him, as Hebrews 7:25 says. There is no work of the adversary in anyone’s life that cannot be demolished and discarded. God can change anyone’s life. No matter how badly people have been afflicted in the past, God can deliver them.

If we want to get out of our prisons today, we must immediately change our thinking about our situation. We must divest the past of its power and change our subject of focus. As we change our thinking, we will draw mental patterns for the things we want in our lives, which in turn will dispel and root out those things we do not want.

Affirmations: I deal with the past effectively. I forgetting what is behind.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 MSG.

Philippians 3:13: Brethren, I count [*logizomai*, conclude logically] not myself to have apprehended [*katalambanō*]: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

We must not only forget the past; we must deliberately reach for the future, “reaching forth unto those things which are before.” “Behind” and “before” are opposites representing the past and the future. It’s important that we refute the past and embrace the future. The best way to embrace the future is with positive excitement.

Disengaging from the past allows for positive anticipation for the future. Dwelling on the past makes one negative, and reaching for the future encourages one to be positive. People who remain pessimistic end up bound by that pattern of thought. Pessimism programs failure. We must look to the future with hope. Some people have trouble looking ahead with hope, because they keep looking back to mope. Eager anticipation for all that life holds must replace those negative patterns of thought which bind us.

That’s not enough though. We must also replace passivism with activism. Discouragement and depression can be so exhausting that we don’t want to do anything. Inactivity precludes reaching out for the future. Reaching requires action. Reaching, stretching out indicates action, extreme action. We must develop a willingness and inclination to act.

Christian living requires a commitment to do something. . . to follow Jesus. It’s nice to be a Christian; having holy spirit means we are Christians. There is activity involved in living out our faith. It’s likened to a walk, a race, and a fight for a reason. Here in Philippians the analogy is of a race. Running is an action term that carries certain associations with it. We are to run to win (I Corinthians 9:24).

I Corinthians 9:24-27: Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. ²⁵ And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to **obtain a corruptible crown**; but we an incorruptible. ²⁶ I therefore so run, **not as uncertainly**; so fight I, not as one **that beateth the air**: ²⁷ But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

We should not merely be content with being in the race. We must commit to give our all. Christ has blazed the trail; he has established the course. We simply commit to follow him. Christ is the goal and Christ is the prize.

Remember, we saw an unconditional dedication to Christ in verses 4-9, and an unquenchable desire to know Christ in verses 10-11. Here in verses 12-14 we see an unstoppable determination to follow Christ. Nothing is going to deter Paul; he’s running to win, giving his all.

I press toward the mark [the goal, target, or finish line] for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The Word says we press toward the mark forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to that which is before. We have already looked at the past/future behind/before dichotomy. Those participles (forgetting and reaching forth) are both present tense. Their action occurs at the same time as the main verb in verse 14, “to press.” “Press” is the same word as “follow after” in verse 12. It’s the Greek word *diōkō*, “to run.” In this athletic context, it means to run or pursue the prize. That takes a determined attitude. The world is programmed by its god to stop us. We must be unstoppable. We must be relentless in our pursuit of Christ.

The context here is clearly part of the athletic analogy. Paul uses athletics to describe our walk in Christ. We are in a race holding forth the Word of life. The purpose of the athletic analogy is to emphasize the strenuous effort and focus required to do what we have been called to do.

Like Paul, we must have an unconditional dedication to Christ, and unquenchable desire to know Christ personally and intimately, and an unstoppable determination to follow Christ fully, whatever it takes. Christ is our goal. Let’s run to win and keep on running until we cross the finish line.

Affirmations: I reach for the future deliberately. I press for the mark resolutely.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 NAS.

Philippians 3:15: Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

We previously covered Philippians 3:12-14. That great athletic analogy set before us what we are to do as believers. When we were born again, we were placed in a race which will continue until the gathering together. Now that we are busy running, how are we supposed to ensure that we do it correctly. Philippians 3:15-21 tells us how we are to walk by the same rule, likemindedly.

Paul just presented himself as the example of a runner, and he urges the Philippians to follow it. They are to let the same mind be in them that he has. We find several of the same words in this section that was in the previous. We will see how he was minded; let us be like-minded. . . Let us set our mind and hearts upon Christ, as he did.

“Perfect” is the Greek word *teleios*. It means “perfect,” “mature,” or “fully initiated.” In verse 12 we encountered “*teleioō*,” the verb form. In verse 12 Paul said that he was not already perfect, but here in verse 15 he says, “let us (including himself) as many as be perfect.” It can only be that there are two usages of the word. One usage is the perfection that happens only at return, which is the usage in verse 12. (Remember verse 11 refers to the out resurrection from the dead.) We see this one clearly in Ephesians 4:13.

Ephesians 4:13: Till [the gathering together when] we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [*teleios*] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: Here in Philippians 3:15 it is talking about faithful ones, who are committed and sold out to live the mystery that Paul teaches to the fully initiated ones. This is the concept of *teleios* that is expressed in I Corinthians 2:6.

I Corinthians 2:6: Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

These are the ones Paul is speaking of in verse 15. “As many as are perfect” are those who were initiated into the teaching of the mystery. They are the ones directed to “be thus minded.” That included all the believers in Philippi. “Let be minded” is the Greek word *phroneō*, and “thus” is *touto*. The Greek phrase means “to think this way” or “to think these thoughts.” This refers back to the previous verses. We are to think like Paul did in verses 13-14. We are to “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

“Otherwise” is *heterōs*, meaning “of a different kind.” If one thinks in a manner other than pressing “toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” then God should reveal their erroneous thinking unto them. “This” is again *touto*, pointing once again back to pressing “toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” If we get our thoughts off the goal that they should be on, God promises to let us know.

That doesn’t mean that every time we stop pressing toward the mark, God will give us revelation. There are several ways this can occur.

1. God can do it by revelation like He did with Paul regarding going to Jerusalem (Acts 20:22).
2. Another believer can reprove and correct according to the Word of God like Paul did for Peter in Galatians 2:11ff.
3. While reading the Word or hearing someone teach the Word, we may realize we are otherwise minded (II Timothy 3:16).
4. It can happen while listening to music (Colossians 3:16) and many other ways, too.

Likemindedness is a key concept in Philippians. Philippians is a reproof epistle. It is designed to bring us back to the right doctrine and practice of the mystery of godliness. This is central to the epistle. This section concerns itself with contending together for the high calling with a view to our joy and crown. To do it together we must be likeminded. God promises to reveal to us what we need so that we can move ahead likemindedly. When we get off on our own agendas God can bring us back to Him and His agenda.

Affirmations: I’m initiated into the mystery. If I stop pressing toward the mark, God will correct me.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 NIV.

Philippians 3:16:

Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

“Nevertheless” is not the typical adversative *alla*. It is *plēn*, “moreover,” from *pleon*, more. It is an adverb used as a conjunction. Although predominately used to restrict a previous statement in which case it is usually translated *nevertheless, however, or in spite of that*, it is also used to break off a discussion and point out parenthetically what was important in it, in which case it is usually translated *in any case, however, only one thing*. That’s how it functions here. It closes the discussion on pressing for the mark and points out the important element. I like the “in any case” translation.

What is it to which “we have already attained.” It’s the new birth. The important thing is that we **all** are born again and in the race, so. . . “let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” Remember from the salutation that “**all**” occurs ten times when addressing the Philippians. We all are born again and we should all walk by the same rule and mind the same thing.

“Walk” is the Greek word *stoicheō*, it means to proceed in a row as the march of a soldier. It is not the typical word for walk, *peripateō*, which occurs 96 times in the New Testament. *Stoicheō* only occurs five times, and it is the one that means to “walk in a line, to proceed under another’s direction.”¹ It carries a more orderly connotation according to a detailed standard, as in carrying out orders or following directions. It was sometimes used to describe soldiers who proceeded in response to the directions of their commanding officer. It connotes orderliness and direction and is always used of pursuing a course deliberately chosen. We need to let God call cadence. We need to step up to the standard, the rule that God has established.

“Rule” is the Greek word, *kanōn*. It was used properly of a rod or straight piece of rounded wood to which anything is fastened to keep it straight. It was also used to describe various measuring devices like a measuring rod, a carpenter’s line or measuring tape. It is also an athletic term which fits right into the analogy here. As an athletic term it was used of the measure of a leap as in the Olympic games and as the lane boundaries in a race. If people ran out of their lane they were disqualified.

Some of the Greek texts omit the end of the verse which reads, “rule, let us mind the same thing.” It would then read: “Whereunto we have attained, let us walk on in the same (the measure of knowledge already attained).” Therefore, whatever degree of knowledge of Christ, and the truths of his Gospel, is attained to, let it be retained, and not departed from. Although *kanōn* is omitted in some Greek texts of Philippians 3:16. It does occur in 4 other verses.

Galatians 6:16: And as many as walk according to this rule [*kanōn*], peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

II Corinthians 10:13-16: But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but according to the measure of the rule [*kanōn*] which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. ¹⁴ For we stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ: ¹⁵ Not boasting of things without *our* measure, *that is*, of other men’s labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule [*kanōn*] abundantly, ¹⁶ To preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man’s line of things [*kanōn*] made ready to our hand.

What is our only rule for faith and practice? It’s the Word of God. Paul is specifically giving them the rule to follow. Philippians is the rule by which they can run the race together. They all need to follow the same rule which Paul is giving them. They also need to mind, *phroneō*, the same thing. This is the third time it occurs in verses 15-16. That is a key concept in Philippians. It occurs one more time in verse 19.

Affirmations: I walk by the same rule. The Word of God is my only rule for faith and practice.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 NLT.

Philippians 3:17-19: Brethren, be **followers together** [*summimētēs*] of me, and mark them which walk [*peripateō*] so as ye have us for an ensample. [Why?] ¹⁸ (For many walk [*peripateō*] [Aramaic adds “otherwise”], of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

“Followers together” is the Greek word *summimētēs*, and it occurs only here in the NT and nowhere else in all of Greek literature as far as I can tell. The related root word *mimētēs* occurs seven times. It means “to copy,” “imitate” or “emulate,” but it does not mean “to duplicate” in the full sense of that term. It is not that Paul wants them to become *clones*, but instead to live like he did. The *sun* prefix indicates the manner in which the church at Philippi is to imitate Paul. They are to imitate him *together*, in a *unified* way.

Although Paul asks others to imitate him, he is not egotistical or arrogant. He ultimately, wanted them to follow Christ.

I Corinthians 11:1: Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

Paul is not urging mindless following, but informed imitation of the Christlikeness found in those who follow Christ. “Walk” in verse 17 is the normal word, *peripateō*. It refers to one’s custom or manner of life. . . how one conducts one’s life. “Mark” is *skopeō*, the verb form of *skopos* we saw in verse 14. Thayer says it means “to fix one’s eyes upon” or “to direct one’s attention to.” It means to observe and keep as a target or goal.

Paul tells the Philippians to imitate him and mark out for an example those who walk as he did. Then they would have a goal to shoot for in how to personally conduct their own lives. Verses 18-19 are a parenthesis, the figure parembolē, which is complete in itself. These verses are also another figure, aetiologia which gives the reason or shows the cause for verse 17. It is not that the people referred to in verses 18-19 were simply not helpful; they were indeed harmful. They were enemies whether or not they knew it or liked it. They were enemies of the cross of Christ.

“Cross” is a metalepsis, a double metonymy. “Cross” is put for “death” which is put for “the accomplishments of Christ’s death.” If we don’t heed Paul’s exhortation to follow his example we may follow in the steps of these others who were enemies of the cross of Christ. God forbid that ever happen. It won’t when we do as we ought. We must mind the things of the Word of God and not earthly things.

Our goal is the high calling; their goal or end is destruction. “Belly” is put by synecdoche for the whole person. They serve themselves not Christ. It is important to not be self-serving. Keeping our eyes on the goal, Christ will keep us safe and running properly in our lane. These believers gloried in things that they should have been ashamed of.

Verse 19 is in reverse order. This is the figure of speech hysteron-proteron. It starts at the end and ends where it should start. First, they mind earthly things. Second, they begin to boast or take glory in those things. Third, they became their own god. Fourth, they ended in destruction, not in the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Verses 18-19 contrast the example of Paul with what these others were doing. As a parenthesis complete in itself, we can read around it and keep the flow of the context.

Philippians 3:17, 20, 21: Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk [*peripateō*] so as ye have us for an ensample. [Why?] . . . ²⁰ For our conversation [*politeuma*] is in heaven [This world is not our home!]; from whence ~~also~~ [not in Aramaic] we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: ²¹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

“Conversation,” is the Greek word, *politeuma*, “citizenship.” It is the noun form of the verb we encountered in 1:27, *politeuomai*, to conduct oneself as a citizen. “Look for” is the Greek word, *apekdechomai*, meaning “to assiduously and patiently wait for.” We are going to get new bodies like unto Christ’s glorious body. What a day that will be.

We saw how Philippians three closes with Paul encouraging the Philippians to join him in running the race. They should use him as an example and walk by the same rule and mind the same thing. Our citizenship is in heaven from whence we look for our savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He shall change our vile bodies and fashion them like unto his glorious body. What a glorious future awaits us. Let’s waste no time, but run together, with all the fervor we can muster. The rewards will certainly be worth it.

Affirmations: I am a follower of Paul. I am a citizen of heaven.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 3 TPT.

Philippians 4:1-2: Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved. ² I beseech Euodias, and [I] beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind [*phroneō*] in the Lord.

Although we are beginning a new chapter now, we are still in the same section of our structure: contending together for the high calling with a view to our joy and crown. In chapter four we will find that our joy and crown are the people we win to the lord and labor together with in advancing the gospel.

We must realize that there is much more than what this world has to offer. We live our hundred or so years now, but what about eternity. We should live now in the light of eternity. That way, we get the best of both worlds. Not only do we lay up rewards for the future, but we enjoy the blessing of running our race for and with Christ now.

We need a focus beyond this world. Our race doesn't end until the gathering together. Then, we will receive our new bodies that are eternal in scope and magnitude. Right now, we need a hope that is strong enough to bring us through the tough times. We are citizens of heaven, and we look for Christ's return and our transformation.

Philippians 4:1 is such a tender plea. Here at the beginning of chapter four Paul repeats his great love and longing for the Philippians. Paul's heart is so big for the Philippians. The bond which knit Paul and these Philippians together is set forth very simply and beautifully. Paul addresses them without apostolic authority. He puts himself on their level, and speaks to them as brethren, brethren who were dearly beloved and longed for. Not only were they his joy, but they who, by their faithfulness, have become his joy, will on that one day in the future, be his "crown."

"Dearly beloved" is the Greek word *agapētos*. It occurs twice at the beginning and at the end. It encircles the verse; that's the figure epanadiplosis. From beginning to end their fondness is enveloped in the love of God. "Longed for" is *epipothētos* which means greatly desired. This is its only occurrence. Paul used this unique word to describe his intense affection for the Philippians. The phrase "*dearly beloved and longed for*" explains why the Philippians' welfare and happiness were so important to Paul.

"Joy and crown" are singular. Every word before them was plural. Paul is treating the whole group as one. They are his joy and his crown. Sticking with the athletic analogy "crown" is the garland, the sign of victory at the Grecian olympic games that Paul applies to the apostolic race and struggle of which he had spoken previously. The Philippians were both his earthly pleasure and his heavenly reward. "Joy" is a fruit of the spirit, as such it is associated with the fulfillment of one's ministry. The operating of the ministry of reconciliation produces joy now and accrues crowns for the future.

I Thessalonians 2:19-20: For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? ²⁰ For ye are our glory and joy.

"Stand fast" is the same word that was in 1:27. "Standing fast" is part of the responsibility of conducting oneself as a citizen. "In the lord" is the phrase that shows commitment and service in the household. The practical application of what we just learned regarding running the race is to stand fast and do it. Certainly, "standing fast" carries with it the idea of resistance against antagonistic force, but the main thrust is continuous steadfastness in our union with Jesus Christ. Let's exert ourselves and stay in our lane and run for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Euodias and Syntyche are both women, and Paul addresses them directly and asks them to be of the same mind, to think the same thoughts. "In the lord" again shows commitment and service in the household. It indicates not only where we are to stand in union with Christ, but also how we are to do it with commitment and in service in God's household.

Affirmations: I standfast in the Lord. I love and long for my fellow believers.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 4 KJV.

Philippians 4:3: And I intreat [ask] thee also, true [genuine or authentic, the adjective form of the word used of Timothy in 2:20] yokefellow, help those women [Euodias and Syntyche] which laboured with me [*sunathleō*] in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life.

“Yokefellow” is the Greek word *suzugos*. It is a word Paul uses to address a particular associate who labored with him in the gospel. It is used of a *consort, comrade, colleague, or partner*. This could be a proper name or just a nickname for a colleague. The adjective true would seem to indicate that it probably more of a play on words using his name rather than the name itself. It would be similar to calling Onesimus “profitable” in Philemon 11.

However, since it occurs in the midst of three other proper names, it may well be a proper name. It is masculine and probably is one of the bishops or deacons addressed in 1:1. Paul knew him and understood that he was responsible for the oversight of the women he had just instructed and would be able to help them get likeminded.

Whatever the case, “yokefellow” indicates one who is closely linked with another in some activity. . . someone who shares the burden of labor and the hardship of occasion together. This fits with *sunathleō* which means to toil together with someone in a struggle, implying opposition and/or competition (Louw-Nida). *Sunathleō* is part of the athletic analogy. Thayer says it means to strive at the same time as another. It was used previously in 1:27. These are the only two places it occurs in the Greek New Testament. Gingrich says it means “to fight beside someone.”

Sunathleō was a powerful word, which provoked powerful mind pictures. It comes from the root *athleō* which is also used only twice in the Greek New Testament both in II Timothy 2:5. *Athleō* means to “engage in a contest, contend in public games, or contend for a prize” (Thayer). Both are part of the athletic allegory, but the *sun* prefix adds the “together” element that so typifies the mystery. *Sunathleō* is used to describe gladiatorial conflict. *Sunathleō* was used to describe gladiators who fought side by side against beasts in the arena. That’s how Paul felt about those who labored with him in the gospel. It was like they were in gladiatorial combat. There’s a bit of irony involved in its use here in 4:3, because instead of fighting the beasts together like they had in the past, they have turned to fight with each other. These women who had fought with Paul for the advancement of the gospel are now fighting each other. What’s wrong with this picture?

Paul addresses this problem only after handling the importance of humility in chapter two. After handling the general principle in 2:3 that nothing be done through strife or vainglory and after using examples of the humility of Jesus, Timothy, Epaphroditus, and himself, he speaks directly to these women. Not only does he address them specifically and emphatically (repeating “I beseech” two times), he also directs his true yokefellow to make sure they “kiss and make up.” Life is too short and our work is too important to be at odds with one another.

“Help” is the Greek word *sullambanō*, which means to take and hold together. My mind picture is of a group hug, but it may more accurately be pictured as a scrum in rugby. Everyone with their arms entangled supporting one another feverishly working together to accomplish their goal.

“Clement” is only mentioned here in the New Testament. Roman Catholic tradition claims he was a bishop of Rome at the end of the first century who wrote an epistle bearing his name, but there is no way to verify that claim. “Fellowlaborers,” is *sunergos*. We handled this word before showing the special relationship that Paul had with those who worked with him in the advancement of the gospel.

“Book of life” is the scroll of the living. This referred to a roll of names that was kept for specific purposes. It was almost a universal custom among men who lived in cities to keep a register of its citizens names. From these rolls a man could easily obtain title to property and claim privileges and immunities common to all citizens of the city. This was done in Roman, Greek and Judean cities. The Roman rolls were revised every five years in Rome and Italy and less frequently in the Provinces. It was one of these mandated enrollments that brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem at the time of Jesus’ birth.

Citizenship was both a great honor and responsibility. Losing one’s citizenship was a disgrace and implied some treasonous act. When one committed such an offense, his name was blotted from the rolls and taken out of the book of life. There was an entire Psalm that addresses this idea.

Psalm 87:1-7: His foundation *is* in the holy mountains. ² The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

³ Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah. ⁴ I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this *man* was born there. ⁵ And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. ⁶ The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, *that this man* was born there. Selah. ⁷ As well the singers as the players on instruments *shall be there*: all my springs *are* in thee.

Although the phrase “book of life” is mentioned only here and in Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27; 22:19, it is referred to in the following scriptures: Exodus 32:32-33; Psalms 69:28; 87:6; Isaiah 4:3; Ezekiel 13:9; Daniel 12:1; Malachi 3:16; Luke 10:20.

God is the one who keeps the scroll, and we are honored to have our names in it. As citizens of heaven, let us stand fast and accept the privileges and responsibilities that come with it.

Affirmations: My name is in the book of life. I enjoy the privileges and responsibilities of being a citizen of heaven.

Recommended Reading: Scriptures regarding the book of life or Philippians 4 AMP.

James 1:25: But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Philippians 4:4-9 are the last verses in the section of scripture entitled contending together for the high calling with a view to our joy and crown. I call Philippians 4:4-9, which finishes this section of the structure, “Practice Makes Perfect.” I chose that title because practice is what the whole epistle of Philippians is about. It has very little to do with doctrine, and a lot to do with what we do, our practice.

The purpose of practice is to perfect. “Perfect” in this context means mature. Repeatedly practicing what we ought causes us to mature in the faith. If we want to grow up, we must learn to practice what’s right on our own on a regular basis. As we keep doing it, we mature.

Maturing means we’re better off today than we were yesterday. We’re closer to the image of Christ that’s been put inside. We’ve let more of it come out, and that’s what we want to do. So, the more we practice, the more we do what the Word says, the more mature we’ll be. Of course, that also means if we don’t do it, we won’t mature. We never change. We’ll never develop like we want to.

As if we haven’t heard enough already, Paul returns to the topics of joy and controlling our thinking in these verses 4-9. In verses 4-5, we’re told to rejoice and to put up with one another. In 5-6, we’re told to find peace through prayer. In 7-8, we’re told to control our thinking. Finally, in verse 9 we are told to do all those things, which ye have learned, and received, and heard, and seen in Paul.

We can look at verses 6-7 as how not to think, and verses 8-9 as how to think, but unless we actually do them like James 1:25 teaches we only deceive ourselves and forfeit our blessing. If we don’t want to deceive ourselves and forfeit our blessing, we must do what the Word says. That’s when we grow up. We mature when we do what the Word says.

The mystery of godliness of our administration has both, equally important, doctrinal and practical elements. Although it has both doctrinal and practical elements, Philippians is primarily concerned with correcting the failure of practically applying the mystery. People weren’t living the way they should have been in light of what they knew. They knew much of the doctrinal wording of the mystery, but they weren’t living according to it. Part of the greatness of the practical application of the mystery of godliness is that if one of us can do it we all can do it.

The overall underlying theme of the epistle is *joyfully serving together* using examples from the lives of Christ, Timothy, Epaphroditus, and Paul. The key concepts (likemindedness, joy, obedience/example, and the furtherance of the gospel) are all related to overall theme of *joy in serving*. Joy in serving is the common thread that runs through the entire epistle.

Too often when we think of knowledge, we think of something that is just in our head. This knowledge, *gnōsis*, refers to something we have learned by experience by an exertion of effort. This is knowledge that has changed us. We act differently because of what we learned, it had an impact on us, and we are changed. Our knowledge of the Word is much bigger than just book knowledge, it is not just something that has lodged itself in our memory, but something that has changed our lives for the better. We become more like Christ. When the Word of God is practiced it transforms us.

Affirmations: I am transformed by the Word of God. I continue in the perfect law of liberty.
Recommended Reading: Philippians 4 BSB.

Philippians 4:4: Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

“Rejoice in the Lord.” Sounds familiar doesn’t it. Paul repeats and emphasizes the exhortation of chapter 3, verse 1, which says: “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” Philippians 4:4 repeats it. Not only does he repeat it, it’s a command. It’s in the imperative mood, but he says it twice. He says it at the beginning, and he says it again at the end.

It’s rejoice at the beginning and rejoice the end. That’s the figure *epanadiplosis*. It’s called “encircling” in plain English. “Encircling” — that’s what the word “rejoice” does. It begins and ends the verse; it hedges it in. The figure marks off this verse, so this verse is unique. There’s another figure, too, *paeanismos*. In simple English it’s “exultation.” This verse is almost the definition of the figure. It commands the expression of lively or triumphant joy. Bullinger defines the figure as an expression of feeling by calling on others to rejoice.

It begins with “Rejoice in the Lord.” “In the Lord” is another very important phrase in Philippians. It occurs 9 times. In chapter 4, it’s in verse 1, which says, “. . . stand fast in the Lord.” It’s in verse 2. We just read it: “. . . be of the same mind in the Lord.” It’s here in verse 4: “Rejoice in the Lord,” and it’s in verse 10. Paul said, “But I rejoiced in the Lord . . .” In the Lord recognizes his lordship and our servanthood. It emphasizes commitment to serve in the household. That’s what the phrase “in the Lord” means. We are not to rejoice in ourselves. It’s not in our natural ability we are to rejoice. We’re to rejoice in the Lord and the privilege we have to serve in the household, the privilege He’s given us to be ministers in the Gospel. We rejoice in the Lord and his faithfulness. We don’t rejoice in what’s going on around us. We rejoice in the Lord as sometimes what’s going on around us is not always something to rejoice about.

It says, “alway,” and that’s just so amazing. Alway. Of course, it’s in the singular. That’s just old English. We would say “always.” There is no time that’s not covered. It’s always time to rejoice! That can be quite a pill to swallow. There’s sometimes we don’t feel like rejoicing. Sometimes we want to be downright bummed out. Sometimes we want to do other things. But it’s a command. There’s no time where that shouldn’t happen.

In I Thessalonians 5:14-21 there are 14 imperatives in a row. The 7th in verse 16 is: “Rejoice evermore.” Evermore, that’s sort of like always, isn’t it? We’re supposed to rejoice evermore, and joy is an encouraging fruit. Then verse 18 says “In everything, give thanks. Now, it doesn’t say **for** every thing give thanks. It says **in** everything. There are things that happen that we may not be directly thankful for, but even in those situations, we can be thankful. There’s always something to be thankful about. We have our salvation. We have holy spirit. We can operate manifestations. God has a way out of the situation. There’s always something to be thankful for just like there’s always something to rejoice about if we get back to the least common denominator of what God has done for us. If we realize what we have in the Lord, what He’s given us the privilege to do, we can always rejoice. There’s always a reason to rejoice if we’ll push ourselves. We’re supposed to do it all the time, evermore, always. In everything that goes on, we can choose that kind of positive mental attitude. We can choose the frame of mind that will cause us to rejoice, that will cause us to be thankful.

Affirmations: I rejoice in the Lord. I give thanks in everything.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 4 CSB.

Nehemiah 8:10: Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for *this* day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

Now, when it comes to the fruit of the spirit, joy is an encouraging fruit primarily designed for the individual. Joy encourages us in our walk with God. The joy of the Lord is our strength. It provides resilience to our lives. God wants our joy to be full, for we will be encouraged in our labor when it is (John 15:11:16:24; I John 1:4; and II John 12).

All the fruit are beneficial in all aspects of life. But as the diagram to the right illustrates, love, joy, and peace are basically for the individual. When working with others, longsuffering, gentleness, and goodness come in. Faith, meekness, and temperance are intended to foster results.

	Activating	Encouraging	Guarding
<i>For the individual</i>	LOVE	JOY	PEACE
<i>For ministering to others</i>	LONG-SUFFERING	GENTLENESS, KINDNESS	GOODNESS
<i>For bringing forth results</i>	FAITH, BELIEVING, FAITHFULNESS	MEEKNESS	TEMPERANCE, SELF-CONTROL

Love, longsuffering, and faith are activating or appropriating fruit. Love activates. It energizes our believing and our hope. When I am working with myself, it's the love I have for God and the love I have for myself that gets me to do what the Word says. If I will love, I will do what the Word says. Likewise, longsuffering allows us to persevere when working with people. It bears the offenses and injuries of others without retaliation. It provides impetus to continue to work with people despite their imperfections and shortcomings. Faith allows us to appropriate results as we labor together with God. It shows us faithful, trustworthy, and reliable as workers together with God. It provides an aggressive perseverance so that we remain faithful doing the Word of God so that we might receive His promises.

Joy, gentleness and meekness are all encouraging fruit. Joy encourages me. Gentleness encourages other people, and meekness encourages results. There may be no one else in our lives that encourages us. Others may point out everything about us that we need to improve, but we need to at least encourage ourselves. It says, "Rejoice in the Lord." If we do, we will always be encouraged. If we look to God and what He's made available in the Christ Jesus our Lord then we will be encouraged by what He's given us to do. **Gentleness or kindness** is a quality that encourages others when we work with them. It is the opposite of harshness and abruptness. It is not sentimentality and is demonstrated by our willingness to actively seek occasions to bless others. **Meekness** encourages results. Without meekness we will not receive the things of God. It is a disposition of mind that encourages us to discover, appreciate, and ponder truth. It encourages us to accept the words and ways of God without arguing or stubbornly resisting. It allows for training and development and fosters growth.

Finally, peace, goodness, and temperance are guarding fruit. Peace will guard my heart if I let it rule (Colossians 3:15). Goodness is a guarding fruit when working with others. It's our goodness that protects us when helping people because there's nothing they can say about us. If we're good, if we don't do the wrong thing, if we're always doing what we should be doing, people can't pick at us and say, "I'm not going to believe what you do because this is who you are." They can decide not to do what we say, but they can't use us as an excuse for doing so if we've been good. Then, temperance or self control, guards results. Often, people lose their healing because of this, because they've got no self control. They come, they get healed, perfectly healed. They go home. The devil will bring up the same thing. They'll have a pain where they used to have a pain, and they won't control their mind, and everything will come back on them. This is what guards results — our self control.

Those are the fruit of the spirit, and that's how they work. Joy is an encouraging fruit. God wants us encouraged. He wants us to rejoice. It's His will. Let's get on board with this.

Affirmations: The joy of the LORD is my strength. I operate manifestations to produce fruit of the spirit.
Recommended Reading: Nehemiah 8.

I Samuel 30:6:

And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

David was distressed, and there was no one around who wanted to encourage him so he encouraged himself. Like David, we must decide to encourage ourselves. Joy is a decision we make, and we can control that. If we need to encourage ourselves, we can do it. That's what this fruit of joy is all about. We can rejoice and be thankful because of what Christ has done for us regardless of what is going on around us.

Paul tells us to rejoice in the Lord, and he will tell us again. Although it says, "again I say, rejoice" the word "say" is in the future tense. Many translations read "I will say again." That's how it reads in the Greek. "Rejoice in the Lord, and I will say again, rejoice." That's emphatic. Rejoice, and I'm going to say it again, rejoice! That establishes it. So, do it.

For Paul, joy was bound up with salvation and the relationship he enjoyed with God. It wasn't based upon how things were going in his life and ministry because if that was the case, in the latter part of his ministry he would have never been joyful. He was in prison. He had blown it. He had made mistakes, but he still had tremendous joy because God still worked with him. He still had opportunities to move the Word. He still had fellow laborers. God still opened doors of utterance for him, and he was able to do it, but his joy was bound up with his salvation, the relationship he enjoyed with God, and exercising his ministry.

In verses 4-7, Paul really keys on stress-free living. Everybody's going to have pressure. We can have pressure, but we don't have to have stress. When pressure has a negative effect on us, it becomes stress. Pressure can be a good thing. Pressure can make us better. Pressure can make us focus. Pressure can bring out the best in us. It's that way in sports and the performing arts. The first key to stress-free living is to rejoice in the Lord.

Philippians 4:4 is a *paenismos*. It's from the Greek *paen* which means "physician," and *nismos* which is a chant. The chanting of the *paen* is what is originally meant, and the *paen* was first applied to the physician, then it was broadened to any savior or deliverer. Then it was used of a song of deliverance — a triumph after victory. *Paen* was originally used of a physician because he was the one who helped fix things. Then it was used of anybody who fixed things like a savior or a deliverer, and then it became used of the song extolling that savior or deliverer. Then Bullinger says it was used of any solemn song of triumph, and then he continues to say "so that the figure consists of a calling on others to rejoice over something instead of merely stating the thing as a matter of fact, thus emphasizing and calling attention to it." He just doesn't say, "Okay, I said it four or five times now, but I'm going to say it again—rejoice." He's calling on others to rejoice.

That "something" is what he has just mentioned. What's he rejoicing about? What's the big deal here? Well, he just said our names were written in the Book of Life. If I'd have worked this before time, I would've put verse 4 with verses 1-3 because it really closes up that section. That's what we can rejoice about. That's what we had the right to sing about. It's also rejoicing in the gladiatorial battle won, how the true yokefellow will help Euodias and Syntyche to get it together again. See, these were not just songs of triumph. They were also songs before the battle. They were war cries or battle songs. They were sung before going out.

We usually sing Philippians 4:4 as a round. We ought to do it as a battle cry, a war song. As such it should be sung before and after the victory. It's a song of rejoicing, and I believe it's in celebration of the gladiatorial contest he just talked about — how he's rejoicing in the fact that, "Hey, Clement and Euodias and Syntyche were with me. We fought the good fight in the arena. We had each other's back. Yokefellow, get in there and fix this problem that they have. Hey! Our names are written in the Book of Life," and then he breaks into this chorus, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." How unique that we sing that as a song! In my mind, it's just so cool because that's what it is. It's a war cry. It's a battle song, and it could be sung going into battle, and it can be sung after the battle is over, in rejoicing. So that's what God had planned here. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again we will say. . ." We could sing it in rounds. We should not stop singing it. We can just go over and over again. We can take different parts. That's what a battle song is.

Affirmations: I sing my war cry! I encourage myself when I need to.

Recommended Reading: I Samuel 30.

Philippians 4:5: Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

“Let your moderation be known. . .” is another command. Moderation is the Greek word, *epieikēs*, which means equitable, yielding, gentle, mild, forbearing, fair, and reasonable. It’s used in the sense of being truly fair by relaxing overly strict standards in order to keep the “spirit of the law.” It describes true equity that appropriately fulfills the spirit, not just the letter, of the law. It connotes to being actively considerate, charitable on insignificant points, or yielding on insignificant matters. It’s translated “gentleness” and used of Jesus in II Corinthians 10:1 which says “Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.”

I can’t think of any other word translated so differently. Almost every version has a different rendering. King James says “moderation.” The New American says “forbearing spirit.” The NIV says “gentleness.” The NLT says “considerate.” The ESV says “reasonableness.” The NAS says “gentle spirit.” The CSB says “graciousness.” The ASV says “forbearance.” The DRB says “modesty.” The NLT says “considerate.” The MGI says, “meekness.” The MRD says “humility.” The BBE is “gentle behavior,” and then the MIT — the idiomatic translation — is “unflappable, reasonable.”

So, it’s got a broad application. I just chuckle that it is translated so differently, but it epitomizes true Christian character. You’ve probably heard it said, “Nothing is so strong as gentleness, and nothing is so gentle as real strength.” That’s when we have this quality in our character, it does so much for us. Since we’ve been benefited from God’s forbearance and gentleness, we should show the same quality in our dealings with others. So, let it be known.

“Forbearance” is described by Aristotle as “that which is not only just but even better than justice,” and that was because there are occasions when strict insistence on the law would lead to injustice. Forbearance recognizes those occasions and knows how to act when they arise. Think about Jesus with the woman taken in adultery in John 8. The strict letter of the law was to stone her, but he had this quality, what one translator called — the “sweet, reasonableness of Christ.” He went beyond the letter of the law and got to the heart of God. That’s what we want to do with moderation, with our forbearance. We want to exemplify this quality so it will be known. We want to show the character of Christ in us. We want to live like he lived, and this is one of the great characteristics that does that.

To be able to live with the meekness and forbearance of Christ, we’ll need to be introduced to the sweet, reasonableness of Jesus. The command is to let it be known. How can we let something be known? Well, we have to demonstrate it. Whether or not others recognize it, it’s not our problem, but they should. It should have the kind of impact that it’s recognizable. That’s how it’s known. It should be something that can’t be missed. When we have this quality, this reasonableness, this gentleness, this forbearance, this consideration, this yieldingness on insignificant matters, this charitableness on insignificant points, it will be noticed. When we live this way, it can’t go unnoticed.

Then it says, “The Lord is at hand.” The Syriac version reads, “our Lord is at hand.” That doesn’t mean he’s coming soon. It’s used in the sense of *presence*, not of *coming*. It means he’s near. Indeed, a lot of the translations have “near.” Sometimes we hear in manifestations, “he’s closer than our very breath.” We don’t have to go far to get to him. We can reach out and touch him. He’s there.

Affirmations: I let my moderation be known. I am conscious that my Lord is present with me.
Recommended Reading: Philippians 4 CJB.

Philippians 4:6: Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer [*proseuchē*] and supplication [*deēsis*] with thanksgiving [*eucharistia*] let your requests [*aitēma*] be made known unto God. made known unto God.

“Be careful for nothing” means “don’t be anxious” or “don’t have distracting care.” It’s a command. The antidote for anxiety is prayer. Verses 6-7 tells us how we can obtain peace through prayer. A grateful remembrance of past blessings is a safeguard against anxiety for the future. That’s why it’s done with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is an important element because we realize He’s answered our prayers before and He’ll surely do it again. We’re just thankful for everything that God has done for us, and we know He hasn’t changed. That shows the importance of thankfulness in all true prayer. One of the purposes of prayer is to help us control our thinking. We stay thankful and speak words from the Word that we believe and expect to come to pass.

This is also second person plural. He’s telling them collectively, be careful for nothing. Don’t be anxious. He’s telling them collectively to pray and supplicate with thanksgiving. He’s telling them collectively, corporately, to let their requests be made known unto God. It’s not something that we have to do by ourselves. There’s a corporate element to this. There’s a community believing element to this. Yes, if I do it and you do it, that’s where unity comes in. We do it together, and guess what unity provides? Peace! The unity of the spirit is in the bond of peace!

There are four words for prayer in this verse. The word *proseuche*, which is the general term for prayer, recognizing that God ought to be prayed to. Then there’s the word *deēsis*, which emphasizes the element of petition or entreaty for specific requests. That’s the word “supplication.” Then there’s the word *eucharistia*, which is thanksgiving. That emphasizes the element of thanksgiving in what we say. Then the last one is “request.” Let your requests be made known with joy, and that’s the word *aitema*, which emphasizes the thing that is asked for.

Worry is evidence of an ill-controlled brain. It’s merely a stupid waste of time in unpleasantness. If men and women practiced mental calisthenics as they did physical calisthenics, they would purge their brains of this foolishness. That’s what Arnold Bennett said. Worry is unhealthy and unproductive. It focuses one’s thinking on all the ways things can go wrong. It’s got no discipline. It’s letting your mind run, and it’s really not just unproductive, it’s counterproductive. It works against being productive. It’s not like it doesn’t produce anything. It stops things from being produced. It’s paying interest on a purchase not made yet.

Someone has said, “Worry is the interest we pay on trouble borrowed.” We don’t have trouble. It hasn’t happened yet, but I’m going to borrow this trouble, and worry is the interest we pay on it. Although it hasn’t even happened yet, we’re going to make sure that we’re wasting our time worrying about it.

In verse 4 it said “always.” In verse 6, it says “nothing.” Rejoice in the lord always, and be careful or anxious for nothing. God makes His commands so simple and absolute. Most people cave in someplace. It may be health. It may be finances. It might be love. It may be relationships, but we’ll usually allow and even encourage ourselves to foster worry in some area of life. We’ve got no problems with finances. We’ve got no problems with our relationships, but health — we just worry about our health. We can’t apply what we’ve done in the other areas and take it to our health and do the same thing in our health that we do in the other areas because we’ve programmed ourselves in this category of life. We’re supposed to worry because we’re unsuccessful, we haven’t been victorious, we’ve always been defeated, and so we don’t sing our war song. We don’t sing our chant. We don’t rejoice in the Lord. Most people allow themselves some place to worry. It says “nothing.” It says “nothing,” and if we can do it in eight out of ten categories, why can’t we do it in ten out of ten?

It’s just we don’t do it. We don’t discipline ourselves because it’s harder in some areas than it is in others. For me, health is not a problem. I’m strong as a horse. I missed, maybe, two days of work my whole life due to sickness, but there are other areas where I have trouble, and the reason I have trouble is because it’s not as easy for me as health is. It’s My genetics makes health no problem, but my genetics causes weakness in other areas that I’ve got to deal with.

There’s no situation that we get into that we can’t be more than a conqueror. Remember Jesus in the sermon on the Mount? Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, about your body, what you will wear. Do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will take thought for the things of itself (Matthew 6:25-34).

Since the Lord is near, there’s no cause for anxiety. Jesus had encouraged his disciples to be done with anxiety because their heavenly Father who fed the birds and clothed the grass with flowers knew their needs as well and was as able to supply for them as He did for the birds. Similarly, Paul said, “. . . in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” Do it. Say it. Speak it.

Affirmations: I’m anxious about nothing. I let make my requests known unto God.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 4 CEV.

Philippians 4:6: Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer [*proseuchē*] and supplication [*deēsis*] with thanksgiving [*eucharistia*] let your requests [*aitēma*] be made known unto God. made known unto God.

Philippians 4:6 has 4 of the 7 words for prayer in the New Testament. There are slight differences in those four different words of “prayer,” but using all four of them in verse 6 is the figure of speech synonymia. They’re all similar; they are synonyms. It’s like shouting, “Pray!” It emphasizes the importance of consistency in believing and expectancy in prayer. We do it because we expect things to change. Prayer changes things. Paul takes it for granted that an essential element in prayer is asking God for things and with the same trustful spirit as children show when they ask their fathers for things. We’re not going to ask for an egg, and get a scorpion or for bread and get a stone (Luke 11:12). I Timothy 2:1 also has the same figure, synonymia, concerning prayer.

I Timothy 2:1: I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications [*deēsis*], prayers [*proseuchē*], intercessions [*enteuxis*], and giving of thanks [*eucharistia*], be made for all men;

Paul lists several forms of prayer that are to be lifted up before all men. The first, “supplications” or “requests” carries the idea of the addressing of one’s needs. Supplications are lifted as requests more to the meeting of needs than wants. Furthermore, those supplications are to be lifted not just for the one praying but for “all men.” Paul is literally commanding them to pray, not only for their own needs, but for the needs of those who they are currently neglecting everyone else.

The second word, most commonly translated as the simple and more broadly defined, “prayer,” simply refers to talking to God. Much of the church today has gotten away from the concept of prayer that Paul understands. Much of the church today practices a form of prayer that is more liturgical repetition than actual communication with the LORD. Christian churches often practice prayer by the recitation of written words, led corporately by a priest or pastor. Though this can be a meaningful form of prayer, this is not what Paul thinks of when he thinks of this form of prayer. Prayer with God is more like an open communication that is informal and spontaneous, more like the way we communicate with a dear loved one. Since God knows our thoughts and hears our voice, we have the opportunity to communicate with God continually through the course of the day as we encounter each of its varied events. Paul is urging the church to open up that avenue of personal, spontaneous, and continual communication with God.

The third word for prayer is found only in this letter, and is often translated, “intercession.” Though the English word carries more of a call to pray for others, this is not the best meaning of the Greek word. Certainly, as prayers are lifted for one’s self, they are lifted up for others, and the context of praying for the needs of others is clearly indicated here both in the first word used and in the command that these prayers be lifted up for “all men.” The word used here carries the additional and clear statement of boldness as one approaches the throne for others.

The last word, *euchaistia*, is the word that we transliterate, Eucharist, referring to the LORD’s Supper, or the ordinance of communion. *Euchaistia* simply means to give thanks, recognizing what God has done for us, what He has provided for us, and what He will do for us. We recognize that all we are and all we have, comes from Him and from Him alone, and for this we give thanks.

Finally, these prayers are not to be lifted for the one praying alone, but for all people. We may recall Jesus’ command to “pray for your enemies” and those who “persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). It is evident that the people in the churches of Ephesus had wandered far in their prayers, replacing supplication, prayer, intercession, and thanksgiving with pagan rites and chants. That may sound dramatic to us, but it may be instructive for us to look at our own prayer life. Is it spontaneous and personal, a communication with a God who is close to us, a communication that in praise and thanksgiving addresses issues concerning both us and others? Or is our prayer life mostly silent, comprised mostly of listening to others pray and/or reciting written prayers in corporate worship. Whether getting up before sunrise (Mark 1:35), praying all night before choosing the twelve (Luke 6:12,13), or agonizing in the garden (Luke 22:44) Jesus made prayer a priority. Paul addressed the same priority in his first letter to Timothy.

We pray so we can lead a quiet and peaceable life. Through prayer we restrain the forces of darkness operating against all men and release upon them the power and influence of God. One effective way to do that is by praying for people who are in positions of authority, like presidents, prime ministers, kings, judges, state and local officials, and school board members. Although it may not seem like prayer for our leaders accomplishes much, we have no idea how much better things are because we do. Our prayer for people in positions of authority, brings the highest kind of pressure, (godly, positive pressure) to bear upon those offices.

Affirmations: I give thanks well. I AM spontaneous and personal WHEN I PRAY.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 4 ESV.

Philippians 4:7: And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

The peace of God is the result of replacing worry and anxiety with prayer and thanksgiving. Paul doesn't equivocate. He doesn't half-step. He doesn't add "often" or "sometimes" or "usually." He doesn't say "Let your requests be made known unto God and maybe the peace of God," or "often," or "most of the time," or "usually." He doesn't equivocate. He says, ". . . and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Prayer without expectancy may be unbelief in disguise. If we just go through the motions, we're really not believing for an answer. If we don't expect it will happen, we're just disguising our unbelief uttering the words but not expecting anything to change.

Peace is a guarding fruit. That's what it says here. The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall "keep." That's the word "guard." This verse could be a personification of a soldier on guard duty. Peace may be personified as a soldier, a sentry on guard duty, and in Philippi, they were familiar with Roman sentries because many of them were previous military soldiers, and they had all done it, and it was a military colony, and people walked guard duty. They had sentries on guard, and that's what peace does. It keeps. It guards.

The first place it's used is in II Corinthians 11:32 which says, "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me." It's translated there "kept with a garrison." That's our word "guard." That's what it means. That's why I say it's almost a personification of a soldier on guard duty. The Philippians living in a Roman colony, a garrisoned town—that's what a Roman colony meant. It was a garrisoned town. They would be very familiar with these. Then it says, "through Christ Jesus" or "in Christ Jesus," and that phrase "in Christ Jesus" is in our identification with him.

Our minds will be kept. Our hearts and minds will be guarded when we identify with Christ Jesus. They are kept "in Christ Jesus," in our identification with him. We are as he is. He became like we were so we could become as he is, and we are as he is now. When we think of ourselves that way, then the peace of God will guard us. There will only be peace in the fellowship if they're unified. Otherwise, there won't be peace. If people are at odds, if they're moving in different directions, there won't be peace in the fellowship. There will be turmoil. There will be confusion. They have to be unified. That's one of the things that prayer provides. Prayer unifies the fellowship. We're believing for the same thing. I know what to believe for when I hear somebody pray. I'm believing along with them. I'm listening to what they say, and I'm speaking in tongues. I'm unifying with them. That's why it's important to do in fellowships, because it does unify.

Paul uses a military analogy to describe this peace. It's a big deal. That's why persecution has never stopped the movement of the Word — only dissention does, only disunity does. If we're being persecuted, and we pull together like they did in Acts 4, we get out of jail. Then when they all prayed together, the place was shaken because they were unified. The persecution never stopped the Word from moving. The only thing that stops the Word from moving is when we're not unified, when we're at odds with each other, when we don't want to pull together, when we don't want to see results.

It says, ". . . the peace of God, which passes all understanding." It means it stretches out beyond one's ability to comprehend. We don't have to figure it all out. We can't. So, don't try to. It's enough that we remember what the Word says, and we repeat God's words to him in prayer. We remember what the Word says, and we echo those words back to God in prayer like Isaiah 55:11 tells us to do.

In John 14:27 Jesus promised to leave peace with us and commanded us to not let our heart be troubled. So, it has to be available for us to do that, just like it's available to rejoice always and to be thankful in all things. It's just a question of whether or not we have the discipline to do it. Isaiah 26:3 says: "Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose mind is stayed on thee*: because he trusteth in thee." That trust is evident because we stay our minds on God. We acknowledge His Word. We say what the Word says. That's how we trust it

Affirmations: The peace of God keeps my heart and mind. I don't let my heart be troubled.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 4 ETH.

Philippians 4:8: Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

“Whatsoever” is an *anaphora*. Paul uses this *anaphora* and lists six things then he ends the list abruptly. He ends it abruptly, not because there’s not any more virtues to name, but because they were too numerous to name. He sums up the remaining ones with the phrase “if there be any.” “If there be any virtue or any praise, think on these things. Well, is there virtue? Have we heard any praise? Then we must “think on these things.”

We are to think on these things. Take them into account. Give them weight in our decisions. Think is the word *logizomai*. *Logizomai* is used precisely. There’s only one proper way to think. *Logizomai* means to reckon, count, compute, calculate, to take into account, to count up or weigh the reason, to deliberate, to consider, meditate on it, to suppose, to judge, to determine, to purpose or to decide. Like tabulating a list of numbers, there’s only one outcome that’s correct. That’s how we’re supposed to think.

Then the phrase “if there be any virtue and if there be any praise.” is the figure *meiosis*, which is a lessening of a thing in order to increase it. Of course, there’s virtue. Of course, there’s praise. So again, that would emphasize the fact that we’re to think on those things. In ancient Greece, there existed an argument between the sophists and the educated traditionalists over the meaning of virtue and whether or not virtue should be taught to others. The Greek word *arête* was used of excellence or goodness of any kind and not necessarily moral goodness. It was used of brave and glorious deeds of war and athletics. It was also applied to the nature of animals and things. Its usages were so varied that its meaning of moral excellence or conformity of conduct to moral principle was in constant dispute. Aristotle talked about it. Plato talked about it. Philippians 4:8 is the only place in the church epistles it occurs, and it’s introduced by the words, “if any.” If there’s any such thing as virtue, whatever it means, then if there’s any praise, whatever that is—even if we can’t agree on it. Even if you and I can’t agree, even if the people you talk to can’t agree on what it is, let’s move our heads and think about these things.

Praise is introduced beside virtue since *arête* was used in the Old Testament in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word for “praise” as an attribute of God. In this singular and peculiar use of *arête* in the church epistles God appeals to the Philippians (in light of their philosophical background) to conduct their lives in accordance with the six aforementioned concepts: Truth, honesty, justice, purity, loveliness, and good report. The only other occurrences of *arête* in the New Testament are in II Peter 2:9 where it’s translated “praises” and II Peter 1:3 and 5 where it’s translated “virtue.” In both contexts, it’s used of moral excellence, the conformity of conduct to moral principles. *Arête* is a unique and separated superiority, an excelling excellence, a superior excellence.

Godliness is a true, vital, spiritual relationship, and it is central in II Peter 1:3. It’s opposed to religion.

II Peter 1:3: According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory [to his own glory, the text says] and virtue [*arête*]: Now the list connected with virtue in II Peter 1:5-7 differs from the list in Philippians 4:8. Both of these differ from Plato who originally gave four cardinal, or natural, virtues: Wisdom or prudence, courage or fortitude, temperance or self-control, and justice or righteousness. Aristotle adds six more to these. He said there’s also liberality, high-mindedness, gentleness, friendliness, truthfulness, and decorous wit. St. Thomas Aquinas and other church fathers adopted Plato’s four cardinal virtues and added three theological virtues: Faith, hope, and charity. Of course, you find those in I Corinthians 13:13, I Thessalonians 1:3, Galatians 5:5-6, and Colossians 1:4-5, making seven virtues for the church.

Outside of Philippians 4:8 and the records in Peter, there’s no mention of the word “virtue” in the New Testament; yet, the moral principles for conformity of conduct in the New Testament are numerous. That’s what all these practical guidelines are in Philippians, like, rejoice in the Lord always. What’s that if that’s not a principle of virtue? Be careful for nothing. What is that if it’s not a principle of conduct, of virtuous conduct?

Affirmations: I filter my thinking through God’s Word. I have a true, vital, spiritual relationship with God.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 4 GNT.

Philippians 4:8: Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

Philippians 4:8 lists 6 specific praiseworthy virtues before switching to “if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise.” The switch functions to suggest that there are many other virtues and things worthy of praise that could have made the list. Many translations render *epainos*, “worthy of praise” or “praiseworthy.” The six items that are mentioned are there for a reason, but they are not exhaustive.

In the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-16, Jesus Christ lists ten virtues. I Corinthians 13:13 lists three. Colossians 3:12-15 lists ten. Romans 5:5 lists four. II Peter 5:3-7 lists eight. In addition, there are 17 virtues in I Timothy 3:2 and following, pertaining to a bishop, *episkopos*. Seven virtues in II Timothy 3:8 and following, pertaining to deacons. Four virtues in II Timothy 3:11 pertaining to the wives of deacons and bishops. Six virtues for elders in Titus 2:2. Ten virtues for elder women in Titus 2:5-7. Seven virtues for young men in Titus 2:6-8. Seventeen virtues for servants in Titus 2:9 through 3:2. Numerous virtues in II Corinthians 6:4-10 and many other principles of moral content.

So, do you think there’s any virtue? Sure there is. So, if there is any virtue or commendation, we ought to consider or take into account these things as standards for conduct. The rest of the world may argue over what is moral, but the Word makes it clear even though a right way is not always possible. I don’t know if you’ve lived long enough to know that. Sometimes you have to choose between the lesser of two evils.

Paul gave the Philippians filters through which they could purify their thinking and in the last chapter of Philippians, he commands them to think according to the standard he gives them. We should filter our thinking so that we prove all things and hold fast that which is good. Philippians 4:8 says. . . think of these as filters.

We ask ourselves, is what I’m thinking about true, is this honest, is this just, pure, lovely, of good report? Is this virtuous? Is this praiseworthy? No, then I shouldn’t think about this. There’s only one proper way to think. We think according to what the Word says. *Logizomai* deals with reality. If I *logizomai* or reckon that my bank book has \$25,000 in it, it has \$25,000 in it. Otherwise, I’m deceiving myself. This word refers to facts, not suppositions.

The New Living translation reads, “Fix your thoughts on these things.” The New American Standards reads, “Let your minds dwell on these things.” The Aramaic Bible in plain English says, “meditate on these things.” Weymouth New Testament says, “cherish the thought of these things.” Paul had taught them how to use their minds to filter out the negatives of the world. When he kept accounts with people in situations, he did it according to the Word. He recommends the Philippians use these filters for their thinking. So, if I think something about you and it’s not true, honest, trustworthy, pure, lovely, of good report, then I shouldn’t be thinking it. Isn’t that what the Word says? So that’s how we filter our thinking.

There’s another verse in II Corinthians 10 that also commands us to control our thinking.

II Corinthians 10:5: Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

We’re required to control our thinking and bring every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ. There is a duty of disciplined thinking. No believer is exempt from it. The minute you think you are, you’re on your way down. I’ve seen people with great ministries, people who have served and all of a sudden, they think they’re excluded from controlling their thinking, and it takes them out. We never get beyond our responsibility to control our thinking. We are all required to make our minds think according to the measure of faith God has given to every man. It’s always available. God has put within the hands of every believer the power to direct his life according to the will of God. Once the believer knows the Word of God, he knows the will of God and is responsible to direct himself to do what God asks of him. By doing so, he’ll find the greatest possible freedom. Jesus said that ye shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free. There is no real freedom apart from knowing God’s Word and acting accordingly. That will require that we control our thinking.

Affirmations: I control my thinking. I cast down ungodly imaginations and high things.

Recommended Reading: Read all the verses listed in paragraph 2 or Philippians 4 MIT.

Philippians 4:8: Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

The figure anaphora repeats “whatsoever things are” with the first six of these godly thinking filters. These are things we are “to take into account or give weight to in our decisions.” We are to plan to act according to whatever is:

TRUE: Things that are true contain no error, no deceit, no falseness. Satan enjoys promoting many “what ifs” into our thought life. Why let our minds be clouded with the hypothetical, with fantasies, with baseless slanders. Truth can be relied upon; it will not fail us or let us down. This is the beginning and foundation of the list. The truth is not relative; it is absolute and provides the only proper basis for evaluating our thinking.

This is where we should start. Some things are factually true but are not healthy things to think about. Things that are true are not just true to fact. They have moral qualities of uprightness and dependability. It may be a fact that somebody’s a jerk, but it’s not true. He’s not intrinsically that way. That’s not a quality that’s dependable. He may surprise us and be a nice guy the next time he sees us.

HONEST: A more literal translation would be honorable or worthy of respect. Would I be ashamed to have anyone know what I am thinking or watching or doing. What if our thoughts were portrayed on the TV screen for all to see. Would that cause us to eliminate some things? The opposite of honorable is vulgar, indecent, immodest.

JUST: This means right or conforming to God’s standard and worthy of His praise. It must be understood in light of the word “moderation” in verse 5. It must be in accordance with the “spirit” of the law not just the letter of it.

PURE: This means uncontaminated by the world. There is nothing mixed with it that would defile it. It carries the idea of innocence and chastity. People dabble with a little bit of God and a little bit of the world. How much can I get away with and still maintain fellowship with God? Well, we are not supposed to dabble. We are not supposed to contaminate our thinking. It’s supposed to be pure. It’s supposed to be on the Word. and uncontaminated by the world. Don’t let the world bring things into it that shouldn’t be there.

LOVELY: Lovely things give pleasure to all and cause distaste to none. When there are lovely things to think about just enjoy them! Just enjoy what God has placed there. They are pleasing, amiable, agreeable, acceptable, attractive. Things that are lovely bring joy and blessing to life; think on those things.

OF GOOD REPORT: That means worth talking about or witnessing to. It is admirable and enjoys a good reputation. It sounds well and makes no affront to anyone.

Those are the first six and they have that anaphora there emphasizing them. The next two items on the list are preceded by “if there be any.” Certainly, there is that which is virtuous. There is virtue, and there is praise. Sometimes we have to look hard to see it. Sometimes we have to make an effort but there are things that are virtuous, there are things that are praiseworthy. Those are the things we are to think on.

VIRTUE: This refers to excellence in every category. A person with integrity does not tolerate the standard that the world accepts, but strives for excellence in all endeavors. I Corinthians 14:12 says, “seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.” We should become excellent in our pursuits.

PRAISE: This means things worthy of praise and is a summary category that would include all that has preceded it. All the categories before, can be included in this. It is a summary category. There are things worthy of praise, and those are the things we need to think on.

Affirmations: I think on virtue and praiseworthy things. I don’t dabble with evil.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 4 MGI.

Philippians 4:9: Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Philippians 4:8 taught us to feed our minds positive thoughts, and Philippians 4:9 teaches us to focus our attention on proper role models. These role models will of necessity be encouraging. Paul was the obvious role model for the Philippians. From his example they found positive encouraging things to learn, receive, hear, and see. We, too, can glean much from Paul's example. That's one of the purposes of this epistle to the Philippians. We must also look for real personal models and be willing to model appropriately for others.

Paul set himself up as the example. We ought to have the same guts to live the same way, to follow our savior and walk in the steps of Jesus Christ and be able to say, "Walk as you have me as an example." Paul challenges us to imitate him, to practice those things he did (I Thessalonians 1:6; 2:13; Hebrews 13:7; James 1:22).

Philippians 4:9 is an amazing promise. Paul told the Philippians that if they thought on those true, honest, just, pure, lovely, good report, virtuous and praiseworthy things, which they had both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in Paul, the God of peace would be with them. What a promise! The same is available to us. If we do those same things, the God of peace will be with us. The promise is that not only will the peace of God that passes all understanding that was promised in verse 7 to guard our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus be with us. Verse 9 goes even farther. Now, the promise is not just for the peace of God, it's the God of peace who will be with us. The challenge is to find the God of peace in every situation we face.

Paul, by pursuing the course of life which he had led, and which he here counsels them to follow, had found that it had attracted the blessing of the God of peace. That's a genitive of origin, the God who gives peace (Hebrews 13:20; I Thessalonians 5:23). Paul was assured that the same blessing would rest on them if they imitated his example. The way to obtain the blessing of the God of peace, is to faithfully practice those things.

That word "do" in verse 9 is *prassō* which means to make a practice of. It describes the active *process* in performing a deed, implying that what is done is a *regular practice*, an accomplished routine or habit. *Prassō* which means to perform repeatedly or habitually differs from *poieō*, the more common word for "do." which properly refers to executing or accomplishing a single act.

The 4 terms "learned, received, heard, and seen" are each preceded by *kai*, "and." This is the figure of speech polysyndeton, "many ands." The purpose of the figure is to encourage us to slow down and pay attention to each item in the list. Each is important and deserves careful consideration. Each of the 4 are in the indicative mood, aorist tense, active voice. The indicative mood is simplest and most basic mood in English. It is used to present a statement of fact, something the speaker considers to be a known state of affairs. The aorist is the past tense, and the active voice means the subject takes the action. The verbs are aorists and refer to the past time when he was among them. Each of the terms is what Paul knows the Philippians have already accomplished.

"Learned" is the Greek, *manthanō*, which refers to learning by encountering or undergoing something. There is nothing like living through situations that builds strength and faithfulness into one's life. *Manthanō* is the root word of disciple, *mathētēs*. It means "to learn by use and practice" or "to be in the habit of or accustomed to" (Thayer). It pictures a disciple sitting at his master's feet learning to do as he is instructed in word and example. "Received" is the Greek, *paralambanō*, to take or receive from. It depicts someone taking or receiving by showing strong *personal initiative* from being close or alongside. "Heard" is the Greek, *akouō*, to hear. In this context it depicts someone who not only listens but understands and perceives the sense of what is said. "Seen" is the Greek, *horaō*, to see, perceive, attend to. Among the many synonyms for see are *horaō*: to gaze with wide-open eyes, as at something remarkable; and thus differing from *blepō* which denotes simply voluntary observation; and from *eidō* which expresses merely mechanical, passive or casual vision; while *theaomai* and still more emphatically its intensive *theoreō* which signifies an earnest but more continued inspection; and *skopeō*, a watching from a distance.

Affirmations: I follow Paul's example. The God of peace is with me.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 4 MSG.

I Timothy 6:6: But godliness with contentment is great gain.

Philippians 4:10 begins another section in the structure of Philippians. It corresponds to 1:3-11 which dealt with prayer for fellowship, fruit, and abounding love. This section 4:10-20 deals with Paul's thankfulness for their fellowship, care, and abounding love. I could have just said Paul's thankfulness for their gift. But what the gift represented was the Philippians' fellowship, care, and abounding love for Paul. Stating it this way shows the complimentary nature of the corresponding sections. Make no mistake, however, it is their gift that he is talking about.

In verse 10 we find Paul specifically stating his thankfulness which he follows up with two reasons. The first is found in verses 11-14. It is not because he has need. The second is found in verses 14-20. It is because he wants them to be blessed. This section also contains two of the most decoupled verses in all of the New Testament Philippians 4:13 and 4:19.

Philippians 4:13: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Philippians 4:19: But my God shall supply [*pleroō*] all your need according to his riches in glory by [in] Christ Jesus.

I used to have the motto, "Always thankful never satisfied." I pushed myself aggressively, and I avoided being content at all costs. However, I realized later that it wasn't contentment I was averse to it was complacency. They are not the same. The allure of satisfaction can be very tempting. The power of sin is rooted in its promise of satisfaction. But people end up paying too dear a price and getting too little satisfaction. God provides an abundance of joy and satisfaction. It is independent of our possessions and circumstances and is rooted in the newness of life that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Unfortunately, many people think that it is not a good thing to be contented in life. They think dissatisfaction is good because it drives them to greater accomplishment. However, contentment is a good godly quality. What is not a good quality, that people confuse with contentment is complacency. Now, complacency is undesirable. When people are smug and complacent, they lose their desire to work hard and strive for excellence. There is a place in a believer's life for contentment. It's akin to peace. Contentment is a side-effect of peace. If we have the peace of God in each and every situation, good or bad, we will be much more likely to be content.

Contentment has for the most part alluded people. That's because they look for it in the wrong place. It cannot be found in possessions and circumstances; it will only be found in Christ. Paul found contentment and satisfaction, and we can find it too.

Easton's Bible Dictionary's entry on contentment reads: A state of mind in which one's desires are confined to his lot whatever it may be (I Timothy 6:6; II Corinthians 9:8). It is opposed to envy (James 3:6), avarice (Hebrews 13:5), ambition (Proverbs 13:10), anxiety (Matthew 6:25, 34), and repining (I Corinthians 10:10). It arises from the inward disposition, and is the offspring of humility, and of an intelligent consideration of the rectitude and benignity of divine providence (Psalms 96:1-2, 145), the greatness of the divine promises (II Peter 1:4), and our own unworthiness (Genesis 32:10); as well as from the view the gospel opens up to us of rest and peace hereafter (Romans 5:2).

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia's entry on contentment reads: To be free from care because of satisfaction with what is already one's own. The Hebrew means simply "to be pleased." The Greek brings out the full force of the word in I Timothy 6:8 and Hebrews 13:5. Contentment is more inward than satisfaction; the former is a habit or permanent state of mind, the latter has to do with some particular occurrence or object.

Contentment is godly, and we should expect it to be a part of our lives.

Affirmations: I am content. I refuse to be complacent.

Recommended Reading: I Timothy 6.

Philippians 4:10: But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly [*megalōs*], that now at the last [recently] your care of [for] me hath flourished again [*anathallō*, only place used in the NT]; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

We remember from Philippians 4:6 that Paul said “be careful for nothing.” Now he turns right around in 4:10 and says that he rejoices that their care has flourished again. What’s the deal? Of course, the answer to the apparent difficulty lies in two different Greek words for care.

In 4:6 care was *merimnaō* and in 4:10 it’s *phroneō*. The former means to be anxious and the later means to think. There is a difference between the worry of verse six and the concern of verse ten. Paul condemns the worry because it is counterproductive and focuses on things about which we can do nothing. Concern, however, Paul commends because it is productive in building community and relationship and focuses on looking for opportunities to help or assist.

Greatly in the Greek is *megalōs* and this is the only place this adverb occurs. It means greatly, very much, or vehemently. Out of the 9 uses of rejoice in Philippians, this is the only one magnified with the word “greatly.” He has already told us twice to “rejoice in the Lord always,” and here we find him doing the same. The Philippians’ care of him was the source of the joy, and yet it was joy in the Lord. The favor which Paul had received, and for which he felt so much gratitude, had been received of the Philippians; but he regarded “the Lord” as the source of it, and rejoiced in it as the expression of the Lord’s kindness. The effect was to lead his heart with cheerfulness and joy up to God.

“That now at the last” — after so long a time. The reason why he had not before received the favor, was not neglect or inattention on their part, but the difficulty of having communication with him.

Anathallō only occurs here. That makes it singularly significant. It is literally used of plants and means to shoot up, become green or flourish again. “To bloom again” would be another way to say it. However, it is used figuratively here in Philippians where it means to become active again, revive one’s care for someone, or renew one’s concern for someone. The figurative meaning is to be in a state identical with a previous state or to be again in a position to do as one did formerly. This isn’t the first time they have blessed Paul with a gift, and Paul makes note of it with this statement. However, it isn’t that the Philippians didn’t care and only recently decided to help. Paul acknowledges their concern and willingness to do so all along. They just were hindered from it by lack of opportunity.

“Lacked opportunity” shows how difficult it was to actually send Paul a gift. Even after assessing that Paul had need, the trip from Philippi to Rome was not an easy one. It is not like they could just drop a check in the mail like we do today. It was over 700 miles and it was a dangerous journey by land and sea. (See II Corinthians 11:25-26.)

From the closing verses of chapter one, we know that the Philippians were beginning to be persecuted for their participation with Paul in the gospel. Paul was accused of treason against Rome and by supporting him they could be considered accomplices. The gift for which he is now thanking them he had hinted at before (1:5-6; 2:25-30). The extent of Paul’s rejoicing reflected what a big deal it was. Paul knew what it meant. It represented the Philippians’ fellowship with Paul in the gospel and their deep care for him personally (1:7-8).

Affirmations: I rejoiced in the care of others for me. I make sure I do not lack opportunity to give
Recommended Reading: II Corinthians 11.

Philippians 4:11: Not that I speak [*legō*] in respect of want: for [*gar*] I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.

Verses 11-13 show the first reason Paul gives for rejoicing greatly, and he states it in the negative. He rejoices greatly not because he has need. The NIV translates the first half of this verse rather literally as, “I am not saying this because I am in need.” Then he tells them why.

Gar “for the fact is in fact.” “I have learned.” There are three different Greek words that describe three different kinds of learning:

1. *Gramma* – book learning
2. *Didaskō* – learning from teachers
3. *Manthanō* – learning by experience

Paul learned this by experience, and there is nothing like living through situations that builds strength and faithfulness into one’s life. We will be reading in a minute some of the things Paul lived through, like the shipwreck. *Manthanō* is the root word of disciple. It means “to learn by use and practice” or “to be in the habit of or accustomed to” (Thayer). It is important for us to learn the same thing. Paul had learned to live the way he is about to describe, and he did it habitually. Just how was that?

Paul has learned to be content with whatever he has. His contentment did not vary but his state did. Whether he had plenty or little he is still content. That’s because joy and contentment doesn’t come from what you have on the outside, but rather what you have on the inside. Whether or not you are content depends on your content, what you are made of. . . what you have on the inside.

“Content” means satisfied. It is only used here in the NT. Friberg says it means “to be of a happy state of mind.” Thayer gives three meanings:

- 1) to be sufficient for one’s self, strong enough or processing enough to need no aid or support
- 2) independent of external circumstances
- 3) contented with one’s lot, with one’s means, though the slenderest

“Content” is the Greek word *autarkēs*, self-sufficient. The Aramaic word is *sphaq* which means sufficient. It is also used in II Corinthians 3:5, “Not that we are sufficient [*sphaq*] of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency [power in Aramaic] *is* of God.” In English we get the word autarchy which means absolute sovereignty or self-sufficiency. Paul learned this by experience because he was out there moving the Word and he couldn’t depend upon other people. He had to be self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency. He relied on God in his walk day by day.

The related noun is used twice in the NT. Thayer also gives three meanings for it.

- 1) a perfect condition of life in which no aid or support is needed
- 2) sufficiency of the necessities of life
- 3) a mind contented with its lot, contentment

II Corinthians 9:8: And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency [contentment] in all *things*, may abound to every good work:

I Timothy 6:6: But godliness with contentment is great gain.

People think mistakenly that gain is godliness. They think the more they have, the better believer they are. In actuality the two have nothing to do with each other. We’ll be back to this later. Verse 12 will continue the explanation.

Affirmations: My possessions don’t define me. My sufficiency *is* of God

Recommended Reading: Philippians 4 NAS.

Philippians 4:12-13: I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound [*perisseuō*]: every where and in all things I am instructed [*mueō*, only occurrence in the NT] both to be full [*chortazō*, filled according to appetite] and to be hungry [*peinaō*, to crave ardently, to seek with eager desire], both to abound [*perisseuō*] and to suffer need [verb form of “want in verse 11]. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

“Instructed” is the Greek *mueō*. Friberg says “instructed” is a religious technical term for initiation into sacred mystery religions. He says it is used figuratively meaning “learn the secret,” or “be instructed in how to do something.” The Loew-Nida says it means “to learn the secret of something through personal experience or as the result of initiation.” Thayer adds that it means “to accustom one to a thing” or “to give one an intimate acquaintance with a thing.” It is used here with a sense of irony, alluding to the mystery religions initiations. Paul’s initiation in ministry and life was how to survive all the situations in which he found himself.

“Everywhere and in all things” literally means in the Greek “in everything and in all things.” It is the repetition of the same word; the first is singular, and the second is plural. It’s a redundancy, a pleonasm, for emphasis. Paul uses three couplets to really bring the point home: 1. abase/about 2. be full/be hungry 3. abound/suffer need. Between the first and the second couplet the order changes. It starts out with the negative first. Then he inserts, “everywhere in all things I’m instructed both” then the order changes and the positive comes first.

The context of 4:13 is living with a little or a lot. If we have it together spiritually the physical will take care of itself. Paul learned that our possessions don’t define us. Too many people today think that their self-worth is defined by what they own, the kind of car they drive, the kind of house they live in. It may be true financially, that the more we have, the more we are worth, but it is not true spiritually. Neither is it true as far as character is concerned.

Luke 12:15: And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

We are not defined by what we possess. Most things people think they own, end up owning them. This is why Jesus warns us to be on our guard against greed. He told his disciples that it was very hard for someone who was rich to get into heaven. He did not say that money was evil. It isn’t. And the Bible does not say money is evil. It does say that the love of money is a root of evil. Money itself is not. However, when people love it, they can’t get enough.

Money can be very seductive. There is a great line from the movie *Wall Street* in which an older broker is counseling the younger broker, Bud Fox, who is willing to do whatever it takes to make the big money. What he says is: “Bud, be careful. Money will make you do things you don’t want to do.” It is so true. Money is not the problem, our hearts are.

Why do we look at people with money and great material success and think that they are somehow better people? Would we be better if we had more? Why do we compare ourselves to other people who have more than we do and covet what they have? Will it make us better? We need to know that we are not someone special because we have material things. We are special because we are created in the image of God. And we have all been blessed with more than we deserve. Listen to the apostle Paul writing to Timothy.

I Timothy 6:6-8: But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

Paul is simply saying to us that we should get back to the basics. We need to remember what is really important in this life. Nothing we have is permanent. We didn’t bring anything into the world, and we can take anything out. If we have the basics, we are blessed. If we have food and clothing, we have more than many people in this world have right now. We must realize that possessions do not define us. So, let’s not compare ourselves to others, whether they are doing better or worse than we are. We are not less because they have more, nor are we better because we have more. God doesn’t keep score based on the size of your bank account or the value of your holdings. He looks at the condition of our hearts. He looks at how we live our lives. He looks at who we really are, who he has made us to be in Christ.

Affirmations: I know both how to be abased. I know how to abound.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 4 NIV

Philippians 4:13: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

He who says, “I can” and he who says, “I can’t” are both right. Their confession determines their success. An “I can do” attitude tends toward a life of victory and fulfillment. The “I can’t” confession produces a life of depressing inadequacy. “I can do!” is positive and liberating. It breeds a grand atmosphere in which one feels more than equal to the challenges of life. The secret of the “I can do” life lies in two words: “through Christ.”

This acknowledgement is the secret of spiritual victory. We can do all things “through Christ.” When we affirm, like Paul did, “I can do all things through Christ” we program victory into our thinking. This is not just wishful thinking. It is a positive acknowledgement of the mighty power of God within us. This is no guarantee of success or automatic victory. These are not magic words like *alakazam*. It is a declaration born out of experience. We realize we are ready for anything and more than equal to anything through him who infuses inner strength into us. We are able to do because he is able to strengthen.

We must not eliminate or neglect the end of the verse lest we falter along our journey. There is a definite strengthening required to overcome the challenges of life. We all grow weary and faint in our own strength. We just simply expect Christ to strengthen us. That’s why when we want to give up, we don’t. Rather, we shift into God gear and allow Him to open the eyes of our understanding so that we might know what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe that we can do! God wrought this mighty power in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.

The true enablement for Christian service is to confidently declare, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” If we look at things from a sense-knowledge point of view, the difficulties of life may seem too big and our own insufficiency too obvious. The truth of the matter is that we can do all that God asks us to do. When we come face to face with the promise, our love and respect for the Promiser vaults us into action.

The “I can do” attitude blossoms from an awareness of the power of God in Christ in us. My confession that “I can do” comes from an ever-increasing acknowledgement of what he can do. I realize that I can do because God says I can. Natural ability, be as it may, my spiritual ability is exceeding abundantly above all that I could ask or think, because it is according to His power which works in me.

Unfortunately, God didn’t direct Paul to say to the Philippians, “You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.” God had Paul declare the truth that he had acknowledged and made his own. God had Paul write by revelation, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” However, Paul’s bold declaration makes it available to me, too, for God is no respecter of persons. Since God provided for Paul in such a magnificent way, He will gladly do the same for us. However, we must, like Paul, boldly declare the truth. We must speak it into being for ourselves. Don’t be daunted by anything life throws your way. Confidently declare what God’s Word says and see for yourself the exceeding greatness of God’s power work through you who are willing to say, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!”

Affirmations: I can do all things through Christ. Christ actively strengthens me.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 4 NLT

Ephesians 2:4-6: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵ Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ⁶ And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus.

Not only is Christ seated at the right hand of God, we are, too. That gives us a totally different perspective on life. We are not limited to an earthly view or perspective. We have the ability to see everything relevant to our lives from a heavenly viewpoint. Developing this mindset affords us an entirely different outlook on life.

For us, attitudes, not circumstances make the difference. God made us to be winners who overcome even the toughest situations. However, we must choose to nurture an attitude that releases the power of God instead of one that keeps us bound in fear and failure.

Paul's declaration in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (NKJV) is among the most powerful statements of victory ever record by someone other than Jesus. It is certainly an attitude adjuster. These were not empty words. They were words carved from the life experiences of a man who had lived by the power of God and had seen God deliver him from the most dangerous situations (II Corinthians 11-23-27; II Timothy 3:10-11).

Paul knew what the power of the holy spirit in him could accomplish. God's faithfulness to deliver him time and time again had shaped Paul's perspective on life. Beyond any possibility of doubt, Paul had discovered where his strength came from. It came from God in Christ in him.

To be winners we must understand the power of perspective. The way we look at something can have a huge impact on whether we succeed or fail. Paul had learned to look at every obstacle from the perspective of the strength and power of Christ within him. We develop this winning attitude by getting our heads in God's Word and living according to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:2).

You may have heard it said that: "Your attitude will affect your altitude." Let me add "Your altitude (i.e. seated in the heavenlies) should affect your attitude." A love the poem *Thinking*, by Walter Wintle

If you think you are beaten, you are,
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you like to win, but you think you can't,
It is almost certain you won't.
If you think you'll lose, you're lost,
For out in the world we find,
Success begins with a fellow's will.
It's all in the state of mind.
If you think you are outclassed, you are,
You've got to think high to rise,
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win a prize.
Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster man.
But soon or late the man who wins,
Is the man who thinks he can."

To win we have to adjust our thinking to agree with the Word of God. Our willingness to line our thinking up with what God has said will determine our success or failure. We understand that what happens in us is much more important than what happens to us. Happiness is not due to a certain set of circumstances, but rather a certain set off attitudes.

What perspective do we choose? Do we nurture an attitude of victory or defeat? Does our attitude release the power of God or keep us enslaved to fear and failure?

Affirmations: I'm seated in the heavenlies. I see things from God's perspective.

Recommended Reading: Ephesians 2.

Acts 9:22: But Saul increased the more in strength [in the Word], and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

Endunamoō means to impart ability, make able, or empower. It's a compound word made from *en* "in," which intensifies the root *dunamoō*. *Dunamoō* is used twice in Colossians 1:11 and Hebrews 11:34. It means "to make strong or enable."

Colossians 1:11: Strengthened [*dunamoō*] with all might [*dunamis*], according to his glorious power [*kratos*, emphasizing the force of the impact], unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

The Greek text reads, "With all power [*dunamis*] being strengthened [*dunamoō*] according to the glorious might [*kratos*] of him unto all endurance and patience with joy." The paregmenon, the repetition of words derived from the same root, occurs with *dunamis* and *dunamoō* immediately next to one another. It reads emphatically "with all power empowered."

Hebrews 11:34: Quenched the violence [*dunamis*] of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong [*dunamoō*], waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

These hall of fame believers acquired strength out of weakness. *Dunamoō* means "to make strong or enable." *Endunamoō* intensifies the root *dunamoō* and takes the empowering up a notch. It occurs in all 3 voices, 3 times in the active and twice each in the passive and middle.

Philippians 4:13: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth [*endunamoō*] me.

In our Philippians 4:13 verse *endunamoō* occurs in the active mood. Christ actively empowers Paul. I do not doubt Christ ability or willingness to do what he has promised. I'm sure Paul didn't either for he says he can do because Christ empowers him to do so. The other two verses in the active mood are in I Timothy 4:12 and II Timothy 4:17. In both of them we also find Christ actively empowering Paul putting me into the ministry so that the preaching of the gospel might be fully known.

I Timothy 4:12: And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled [*endunamoō*] me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

II Timothy 4:17: Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened [*endunamoō*] me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

Twice *endunamoō* occurs in the passive mood: Acts 9:22 and Romans 4:20.

Acts 9:22: But Saul increased the more in strength [was empowered [*endunamoō*]], and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

Although this occurrence is in the passive voice it corroborates the others. For here we find Paul receiving his strengthening from the Lord. Similarly, Abraham was strengthened in faith because he judged God faithful who promised (Romans 4:21).

Romans 4:20: He staggered not at [did not doubt] the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong [*endunamoō*] in faith, giving glory to God;

The remaining 2 verses Ephesians 6:10 and II Timothy 2:1 are in the middle voice which means the subject acts upon itself taking and receiving the empowering. Paul commands the Ephesians to empower themselves in the Lord, and he commands Timothy to empower himself in the grace that is in Christ Jesus

Ephesians 6:10: Finally, my brethren, be strong [*endunamoō*] in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

II Timothy 2:1: Thou therefore, my son, be strong in, [*endunamoō*, to be empowered] the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

There are records of God and Christ actively empowering his people, and there are also records of God's people receiving an empowering from God and Christ. Paul also commands God's people to empower themselves in the Lord and the grace he lavishes on his people. Christ is always ready and willing to strengthen us, but he won't violate our free will. We must allow him to do so. Sometimes we simply need to strengthen ourselves in the Lord and his grace. We are always able, and must do whatever we need to do to make sure it happens.

Affirmations: I strengthen myself in the Lord. I stagger not at the promise of God.

Recommended Reading: II Timothy 2.

Philippians 4:14: Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

Philippians 4:10-20 deals with Paul's thankfulness for the Philippians' fellowship, care, and abounding love. In verse 10 Paul said he "rejoiced in the Lord greatly." Then he follows up with two reasons. The first is found in verses 11-14. It is not because he has need. The second is found in verses 14-20. He knew fruit would abound to their account. This section also contains two of the most popular promises in all of the New Testament. Philippians 4:13 and 4:19.

One of the first lessons on giving we should draw from Philippians 4:14 is to learn to take the initiative in looking for faithful servants of Jesus Christ who are focused on the glory of God and the furtherance of the gospel (as Paul was) and support them without being asked. By giving to help alleviate his lack, the Philippians participated in his suffering for Christ. This was remarkable because joining in Paul's travails added more trouble to the Philippians. Truly, Paul could count on the Philippians through thick and thin.

Although Paul had learned the grace of contentment, and he knew that Christ could enable him to do all things, it was well for the Philippians to empathize with his difficulties for it showed a proper regard for a benefactor and an apostle. Paul was rejoicing because they fellowshiped or shared fully with Paul in the furtherance of the gospel. They were spiritual partners and considered it a great privilege to give to Paul and support his work. They wanted to give. They were excited about giving. They were honored that God had given them the grace to give. It was a noble and beautiful thing for these Philippians to share their material things with Paul. They were motivated by love for Christ and love for Paul. Someone has said, "You may give without loving, but you can't love without giving." Our willingness to give as Christians may be used as one thermometer to test our true spirituality.

"Notwithstanding" is not the typical adversative *alla*. It is *plēn*, moreover, from *pleon, more*. It came up before in 3:16. It is an adverb used as a conjunction. Although predominately used to restrict a previous statement in which case it is usually translated "nevertheless," "however," or "in spite of that," it is also used to break off a discussion and point out parenthetically what was important in it, in which case it is usually translated "in any case," "however," "only one thing." That's how it functions here. It closes the first reason that Paul gave, and points out parenthetically what was important about their gift. It wasn't the gift itself that was important it was how the Philippians joined Paul in the furtherance of the gospel. "In any case" they gave, and they didn't do it just once.

Not only does Paul tell them that they did well to give to him. But he calls what they did in sending the gift, "communicating with his affliction." "Communicate" is the Greek word *sunkoinōneō*. It is *koinōneō* with *sun*, "together with," prefixed to it. *Koinōneō* is the usual word for fellowship meaning to partake or share fully with another. It is used with associations like business partners, marriage partners, and citizens within a city. *Sunkoinōneō* shows an even closer bond than *koinōneō*. It means to share in something that one has and holds dear, and it expresses a very close association.

Sunkoinōneō is a commercial term that addresses a situation in which both parties share fully in a business endeavor or investment. *Koinōneō* implies that the Philippians remained intimately involved with Paul. It occurs in 1:5; 2:1; 3:10; and in the next verse 4:15. However, the word in 4:14 with *sun* prefixed shows the closest possible association. In the Church Epistles the verb also occurs in Ephesians 5:11, and in its related noun form it occurs in Romans 11:17, I Corinthians 9:23, and earlier in Philippians 1:7. In Romans 11:17 the Gentiles become the most intimate partakers with the Judeans in the imagery of the olive tree and the mystery. In I Corinthians 9:23 Paul talked about how fervently he labored in the gospel so that he might partake in this most intimate manner. Ephesians 5:11 warns the believers to not have any of these intimate associations with the unfruitful works of darkness. Earlier in Philippians 1:7, Paul told the Philippians how they were most intimate partakers of his grace.

"Affliction," is the Greek word, *thlipsis*, meaning mental pressure or distress. Remember Paul was in prison. He was also considering whether or not he should continue to believe to live or fall asleep. The thoughtfulness of the Philippians helped Paul handle the pressure he was under. The relief which they had sent, not only supplied Paul's need, but it encouraged him knowing he was not forgotten. Epaphroditus and the gift he brought sure came at the right time. Funny, how that works sometimes.

Affirmations: I invest in ministers and ministries. I'm excited about giving.

Recommended Reading: Philippians 4 TPT.

Philippians 4:15:

Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated [*koinōneō*] with me as concerning [*logos*] giving and receiving, but ye only.

“Philippians” is the Greek word *Philippēsiōi*. It is the name that Roman citizens living in Philippi would call themselves. Greeks who were not citizens would use either *Philippeis* or *Philippēnoi*. This is not to imply that every one of the believers were Roman citizens, but is a title of honor Paul is using that keeps with the citizenship analogy he has been using. Using the proper name is always emphatic (II Corinthians 6:11). It marks not only the dignity of their Roman citizenship but also their commitment to support Paul in his work.

“The beginning of the gospel” refers to the beginning of the gospel in Philippi in Acts 16. Then he adds “when I departed from Macedonia.” That didn’t happen until later in Acts. From Philippi he went to Thessalonica and then to Berea. Both of those places are also in Macedonia. He did not depart Macedonia until he went to Athens in Acts 17:15. He was in Athens for a short time and then he went on to Corinth in Acts 18:1. Verse 16 continues “for even in Thessalonica” ye sent once and again to my necessity. The point he is making in verse 15 is that they were the only church to send support after he left Macedonia, and the point he makes in verse 16 is that they immediately began giving and sent support to him at least twice while he was in Thessalonica, before he left Macedonia.

Look at what Paul says in II Corinthians 11.

II Corinthians 11:8-9: I robbed other churches, taking wages *of them*, to do you service. ⁹ And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and *so* will I keep *myself*.

This is what Paul was referring to in Philippians 4:15. There is a further reference to this help in Acts 18:5.

Acts 18:5: And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, [mss read: engrossed in the Word; the NIV translates “Paul was pressed in the spirit,” “Paul *began* devoting himself completely to the word.”] and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ*.

I think it’s very likely that when Silas and Timothy returned from Macedonia and joined Paul, they brought a love offering. This gift allowed Paul to devote himself completely to the Word instead of spending part of his time in tent-making as he had done initially when he arrived in Corinth (18:3). This freed Paul up and allowed more time for him in the Word. It was during this very time that we believe Paul received the revelation of Thessalonians. So how important was their giving to him and the movement of the Word.

“As concerning” is the Greek word *logos*. *Logos* is the word for the Word, but it also has other usages like “matter” or “account.” Here it could be translated “in the matter of” giving and receiving. There is an important association between those two words giving and receiving. When you give it is like making an investment that will return fruit to one’s account. We’ll get to that a little later.

I enjoyed Charles Swindoll’s comments on Philippians 4:14-15 from *Laugh Again*. He said:

“Paul had numerous needs as he traveled on his missionary journeys. He endured hardship and disappointments, heartaches and afflictions. Through it all, the Philippians lent their support. In fact, no other church demonstrated such personal compassion — a mark of maturity. They never second-guessed the apostle in his decision to move on; they supported him. They neither judged him when things went well nor complain when times were hard and he had no fruit to show for his labor; they supported him. They felt pain when he hurt, they prayed for him when he was unable to stay in touch, and they sent friends to comfort him when he was in prison. What a church! No wonder he felt such affection for them.”

Affirmations: I support ministers moving the Word. I endure hardship to further the gospel.

Recommended Reading: II Corinthians 8.

Philippians 4:16-18: For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. ¹⁷ Not because I desire a gift [*doma*]: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account [*logos*]. ¹⁸ But I have all, and abound [*perisseuō*]: I am full [*pleroō*], having received [*dechomai*] of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

Paul was only in Thessalonica for three Sabbath days. That could have been as few 15 days or as many as 26 days, and they gave on at least two occasions if not more. They might have been doing it on a weekly basis which is what I Corinthians 16:1 suggests. They were the model church in this respect. “Once and again” is literally “once and twice.” It is an idiomatic expression that means “more than once.”¹ The New American Translation and the New Living Translation has “more than once.” The New International version translates it “again and again.” Although I have heard it taught as meaning “regularly” or “over and over,” I could find nothing to substantiate that claim.

Finally, we get to the second reason that Paul rejoiced in the Lord greatly.

The word for “gift” is *doma* which means a gift that benefits others horizontally. This did not refer to a personal gift that would benefit him only, it referred to a gift that would benefit the rest of the believers. Paul still desired the personal benefit to the giver above the benefit to the rest of the Body who would receive the blessing. Our desire to see people give, needs to be the same reason.

We must personally expect and desire fruit to abound to the givers before having money to operate the ministry. The former will guarantee the later, but the later should not be our primary reason for receiving love offerings. God will see to it that we have everything we need, so let’s just make sure we keep our motives pure. Paul’s was. He didn’t desire their money; he desired fruit abounding to their account. Giving was important for it guaranteed that fruit would abound in their lives.

“Desire” is the Greek word *epizeteō*. It is a strong word showing intense desire. “Abound” in verses 12 and 18 is the normal word *perisseuō*, but here in 17 it is the Greek word *pleonazō*. We get the English figure of speech pleonasm, redundancy from this Greek word. It means “excess” or “more than what is needed.” *Pleonazō* means you have too much; you abound in excess.

“Account” is *logos*, which in this context means “a record of assets and liabilities.” II Corinthians 8 states the principle of equality. The abundance of one place supplies the need of another place and vice versa. When people give, it gets added to their account and produces fruit that will abound and be more than enough.

Paul said, “I have all.” “Have” is a commercial term. It means “to *receive* a sum *in full* and give a receipt for it.” He is giving them a receipt for their gift. “Full” is the Greek *pleroō* which means filled to capacity. It is in the perfect tense in the Greek indicating that the action has been completed. It was completed when Epaphroditus brought it to him.

“An odor of a sweet smell” is an allusion to the Old Testament sacrifices involving incense. It is found in the Old Testament with Noah’s sacrifice in Genesis 28:1 and many places thereafter. It is also used in the New Testament of personal sacrifices that people make (of Christ in Ephesians 5:2 and other believers in Romans 12:1; II Corinthians 2:14-16; and Hebrews 13:15,16). “A sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God” further elaborates on the gift and its importance to God. Because Paul was engaged in the work of God the gift to Paul was also a gift to God, and God would be the One to make sure that fruit abounds to their account. The investment in this account pays dividends both now and in the future. I love the way Randy Alcorn says it: “You can’t take it with you, but you can send it on ahead.”

Affirmations: I desire blessing upon those who give. I practice sacrificial giving.

Recommended Reading: II Corinthians 9.

1. L. Morris, “Kai hapax kai dis,” Novum Testamentum Supplement 1, 1956 pp. 203-208.

Philippians 4:19:

But my God shall supply [*pleroō*] **all** your need according to his riches in glory by [in] Christ Jesus.

“My God” indicates that it was personal and important to Paul. He was counting on God doing this on his behalf. Because they gave to Paul, Paul was sure that his God would make sure they would be blessed in return. “Supply” is the Greek word, *pleroō*, in the future tense. It is the same word as “full” in verse 18. Paul said he was completely full in verse 18 and promised in verse 19 that God would fill them completely (future tense) also. This is an example or illustration of the principle he stated in verse 15. It is the matter of giving and receiving. It’s a two-way street, a double-edged sword or whatever other reciprocal example you can think of. They gave to Paul and because they did, God would give to them. The matter forms a full cycle of giving and receiving.

Again, Charles Swindoll’s captured the heart of this verse in *Laugh Again*. He said:

“When God is in our hearts of compassion, prompting us to get involved in helping others. . . when He is in our acts of generosity honoring our support for those engaged in ministry. . . and when He is in our strong commitment, using our sacrifices to bless other lives, He does not forget us in our need. It is all so beautiful, so simple, so right.”

In the Aramaic we find the figure anadiplosis. Verse eighteen ends with “God,” and verse nineteen begins with God. The well pleased God will supply. He will cause other people to give back to the Philippians so the cycle of giving and receiving is complete. What is the standard with which God chooses to supply all our need? **According to** His riches in glory in Christ Jesus! That’s rather generous, wouldn’t you say? It doesn’t say He would supply **out of** His riches in glory in Christ Jesus; it says according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. What’s the difference? You wonder.

The mnemonic device I use to remember the difference is an electric **cord**. When an electric cord is plugged in you get power **according** to the outlet. In the U.S. you get either 110 volts or 220 volts. You always get what the power source supplies. It doesn’t deplete or change or vacillate. The standard of our supply is God’s riches in glory in Christ Jesus. That’s an outstanding source of supply. Giving out of one’s riches depletes those riches. Giving out of our bank account diminishes the balance of our account. God’s supply never dwindles. God’s supply is unlimited. God gives according to His riches in glory, we just give and stay plugged in.

We can’t out give God. The more we give, the more we will be given. God will see to that.

Luke 6:38: Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

We decide how to fill out the blank check.

II Corinthians 9:6-7: But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. ⁷ Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Many times, we fill out the check by deciding what we want to do for God. Once we make those kinds of decisions, then He will supply the means to get it done. Giving and receiving is a matter of great importance to us all. As we give generously, we will be blessed abundantly.

Paul does not think of divine riches without linking them to Christ. He is the way in which God’s blessings are communicated to the believers. Like I said “my God” makes this personal and important to Paul. Paul says “my God” because Paul had learned by experience God’s power to meet all his needs. He had been initiated into the secret that God supplied all his need through Christ, and was fully assured that the Philippians would learn the same also.

Affirmations: God supplies all my need according to his riches in glory. My relationship with God is intimate.
Recommended Reading: Luke 6.

Philippians 4:20-23: Now unto God and [even] our Father *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen. ²¹ Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. ²² All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household. ²³ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen. [That's an affirmation of certainty.] To *the* Philippians written from Rome [by Paul and Timothy], [and delivered] by Epaphroditus.

These closing words fall into three unconnected parts, a doxology (Now unto God and [even] our Father *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.), greetings (Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.), and a benediction (The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.). It begins with a doxology which is common in Paul's epistles (Romans 16:27; Galatians 1:5; Ephesians 3:21; I Timothy 1:17; II Timothy 4:18). They always include the words "for ever and ever," or more literally, "for the ages of the ages," or "throughout every age till time shall be no more." How fitting that Paul's expression of thanks and guarantee of God's faithfulness to fulfill His promise is concluded with this simple yet powerful attribution of glory to God. There is no verb in this verse. We need to supply some form of the verb to be to make sense out of it. I like J. B. Lightfoot's comment on this verse as well as other doxologies. He feels that following the example of the Greek texts of I Peter 4:11 and Matthew 6:13 the indicative form of the verb should be supplied not the imperative. It is not that we command or wish glory be to God, but rather that we recognize and affirm that it is.

"Glory" is an essential attribute of God, and is a central element of the mystery which God made known to His people. How appropriate that this exclamation of praise and glory occur right here. However, the Aramaic adds an additional element to the doxology. The Aramaic adds "honor." The only other doxology I found with both glory and honor was I Timothy 1:17.

I Timothy 1:17: Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Following the doxology is the final greeting. It is remarkable that in this letter there are no individual greetings, but rather an emphatic greeting to every saint in Christ Jesus. Of course, this is consistent with the rest of the epistle in which Paul discourages alienation and factions. Saluting every saint at the conclusion parallels greeting all the saints at the beginning. What a reminder that he has them all in his heart, that they are all partakers of his grace, and that he longs after them all. Paul's union with the Philippians is also seen in the switch from "my God" in verse 19 to "our Father" in verse 20.

We do not know who "the brethren that are with me" were. Distinct from these was the whole body of believers in Rome the mention of whom tells us that his imprisonment did not prevent his interaction with them. Again, distinct from both of these, though a part of them, were the saints of Caesar's household. The salutation from the brethren, in Caesar's household, must have been a great consolation to the Philippians. For when they heard that the gospel had got footing in the palace, they would naturally be delighted in the further progress of it in Rome. Not long after this epistle was written, Paul obtained a fair hearing, and an honorable release, through the prayers of the Philippians, the support of Caesar's household, and the justice of his cause.

Finally comes the benediction. What Paul especially desires for them all is to enjoy the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is Lord., the name which implies absolute authority and complements servants of Jesus Christ in verse 1. He holds the keys of the storehouse of grace. He is the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one.

This benediction is the last word of God's revelation to man, the brightness in the clear west, the last strain of the great oratorio. The last word from last book of Scripture is 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.' Let us take up the solemn Amen in our lips and in our hearts.

Affirmations: I take the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ wherever I go. I give honor and glory to God.

Recommended Reading: Romans 16.

Philippians 3:14:

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The mystery of godliness of our administration has both, equally important, doctrinal and practical elements. Philippians is primarily concerned with correcting the failure of practically applying the mystery. People weren't living the way they should have been in light of what they knew. They knew much of the doctrinal wording of the mystery, but they weren't living according to it. To practically live the magnificent mystery of godliness in one Body, the believers must contend together in the furtherance of the gospel toward the goal of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The overall underlying theme of the epistle is *joyfully serving together* using examples from the lives of Christ, Timothy, Epaphroditus, and Paul. Philippians is a reproof epistle and corrects the practical error that arose due to the failure of the believers to adhere to the principles of the Great Mystery laid out in Ephesians. Whereas Ephesians 4-6 give practical directives to carry out the doctrines in Ephesians 1-3; Philippians deals extensively with putting on the mind of Christ. The major theme of like-mindedness pervades this epistle as well as the joy that results from this unity of purpose. Colossians then corrects the doctrinal error concerning the Mystery (Colossians 2:20-23).

Paul wrote the entire "mystery package" of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians imprisoned at Rome. The great mystery is mentioned in each of those epistles: Ephesians 3:4-9; Philippians 1:5; 4:13; and Colossians 1:26-29. Although the mystery was mentioned previously (I Corinthians 2:1-8; 4:1; 15:51; Romans 15:25 and 26) it was not fully revealed in writing until Ephesians was written.

Paul remained chained to a soldier in his own hired house for two years (Acts 28:20, 30). The imprisonment of the Apostle Paul is mentioned in Philippians 1:7, 13, 14, 16, 19, 21; 2:17, 23. The people of Philippi were praying that the Apostle Paul would get out of jail (1:19), which he did. After the Apostle Paul was released (after about two years) he travelled through Ephesus and Macedonia (I Timothy 1:3 and II Timothy 1:18) then to Neapolis (Titus 3: 12) and may have also gone west to Spain as he had intended to years earlier (Romans 15:24,28).

Romans, I & II Corinthians and Galatians are all addressed to the saints (Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:2; II Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:2). Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians go a step farther, and are addressed to the "faithful" and "saints" in Christ Jesus showing our identification with him (Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:2). The first three epistles deal with the individual sinner being made righteous in Christ--the latter three show a unified body with Christ as the head. Thus, where Corinthians deals with individuals who practically abuse their sonship rights, Philippians deals with the believers collectively who do not put on the mind of Christ and become "like-minded." And whereas Galatians deals with those who doctrinally abuse their sonship rights, Colossians deals with those who do not adhere to the doctrine of the one Body.

Since Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians deal with the great mystery, they contain numerous words meaning "together." The Greek prefix *sun* denotes this. It prefixes words 13 times in Ephesians, 15 times in Philippians (6 of which are found no where else in the New Testament) and 11 times in Colossians. In Philippians, they concern: full sharing, working, rejoicing, collecting, conforming, imitating, being present, and being of one mind, contending in the games, holding, and soldiering. All of which are done together with others.

Bullinger notes [*Numbers in Scripture*, page 70] that words that occur only once are often instructive noting that the Greeks referred to them by the term *harpax legomena*, meaning "being said once". There are 37 words used no where else other than Philippians and used only once there. These would be singularly significant for they were chosen by the Holy Spirit specifically and precisely for their use in this epistle. The 6 unique *sun* words are: *suzugos*, yokefellow in 4:3; *summimētēs*, followers together in 3:17; *summorphoōmai*, made conformable unto in 3:10; *sumparamenō*, continue with in 1:25; and *sumpsuchos*, of one accord in 2:2.

Affirmations: I preach Christ out of love. I am set for the defense of the gospel.

Recommended Reading: Galatians 1.

Philippians 1:18: [Holman Christian Standard Bible]

Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith.

How exciting to think we can progress or further ourselves realizing joy in believing. Romans 15:13 guarantees that the God of hope can fill us to capacity with joy and peace in believing. We have seen through our study of Philippians that the overall underlying theme of Philippians is *joyfully serving together*. The examples of Christ, Timothy, Epaphroditus, and Paul demonstrate the joy they had in serving the body of Christ. The other key concepts of like-mindedness, obedience/example, and the furtherance of the gospel relate to the overall theme of *joyfully serving together*. Joy in serving is the common thread that runs through the entire epistle.

There is an etymological link between *chairō*, rejoice, *sunchairō*, rejoice with, *chara*, joy and *charis*, grace. They are all cognates and share the same core or fundamental meaning. *Chairō*, rejoice, properly means, to delight in God's grace, to experience God's grace or favor, or be conscious and glad for His grace. *Sunchairō* properly means sharing God's grace with another person, so that both rejoice together or to mutually participate in God's favor or grace. *Chara*, joy, is the recognition, result or expression of God's grace or favor.

Joy occurs five times in Philippians and is associated with prayer, believing, likemindedness, how to receive a brother in Christ, and the believers with whom one has shared the Word.

Philippians 1:4: Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy [*chara*].

Philippians 1:25: And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy [*chara*] of faith.

Philippians 2:2: Fulfil ye my joy [*chara*], that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

Philippians 2:29: Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness [*chara*]; and hold such in reputation

Philippians 4:1: Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy [*chara*] and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

The verb rejoice (*chairō*) or rejoice with (*sunchairō*) occur 10 times Philippians.

Philippians 1:18:

What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice [*chairō*], yea, and will rejoice [*chairō*].

Philippians 2:17:

Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy [*chairō*], and rejoice [*sunchairō*] with you all.

Philippians 2:18:

For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice [*chairō*] with [*sunchairō*] me.

Philippians 2:28:

I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice [*chairō*], and that I may be the less sorrowful.

Philippians 3:1:

Finally, my brethren, rejoice [*chairō*] in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe.

Philippians 4:4:

Rejoice [*chairō*] in the Lord always *and* again I say, rejoice [*chairō*].

A recognition of God's grace will express itself in our manifestation of His joy and gladness

Affirmations: My joy is outrageous! I refuse to feel frustrated or victimized.

Recommended Reading: Genesis 50.

Philippians 1:7: Even as it is meet [righteous, just] for me to think [*phroneō*] this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

The word meaning “to put into the mind” (*phroneō*) is used 11 times in Philippians. That’s 11 out of 37 (almost 30%) occurrences of *phroneō* that are found in these four chapters. The first is in 1:7, above. Paul thought of them the way the Word said he should. He had them in his heart because they were members one of another. He prayed for them and expected God to work in them, like God did in him.

Philippians 2:2:

Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded [*autos phroneō*], having the same [*autos*] love [*agapē*], being of one accord [*sumpsuchos*], of one [*heis*] mind [*phroneō*].

Philippians 2:2 has four similar terms that relate to the concept of likemindedness. The first, “likeminded” are the two Greek words “*autos*,” same, and “*phroneō*,” put in mind or think. This combination occurs in three other verses in Philippians which we will note as we get to them. The second term is “same love.” This relates specifically to the love of God that believers are to manifest. We all have had it shed abroad in our hearts (Romans 5:5), and we should strive to share it one with another. Doing so would make for an activating, tender likemindedness. The third term is “one accord.” This is the Greek word “*sumpsuchos*,” meaning joint-souled or having minds joined together. Thayer has a note that says, “This word is made up of two words “*sun*” (together with) and *psuchos* (soul, self, inner life, or the seat of the feelings, desires, affections). So, the word refers to being united in spirit or harmonious. Paul desired the Philippians to be united in their affections - one in Christ in all desires!” Used only here in the New Testament.” The fourth term is a repetition of “*phroneō*,” this time with “*heis*,” one, instead of “*autos*,” same. This is the only place these words occur together. The verse starts out encouraging us to be of the same mind and concludes saying we should be of one mind. Thayer comments on this unique construction saying that this is an emphatic usage of “*heis*” meaning “*one and the same* (not at variance with, in accord with oneself).” We should be of the same mind, the one and same mind that Jesus had. This takes us right into the next use of “*phroneō*.”

Philippians 2:5:

Let this mind [*phroneō*] be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

We are to be likeminded according to Christ Jesus. We think of each other like Christ would. Some translations render “*phroneō*” here as attitude, referring to the attitude of service he maintained.

Philippians 3:15:

Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded [*phroneō*]: and if in any thing ye be otherwise [*heterōs*] minded [*phroneō*], God shall reveal even this unto you.

There is a proper way to think. We hold the Word of God in mind and control our thinking to conform to it. We are to think the way we should, like Christ did. Thinking otherwise is unwise, and when it happens, we should expect God to let us know.

Philippians 3:16:

Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind [*phroneō*] the same thing [The Word].

We are to think the right way and act accordingly. As if verse fifteen didn’t say it clear enough, verse sixteen repeats the same truth.

Philippians 3:19:

Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* their belly, and whose glory *is* in their shame, who mind [*phroneō*] earthly things.

We should mind the Word likemindedly, not earthly things. This is an example of being otherwise minded.

Affirmations: I follow Christ’s example. I live my life by power of God in Christ in me.

Recommended Reading: Galatians 2.

Philippians 1:27:

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one [*heis*] spirit [*pneuma*], with one [*mia*] mind [*psuchē*] striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Besides *phroneō*, the *psuchē* word family also contributes to the concept of likemindedness. In 1:27 (above), the Philippians are encouraged to stand in one spirit [*heis pneuma*] with one mind [*mia psuchē*]. This word “*psuchē*” is also used of Epaphroditus’ life in 2:30.

Philippians 3:20:

Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life [*psuchē*], to supply your lack of service toward me.

These are two of 105 uses in the New Testament and two of thirteen in the church epistles. However, the other three occurrences of the word family found in Philippians occur nowhere else.

Sumpschos having the same soul or closely united in soul, it is translated “of one accord” in the King James Version.

Philippians 2:2:

Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded [*autos phroneō*], having the same [*autos*] love [*agapē*], being of one accord [*sumpsuchos*], of one [*heis*] mind [*phroneō*].

Eupsucheō, well-souled, is used of Paul being of good comfort in 2:19.

Philippians 2:19:

But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort [*eupsucheō*], when I know your state.

Isopsuchos, equal souled, is used of how likeminded Timothy and Paul were in 2:20.

Philippians 2:20:

For I have no man likeminded [*isopsuchos*], who will naturally care for your state.

These 3 words occur nowhere else in the New Testament. Bullinger notes [*Numbers in Scripture*, page 70] that words that occur only once are often instructive noting that the Greeks referred to them by the term *harpax legomena*, meaning “being said once.” There are 37 words used nowhere else other than Philippians and used only once there. These would be singularly significant for they were chosen by the Holy Spirit specifically and precisely for their use in this epistle.

Isos is also used of the equality of Jesus and God in 2:6.

Philippians 2:6:

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal [*isos*] with God:

In addition, the word *hēgeomai*, (to lead, consider, think, or esteem) is used twice as often in Philippians (six times) than the rest of the church epistles combined (three times). This also ties into likemindedness as it relates to how we are to lead our thoughts into agreement with God’s Word.

Affirmations: I work out my salvation with fear and trembling. God is at work in me, both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Recommended Reading: I John 3

Philippians 3:17:

Brethren, be followers together [*summimētēs*] of me, and mark [*skopeō*] them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample [*tupos*].

Obedience to God's Word and the example it sets for other believers are keys to joyfully serving together. Paul's life is the example to the believers of how the mystery can be lived practically. The believers are to be imitators with Paul and look at those who follow Paul's example or type. He commands the Philippians to follow him and mark them which walk like he does (Philippians 3:17). Paul frequently used himself as an example in Philippians.

Philippians 3:4-8:

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: ⁵ Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷ But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. ⁸

Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge [*gnōsis*] of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ,

Too often when we think of knowledge we think of something that is just in our head. This knowledge, *gnōsis*, refers to something we have learned by experience, by an exertion of effort. This is knowledge that has changed us. We act differently because of what we learned, it had an impact on us, and we are changed. Our knowledge of the Word is much bigger than just book knowledge, it is not just something that has lodged itself in our memory, but something that has changed our lives for the better. We become more like Christ.

Philippians 3:8-10:

Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge [*gnōsis*] of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, ⁹ And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: ¹⁰ That I may know [*ginōskō*] him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Ginōskō means you put forth some effort, and you learn something that changes your life. If it doesn't change our lives, we are just playing games and we might as well be learning the state capitals. This Word of God can change our lives. Paul is saying look how I changed. He is using himself as an example.

Philippians 3:11-14:

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. ¹² Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The whole tone of Philippians is set by Paul using himself as an example. He says: "I count not myself..." "I press..." "I do..." He doesn't say you all need to do this; he says look at what I do. So be imitators of me. Just like he didn't say, "You can do all things through Christ." He says "I can do all things through Christ." The point is however, that if Paul could do it so can you and I because we are members one of another.

Part of the greatness of the practical application of the mystery of godliness is that if one of us can do it we all can do it. The example we set with our lives encourages everyone else.

Philippians 4:9,11-13,18:

Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. . . . ¹¹ Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. ¹² I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. . . . ¹⁸ But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

Paul not only uses his own life as an example, but he uses the obedient examples of Christ, Timothy and Epaphroditus also. These examples give the epistle a very tangible, practical feel and challenge us to live as examples, too.

Affirmations: I do all things without grumbling or disputing. I do not run in vain nor labor in vain.

Recommended Reading: Matthew 5.

Acts 8:1 and 4:

And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. . . .⁴ Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

The adversary has had more success hindering the furtherance of the gospel from attacking it from the inside instead of from the outside. The great persecution identified in Acts 8:1 resulted in the believers dispersing and taking the Word wherever they went. Jesus told them he wanted them to be witnesses unto him both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). However, they had not gotten out of Jerusalem until the persecution scattered them throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria.

The Philippians endured many things as they endeavored to further the gospel. However, Paul rejoiced that whether in pretense or in truth Christ was preached, the gospel was advanced. Although Paul was in prison and his freedom was severely curtailed, he received the revelation of the prison epistles and worked with several fellowlaborers to communicate the information to the saints. By doing so they all were partakers of his grace.

Philippians 1:7:

Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

Paul specifically mentions that what he has been going through, rather than being counterproductive has contributed to the furtherance of the gospel. Everything we endure, good and bad can be used to move the Word.

Philippians 1:12:

But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

Besides 1:12 where Paul calls it “the furtherance of the gospel,” in 1:14 he calls it “speaking the word,” and in 1:16-19 he calls it “holding forth the word of life” and “preaching Christ.”

Philippians 1:14:

And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Outreach is also specifically addressed in 2:16 where it is also linked with joy and rejoicing.

Philippians 2:16:

Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

We rejoice in the day of Christ because we will be rewarded for it. However, we also rejoice now because of the opportunities we get to hold it forth. Holding forth the word of life is a cause of rejoicing. There is joy in serving, and what greater service can we render than holding forth God’s Word.

In 2:22 Paul includes Timothy and refers to it as “serving in the gospel.” In 4:3 Paul includes Euodias and Syntyche and refers to it as “laboring in the gospel.”

Philippians 2:22:

But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

Philippians 4:3:

And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life.

These are all terms that involve serving the Word of life in the furtherance of the gospel.

Affirmations: I share my joy with everyone. I balance seriousness and joy.

Recommended Reading: Psalms 126 & Proverbs 14.