

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

PHILIPPIANS

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PHILIPPIANS 1:1-30

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HISTORY:

Paul and his companions founded the church at Philippi on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:11-40). This was the first church established on the European continent. Paul was in a Roman prison at the time he writes this letter to thank the Philippians for their gift and to encourage them in their faith.

1:1-2 **Salutation**

Paul begins his epistle in a most unusual greeting to the church. Paul mentions Timothy in his greeting, as they are servants of Jesus Christ. He does not refer to himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. The letter is written to all believers in Christ at Philippi. It seems that they had set up an order in the church of bishops and deacons at this time. However, it's followed with the customary expression of grace and peace.

1:3-11 **THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER**

After Paul's introduction in his letter, it is followed by thanksgiving and prayer. Paul was not in the presence of the Philippians, but it's just the memory of their time together. And there sitting in prison, he remembers their love, their care, and their support. The church at Philippi had been a source of great joy to Paul by virtue of their fellowship with him in the proclamation of the gospel, and being confident that God will complete the work He began in them. Paul prays that their spiritual growth will continue. His prayer for them was that their love abound in knowledge and all discernment; that they approve the things that are excellent; that they be sincere and without offense till Christ returns; and that they be filled with the fruit of righteousness which was made possible by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.

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. Paul's circumstances at Rome have actually been for the furtherance of the gospel rather than a hindrance. Imprisonment has actually created opportunities to spread the gospel. He wanted the Philippians to know this.

1:13 So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places. Even opposition has provided an opportunity for Christ to be preached; for even among the palace guards it is evident his chains are in Christ. Paul turned his prison cell into a gospel chapel.

1:14 And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, and much more bold to speak the word without fear. Paul's example has emboldened others to speak without fear. The lesson for us is this: we must never let circumstances get us down— •persecution •accidents •loss of loved one •imprisonment •age •rejection •divorce—never let them defeat your testimony and witness for Christ, no matter what they are.

1:15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife...— There were preachers who were true followers of Christ. They were not the Judaizers, the false preachers who sometimes followed and opposed Paul. These <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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were genuine preachers who were ministers in and around the metropolis of Rome. Instead of supporting him, they were speaking out against him, hoping to silence his influence and to get rid of him. Sadly, anything we do religiously can be perverted from God-service to self-service. Envy and strife were low motives for preaching the gospel. On account of their jealousy of Paul, they sought to undermine his influence. "Strife" means rivalry, contention, wrangling. These men were motivated by these things. However, their message with wrong motives could not help the circumstances.

1:15b ...and some also of good will. Well, there were those brethren who found pleasure and satisfaction in Paul's work. Therefore, they had the right message and the right motive.

1:16 The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds. So, there were a group that that preached Christ with a spirit of rivalry; contention. The word "*contention*" (*Gr eritheria*) means discord; argumentative; combative; strife; self-seeking, the desire to put one's self forward with a factious spirit. Their motives were of rivalry and ambition. Their purpose was to stir up vexation for Paul and to exaggerate his sufferings. Their purpose was to triumph over Paul, not to triumph over pagans. They were concerned about promoting a sect, not saving souls.

1:17 But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. However, not all preachers throughout Rome opposed Paul. Some were preaching out of love, and they were encouraging their members to show their love for Paul by visiting and supporting him in his ministry of proclaiming Christ. The word "set" (*Gr keima*) means appointed, placed, and destined. We see in these last two verses two types of preachers.

1. **They differ in their hearts:** in one contention rules and in the other love reigns.
2. **They differ in spirit:** in one there is envy and strife; in the other good will.
3. **They differ in the source of their strength:** in one there is the ruling of the religious sect; party; in the other there is confidence in the Lord.
4. **They differ in their aim:** in one the aim was of rivalry and ambition; in the other the aim is to advance the cause of Christ.
5. **They differ in conviction:** one aims to add afflictions to Paul; the other knows that Paul is set for the defense of the gospel.

1:18 What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. "*Pretense*" means an excuse; a pretext which is put forward to hide the true state of things. It has the idea of an ulterior motive. Even if motives or ministry are not what they should be, someone may still find out the message of Christ through that ministry, and come to Him. It is not the preacher who saves us, but Christ. So also today, though we may have doubts about a certain ministry, we can be glad that the name of Christ is being heard. Paul rose above petty jealousy and animosity. The important thing is that Christ is preached! He would do what he could to encourage right motives and valid ministry, but his greatest joy was for people to hear of Christ and be saved. Does the work have to be credited to us or does it have to totally meet our approval before we can take joy in it? Paul lived for Christ and the gospel. In the shadow of the cross Jesus talked about joy (Jh.15:11). Paul rejoiced because Christ was being openly proclaimed; not because of the wrong motive of some, but in spite of the wrong motives. He possessed the assurance of a happy ending—and that is, salvation.

1:19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ...— Paul is sure God will save and deliver him from their criticism and opposition. He is sure of God's help and deliverance because of two things:

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1. **First**, there was the prayer of those who supported him—both those in Rome and those around the world who were praying for him daily. Paul knew how the Philippians loved him, and that he could depend upon their intercession of prayer for him. Paul believed prayer made a difference.
2. **Second**, the supply of the Holy Spirit would empower him to be delivered. There is no way the Roman officers could take the indwelling Holy Spirit from Paul. God's Spirit empowers us to do what we could not do in our own strength. Therefore, Paul knew the reasons and he knew he would be delivered.
 - a. The Holy Spirit was given as a seal to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph.1:13).
 - b. The Holy Spirit was given to be our compassion (Jh.14:16).
 - c. The Holy Spirit was given to counsel us (Jh.14:26).
 - d. The Holy Spirit was given to give courage for witnessing no matter the circumstances (Jh.15:26-27).
 - e. The Holy Spirit was given to put conviction in our lives and ministry (Jh.16:7-8).
 - f. The Holy Spirit was given to share the deep things of God with us (1Corth.2:9-10).
 - g. The Holy Spirit was given to intercede for us while He helps us pray (Rom.8:26).
 - h. The Holy Spirit was given to bear His fruit in us (Gal.5:22-23).
 - i. The Holy Spirit was given to fill us and put a song of joy in our hearts despite circumstances (Eph.5:18-19).
 - j. The Holy Spirit was given to give assurance that we are children and heirs of God (Rom.8:16-17).

Talking about obstacles! Paul was in prison facing a capital crime with his deliverance looking almost hopeless and death was staring him in the face.

- Paul believed God is so great that He can overrule any circumstance, however painful, to bring about good.
- If Paul had to be executed, he knew the Spirit would enable him to die in the same Spirit in which Jesus accepted the cross.
- If Paul was to suffer longer in prison and then be released, he knew the Spirit would sustain him and give him what he needed to say at his hearing.

1:20a According to my earnest expectation and my hope ...— If a man has ever lived a life of commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ, it was Paul. He was confident that no matter what happens, Christ will be magnified. Note the word "**earnest expectation**" (*apokaradokian*). It means to gaze into the distance with the head erect and outstretched just like a watchman on a tower. Paul did not dread his hearing and possible sentence, as most of us would have. He had been told from the time of this conversion that he would suffer for Christ, and testify before Gentile rulers (Acts 9:15, 16).

1:20b There will be some believers who will suffer loss and there will be some believers who will be ashamed. This is what Paul meant: ... **that in nothing he did not want to be ashamed...** when it was his time to stand before Christ. He loved Christ with all his heart, for Christ had done so much for him.

1:20c ...but that with all boldness, as always ...— "**Boldness**" means freedom in speaking, fearless, confident, cheerful courage, and assurance. The absence of fear in speaking boldly was Paul's privilege as a slave of Jesus Christ. Paul's whole purpose in life was to speak out boldly about Christ and to become more like Him.

1:20d Therefore, his one expectation and hope was for ...**Christ to be magnified in his body, whether it be by life, or by death**. He wanted Christ to be honored both in his life and in his death. If you're not ready to die, then you're not ready to live. Once you know your eternal purpose, then you're free to serve—develop your life to what really counts without fear of dying.

1:21a For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. What exalts Christ, makes us happy!

1. First, **'For to me to live is Christ'** What did he mean by this? He meant at least five things.
 - a. He presented his body as a living sacrifice to Jesus Christ.

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- b. He struggled to yield the parts of his body—every member of his body—to Christ as a tool for righteousness.
 - c. He struggled to control his mind—to control every thought and to focus every thought upon Jesus Christ and the great virtues of life.
 - d. He committed himself to work for love and justice within all of society.
 - e. He surrendered his life—to reach and minister as many people as possible in the last part of his journey.
2. This brings us to the second point of Paul. He declares that **1:21b** "...and to die is gain." He knew that everything on earth was aging and passing away, including man himself. In Paul's reach for the Savior, he would never age or pass away in the eternal world that Jesus was able to give.

The natural mind wonders and questions how a person in his right mind could ever want to go ahead and die. The reason is simply answered: the genuine believer does not die; he never tastes death. He is transferred into the presence of Christ—Immediately—Quicker than the blinking of an eye! The believer is transported into the perfect world of God which is, Heaven. The believer is perfected—never again to experience pain, suffering, sin, corruption, infirmity, weakness, deformity, disappointment, fear, loss, or death. The promises of God to the believer are phenomenal; they just explode the human mind. It is for this reason that the believer can declare: *"to die is gain."*

¹If for me to live is Christ, then to die is gain, but...

- If for me to live is money, then to die is to leave it all behind
- If for me to live is fame, then to die is to be forgotten
- If for me to live is pleasure, then to die is to miss all the fun
- If for me to live is ambition, then to die is to become insignificant
- If for me to live is possessions, then to die is to have them all rust and fade away

Alexander MacLaren describes how death can be a gain:

1. We lose everything we don't need – the world, the flesh, and the devil. We lose our trials, troubles, tears and fears.
2. We keep everything that matters – our personality, our identity, and our fruit.
3. We gain what we never had before – heaven, rewards, the presence of God, fellowship with other believers.

1:22 **But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.** Paul speaks of life in the flesh, his physical body to be the fruit of his labor—souls being saved and lives being changed. Paul knew that the only reason to remain in this world was to bring souls to Christ and build up believers to do the same. You see Paul was in a dilemma concerning which to choose between (life) and (death). The word **"wot"** (*Gr gnōrizō*) has two distinctive meanings: transitive, to make known; intransitive, to know, to become acquainted with, and to discover. So, Paul is saying: I make not known; I cannot tell; I cannot choose.

1:23a **For I am in a strait betwixt two...**²The word rendered *"I am in a strait"* - means to be pressed on or constrained, as in a crowd; to feel oneself pressed or pent up so as not to know what to do; and it here means that he was in perplexity and doubt, and did not know what to choose.. Paul was hard-pressed. He was hemmed in on both sides.

1:23b There is **...a desire to depart and be with Christ...** —and there is a necessity to abide, a very strong reason for either choice. He is being pulled in both directions. The word **"depart"** (*anulusai*) has a twofold meaning that speaks to the believer's heart. Paul says that he is caught between two great desires.

- One *"desire is to depart"* and go on to be with Christ which is far better.
- The other *"desire is to live a life of fruitful service"* for the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹ http://www.pontiacbible.org/index.php?sermons/more/you_win_either_way/

² <http://bible.cc/philippians/1-23.htm>

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The Greek word translated "**desire**" (*epithumia*) is most often used of a sinful lust. But occasionally it expresses a strong unfulfilled desire for something right and good.

1:23c ...**which is far better**;— Labor for Christ is sweet, but rest with Christ will be sweeter. *Whitfield* said, "*I am often weary in the work, but never weary of it.*" Paul was ready to go and willing to wait. Life has its attractions; death has its advantages. Paul desires to live and labor, but preferring Christ's purpose!

1:24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. Paul yielded his personal desire to be with the Lord for the necessity of the building of the church. Paul was an unselfish man.

1:25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith. Paul was convinced that he would "**remain**" (*meno*) and "*continue or come alongside*" (*parameno*) --a play on words. He would remain for the purpose of aiding the Philippians' spiritual "*progress and joy in the faith.*" Their faith in Christ would increase, as they also abide and continue, thus leading to an increase in their joy.

1:26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again. The word "**rejoicing**" (*Gr kauchēma*) is exultation; that of which one glories or can glory; a matter or the grounds of your glorying; your reason for boasting. The word does not mean the act of glorying. Their joy and confidence would overflow because of Christ working in Paul, not because of anything he himself did of his own ability. And as Christ is working in him, he is able to come again.

Standing Together

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 spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;—The Philippian church was a great church, and Paul wanted it to remain great. Keep conducting yourselves as Christians should. Therefore, he reviewed with them the marks of citizens of a great Christian church.

1. The **first mark** of a great church is "Christian conduct" or "heavenly citizenship." The word "**conversation**" or "**conduct**" (*politeuesthe*) is significant. More accurately it means how they should walk day by day.
2. The **second mark** of a great church is "honoring the gospel." The word "becometh" or "worthy" (*axios*) means to fit, correspond, be suitable, be worthy. If we are to profess the gospel, we are to live worthy of the gospel.
3. The **third mark** of a great church is "standing fast."
 - a. The church must stand fast in unity: in one spirit, with one mind.
 - i. "**One spirit**" means that all the members of a church must be born again by the Spirit of Christ. They must all be committed to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - ii. "**One mind**" means that all members must be set upon the same purpose. They must all be focused upon the purpose of Jesus Christ.

The point is this: the world—its people, families, and nations—may be split and divided, arguing and differing, fussing and feuding, fighting, and divorcing, warring and killing, seeking and grasping; but the church is not to live that way. The church is to be unified; it is to be one in spirit and one in mind; one in heart and one in purpose.

- b. The church must stand fast in "striving together" for the faith of the gospel. The word "**striving together**" (*sunathlountes*) is the word taken from an athlete contest. It is the picture of a team working and struggling together against strong opposition. The church—every member of it—is to strive for the

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faith of the gospel: strive, work, struggle, push, exert all the energy possible; everyone cooperating together, not a single person letting up or turning aside or walking off the field. The opposition is difficult; therefore, the faith of the gospel needs every member working and struggling together.

Surviving To The End

1:28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. The Philippians did encounter opposition to their faith in Christ and their evangelism of the gospel. When we stand and when we strive it's easy to get afraid when people come after us. Paul doesn't want us to be alarmed or jumpy when we face opposition. Actually, if people are not opposing you because of the gospel then there's something wrong.

4. **The fourth mark** of a great church is "courage and fearlessness." Being a Christian believer in a corrupt world is hard. People oppose our stand for Christ and righteousness. It may be next door, in the office, at school, or a hundred other places—the Christian believer is sometimes...

- avoided •ridiculed •mocked •isolated •neglected •overlooked •questioned •mistreated
- slandered •persecuted •martyred •ignored •by-passed •imprisoned •abused •cursed

Note the exhortation: we are not to be terrified by our adversaries. There are four reasons why:

1. Persecution is a sign that the persecutors are doomed.
2. Persecution is a sign of salvation for us.
3. Persecution is a privilege, not a terror.

Suffering For Christ

1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; — The apostles considered it a special gift from God, a high privilege, to be allowed to suffer for Christ's sake, even as Christ had suffered for the lost. The Christian's privileges are to believe on Christ and to suffer for Him, and always in that order. God confers upon us the high honor of suffering with Christ and for Christ. Christ suffered to provide salvation. A glorious reward awaits all who suffer. When we suffer because we faithfully represent Christ, we know that our message and example are having an effect; and that God considers us worthy to represent Him. Suffering has these additional benefits:

1. It takes our eyes off of earthly comforts.
2. It weeds out superficial believers.
3. It strengthens the faith of those who endure.
4. It serves as an example to others who may follow us.

Suffering for our faith doesn't mean we have done something wrong, in fact, the opposite is often true—it verifies that we have been faithful. The suffering is seen as that which was, "given in the behalf of Christ." There is no greater passage that describes this reality more clearly than, John 15:12-21.

1:30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me. The inner conflict is always the result of an outward conflict of struggle. Paul is letting them know that their same conflict was seen by them in Paul. The Philippians saw Paul beaten for the sake of Christ, and thrown into prison. And they have heard that he is still fighting now.

SUMMARY:

Paul's circumstances at Rome have actually been for the furtherance of the gospel. Imprisonment has actually

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created opportunities to spread the gospel. He wanted the Philippians to know this. Even opposition has provided an opportunity for Christ to be preached; for even among the palace guards it is evident his chains are in Christ. Paul turned his prison cell into a gospel chapel. His example has emboldened others to speak without fear. The lesson for us is this: we must never let circumstances get us down— •persecution •accident •loss of loved one •imprisonment •age •rejection •divorce—never let them defeat your testimony and witness for Christ, no matter what they are (**1:12-14**).

There were those that preached Christ out of envy and strife, but some found pleasure and satisfaction in Paul's work. Paul had an abasing selfless attitude. He knew that some were preaching to build their own reputations, but he was glad the gospel was being preached, regardless of the motives of these preachers. Many Christians serve for the wrong reasons. God doesn't excuse their motives, but like Paul, we should be glad if God uses their message, regardless of their motives. Paul continued to rejoice because he knew that the prayers and the help of the Holy Spirit were going to be for his good (**1:15-19**).

Paul didn't want to ever do anything that would cause him to be ashamed, but he would speak boldly for Christ, even in the trial he was going through, for Christ was going to be magnified in life, or in his death. It would both be to his gain. Paul's main purpose in living was to glorify Christ, and yet he knew that if he was martyred he would also glorify Him through his testimony. His personal desire was to depart and be with the Lord. This he knew would be better for him as it would mean his release from persecutions and other hardships he suffered. However, he knew that the Philippians needed him and the Lord had more work for him to do. Paul had confidence that he would remain and continue to work for the progress and joy of the Philippians faith. He wanted to cause their rejoicing to be more abundant in Christ by his coming to them again (**1:20-26**).

Paul wanted them to keep conducting themselves as Christians should—stand fast in the spirit with one mind, striving together on the faith of the gospel. They were not to be afraid by anything of their opposers, which is their clear sign of the opposers destruction, but for the Philippians, it is their salvation from God, for the privilege has been given to the them in behalf of Christ not only to believe but also to suffer for Christ's sake. This is not just any suffering, but that which comes in standing for Jesus Christ. The same conflict they had seen and heard of Paul's fight would be theirs. If our church is unified together then we are not going to be frightened. We find a special strength that comes from God. (**1:27-30**).

APPLICATION:

How is your service here on earth? Is it committed service to others and to Jesus? It makes a difference how you serve. Is Christ exalted? Paul himself was beaten to the point of death, put in jail there in Philippi, and writing from prison while still undergoing these kinds of hardships. Do we forget to rejoice, when we have been given the opportunity to share in God's grace, knowing we will overcome the obstacle accounted unto us? The Gospel will get out and reach whomever God intends it for. As you, the messenger speaks, God directs His Word to the appropriate one. Whatever motive there is, God's message still touches and will be understood by the hearer.

[TOP](#)

2:1 **If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies:**— Coming from Chapter One Paul says “*if*.” “*if*” meaning, there is a condition or stipulation; if what is said to be true, then it will result in something. You see Paul had said that they were involved in the same kind of struggle he had gone through. In other words faithful disciples should experience the same persecutions as their teacher but go through knowing the strength within to do so. Now he says if our consolation (*encouragement*) is in Christ; if our comfort is found in His love; if we have fellowship in His Spirit, then agreement will occur. “*Bowels*” is the same word as we find in 1:8 and means tender-heartedness, tender mercies. “*Mercies*” means compassionate yearnings and action. Therefore, if our deepest affection, tender-heartedness and our compassionate yearnings and action comes forth from Him, it will result in unity and having the right attitude with others. Paul does not doubt their Christian faith. He is reminding them that their faith should be rooted in Christ. ³They must show Christ’s love to other people. If they are not united, their witness to the world will be weak. Therefore, we have to know our position in Christ and our responsibility in that relationship. Four things that we constantly receive through God’s grace and we need to pass on to others in a spirit of loving service are: 1.) The consolation we have in Christ 2.) The comfort found in His love 3.) The fellowship we have in the Spirit 4.) The bowels and mercies we enjoy. Now you can fulfill my joy...

2:2 **Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind:**— All of this was to give Paul joy? “*Be the cause of my joy*”; make his joy complete. How? – By oneness of attitude, living in harmony, being intent on one thing; having the same love...That’s what Christ wants for the church.

2:3 **Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory:**— Paul gives two negative attitudes to stay away from:

1. Strife

- a. ⁴Where you have this kind of behavior, you have a divided church.
- b. It is a work of the flesh.
- c. It is the total opposite of the work of the Holy Spirit.
- d. It is the result of any church or individual’s behavior where God’s love is absent.

2. Vainglory

- a. Those are operating against Christ and in competition with Him.
- b. It is the exact opposite of the one who should get all of the glory and His name is Jesus Christ.

Nothing is to be done through conflict, fighting, contention, or discord; neither done through empty, proud, or groundless self-esteem. Strife also comes through selfish ambition, self-assertiveness and conceit —wanting to promote his own cause—empty glory.

2:3b...but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves:— “*But*” is a conjunction, meaning “*instead of the other*.” Therefore, instead of strife and vainglory **lowliness of mind** is what I want you to display. Lowliness of mind means— 1.) Humility of mind (be humble-minded. 2.) Self-forgetfulness in serving others (*forgetting about self to serve*). So, “*esteem*”(regard and respect) others above ourselves. The Christlike spirit of humility fixes its eyes on the excellency of others. God has placed excellency in others, and we are to look for that excellency in them by esteeming the greatness in them. We are placing ourselves lower than others with an attitude of respect. It’s the same as respecting your elders.

³ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/philippians-lbw.htm>

⁴ <http://www.fotbc.org/commentary/50philippians.htm>

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2:4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others:— The word **“look”** means to mentally consider, regarding something as an aim. However, we are not to look, consider, regard our aim toward self. Discipleship focuses on other people not selfish purposes. By doing this and giving it our priority we are imitating the humility of Christ, while staying in unity.

2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:— **“Let”** means allow, consent to. It’s something **you** have to do. The word **“mind”** here does not mean mental activity or intellectual process. It’s an act of the Will, allowing your attitude to be like Christ as He had while here on earth. Christ demonstrated a humble mind (attitude) and behavior. How did He do that? By being obedient to the Father. By not selfishly demanding His divine rights. Yes, our supreme example of humility is divine by nature, but He did not seek royal treatment. He emptied Himself and took the role of a servant. He obeyed the Father’s plan to the end by dying on an Old Rugged Cross for our sins. Having the mind of Christ is lowering oneself. That was the ultimate example! What an incredible example of attitude for the believer to follow. Jesus set and focused His attitude upon humbling Himself. He set the **“bar.”** He met our need as He humbled Himself to show what the mind of Christ looks like; what the attitude of Christ could be acquired. ⁵If Jesus regarded no sacrifice too great, no humiliation too painful, should not we have this sacrificial attitude toward fellow Christians?

2:6 Who, being in the form of God:— This is fundamentally about what He was and what we are to think of Him to be, before He became man. The phrase **“who being”** (*huparchōn*) **in the form of God** implies His preexistent deity, and His continued deity. It denotes prior existence. Jesus existed as God. Paul’s purpose here is not to explain the mystery of the Trinity, but to use it to illustrate the great sacrifice Christ made in becoming a human being. He gave up the glory of heaven to become a human. The word **“form”** (*morphē*) does not mean shape, but it is **“the nature or essence”** living in the individual. Christ preexisted in the “form of God.” His very form—the essential nature and character—identified Him as God. When Mary became impregnated, the Angel Gabriel told her the Holy Ghost shall come upon her and the power of the Highest shall overshadow her—that Holy thing which shall be born shall be called the Son of God! While on earth, the form of God still existed—His prior existence and His nature and essence still existed in the womb! The form of God will always be seen in the Person of Christ which includes the whole nature and essence of His Deity; will be retained as long as He exists and that’s Forever!

2:6b...thought it not robbery to be equal with God:— God came in humility as a baby. Jesus did not regard His position as equal with God the Father as something to hold onto, but as something to be relinquished for the redemption of men. He gave up the throne in glory for a cross of shame and suffering. He did not obtain anything, including His deity by force or use force to seize, by robbery and usurpation, as Satan attempted to do. He did no injury, nor deprived Himself of any glory, or assumed to Himself which did not belong to Him. He was God! Just as He laid His life down for man on a cross, He laid down His rights of Divine Majesty to become a Son on earth; He set aside the use of His essence of God, because of His mission. His mission had Him to respond in a different way as to not be equal to God. **“Equal”** means one and the same. He was one and the same, meaning God. He was absolute in that equality. He was eternally conscious of His existence with the Trinity. But his mission took another course. When Christ went to the cross, He fulfilled the role of the Son and the Savior—the original plan of the Father. They had a meeting: The spoken plan of the Father—became the plan of the Son. The Father is the Administrator—The Son Becomes the Plan. It’s carried out by the Power of the Holy Spirit—The Trinity is One! Jesus gave up the glory of heaven to become a human. He gave up His big mansion for a while as the Father is always to take center stage. He’s doing what He’s telling us to do in verse 3

⁵ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/category/philippians/page/16/>
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and 4—in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

2:7 But made himself of no reputation...:— "No reputation" literally means He "emptied" Himself. He renounced and set aside His privileges. He began to do that when He came in human form as a baby. His reputation was not seen. He began to do that when He fasted and went into the wilderness, and the tempter came to tempt Him and said "If you be the Son of God..."(Matt.4:3); the second time the devil took Him into the Holy City on a pinnacle of the temple and said "If thou be the Son of God..."(Matt.4:6); the third time the devil took Him to an exceeding high mountain and said, "Fall down and worship me"(Matt.4:9); Christ emptied Himself by saying "It is written" each time went. Christ reputation was not seen for He emptied Himself from something, that is, the form of God. He set aside His privileges; His rights. He did not cease to be what He essentially and eternally was. He did not empty Himself of being the Godhead. He set aside and took upon Himself the form of a servant. When you empty yourself and want to be like Christ, what do you do?

2:7b ...and took upon him the form of a servant...:— by preaching the Gospel to them, and partly by working miracles, healing their diseases, and going about doing good, both to the bodies and souls of men. ⁶We do everything in our power to build a reputation. Yet, Jesus shelved His rights as God. He thought more of us than He did of His reputation.

2:7c ...and was made in the likeness of men:— ⁷"Likeness" refers to an outward expression that is assumed from the outside and does not come from within. "Likeness" means similarity, but not sameness. Christ was not identical with man, in that He could not sin. He was exposed and tempted to the things man would be tempted and exposed to, but He was sinless; He did not sin. "Likeness" protects that distinction. His deity remained through humiliation. He lost nothing of what He had. His glory of His divine nature was covered, and out of sight; and though some rays and beams of it broke through in His works and miracles, His servanthood was displayed. As Jesus went around preaching and healing, He did all His acts not as God, but as the servant of God in the likeness of man. The purpose was not for Jesus to emulate us (man), but for man to emulate Him being a servant. He relinquished rights to be made in the likeness of men to serve which was unfamiliar for man. He still became a person to whom people refused to give honor.

2:8 And being found in fashion as a man...:— The word "*fashion*" points to an external appearance. While men recognized Him as a true man. He was not just a man. He was fully man (Heb. 2:14, 17), but He was also sinless (4:15) and fully God (Col. 1:15; 2:9). ⁸His fashion, His form, were like that of other men; though He was not begotten as man, but conceived in an extraordinary manner by the power of the Holy Ghost, yet He lay nine months in His mother's womb, born as children are, grew in stature; He hungered, was thirsty, became weary, in pain, experienced grief, sorrow, and death itself—all of what man goes through, yet, He was fully God and fully man. Jesus was both absolute deity and true humanity. He was always God who became man.

2:8b ...he humbled himself and became obedient unto death...:— First thing is He humbled Himself by complying to the Will of His Father and to His parents (had a trade as a carpenter, washed His disciples' feet, and even forgave His enemies). He was obedient from the cradle to the cross. Christ humbled Himself by becoming a man, but also, He humbled Himself in dying for man. He didn't have to do either one, but He did both. He knew the plan, became the plan, and carried out the plan by the power of the Spirit of God. To

⁶ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/category/philippians/page/16/>

⁷ http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?lect_date=3/16/2008&tab=3

⁸ <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=php&chapter=002&verse=008>

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humble oneself involves "**volition**" (a Will, a decision, a choice). He chose to die!

2:8c ...even the death of the cross:— For Jesus to die was not unique; everyone dies. However, the most despised death of a condemned criminal was on an accursed cross. When slaves were executed, they were crucified. Christ placed Himself on the same plane as the worst of criminals. He says, "*No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father*" Jh.10:18 (NIV). Jesus did not stop halfway. He showed the mark of slave/a servant in His obedience. He never was death's slave, but death's master and conqueror.

- ⁹The cross was the **goal** of the incarnation. "*Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements [the law] that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross*" Col. 2:14 (NKJ). Jesus was nailed to the cross and with Him the judgments of the law against us.
- The cross is the **focal point** of God's dealings with us. That is where our redemption from sin was worked out. By shedding His blood on the cross He paid the price for all sin for all time. "*...God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them...*" II Cor. 5:19 (NKJ).
- The cross is a **bloody issue with which to deal.** The cross is offensive to many people. The cross offends people, especially religious people (Gal. 5:11). Religion leads people to believe that if they lead a decent life they will be acceptable to God. That's why people run to religion to tell them that they are "ok." It becomes offensive and distasteful, causing them to not want to accept that it was the cross and not man having the power to save. If Christ did not die there, there would be no salvation for man. Only the cross of Christ could save us from our sin. God's best was on a distasteful cross. The cross is not to offend us, but to save us!

2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him:— "**Wherefore**", determines a reason or purpose for something. Jesus went from the highest point imaginable—the "**form of God**" (*the essence of God*), to the lowest place conceivable—the "**death of the cross.**" The "**reason**" or the "**wherefore**" for God's exaltation of Christ is contained in verses 6-8. It was because of the journey Christ took, God exalted Him. It was because Christ humbled Himself as an obedient servant, God exalted Him, and raised Him from the dead and enthroned Him in heaven. It's true God exalts those who humble themselves.

Lk.14:11 says, "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Just as Jesus taught others, it was by humbling Himself as a servant that He became greatest of all. To exalt Him is one thing, but to "**highly**" exalt Him is another thing. Because of His voluntary renunciation, obedience, and death, God exalted Him supremely. He was never to stay on the cross; He was never to stay in the tomb. He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" Jh.2:19. He was referring to the destruction of His body and to His resurrection from the dead. When Christ's body was destroyed, the purpose and existence of the Jewish Temple were also destroyed. The task was done. Before He died, He prayed, "**And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began**" Jh.17:5 (NIV). He was highly exalted!

- ¹⁰The first step of Christ's exaltation was His resurrection from the dead. His body became a glorious body; raised in incorruption; glorified as Mediator; justified in the Spirit, and acquitted and discharged from all the sins of His people; and all God's elect were justified in Him, for He rose, for their justification; and was glorified.
- The next step of His high exaltation was His ascending on high up to the third heaven, where He is made higher than the heavens; when He was accompanied by an innumerable company of angels,

⁹ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/category/philippians/page/15/>

¹⁰ <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=php&chapter=002&verse=009>

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and by those saints whose bodies rose out of their graves after His resurrection; and was received and carried up in a bright glorious cloud; and passing through the air, He led captivity captive, and triumphed over principalities and powers, having before spoiled them on His cross; and then entering into heaven, He sat down at the right hand of God, which is another branch of His exaltation; and shows that he had done His work, and that it was approved and accepted.

2:9b...and given him a name which is above every name:— ¹¹The word “name” is equivalent to character. Character is beyond reputation. A person might have a good reputation but not have integrity. A person might have a talent but no character. A name spells out who and what a person is. Becoming a Christian has to do with Jesus’ name:

- “...to those who believe in his **name**” (John 1:12),
- “...because he has not believed in the **name** of the only begotten Son of God” (3:18).
- “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other **name** under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).
- Prayer is to be executed in Jesus’ name, “And whatever you ask in **My name**, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in **My name**, I will do it” (John 14:13, 14).

What name is that? The name Jesus had already been given to Him. The name most likely in view here is “Lord” (verse 11). The word translated “Lord” (*kurios*) was used of Yahweh, the God of Israel, in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. God gave Jesus the very name of God: “Yahweh” (in Hebrew) and “Lord” (in Greek). God has placed Him in rank above everyone and everything else. To not appreciate who we are in Christ is to diminish what Jesus did for us. Scripture affirms that this was Jesus’ rightful title as the God-man. Now He is openly and manifestly glorified with Himself, with the glory He had with Him before the world began.

2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth:— All worship is to focus on Jesus Christ. To bow one’s knee meant to recognize and acknowledge one in authority. Jesus will be acknowledged as the ultimate authority—God. To illustrate total submission, Paul says that the knees of...

- things “in heaven” means angels and people who have gone to heaven,
- things “on earth” refers to human beings who are alive in time,
- things “under the earth” probably refers to fallen angels will bow.

Even during Christ’s earthly ministry the demons recognized Him for who He was and trembled at His authority. After resurrection, Jesus said to His disciples, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” *Matt.28:16 (NIV)*. Every being has to recognize the supreme authority of Christ. We can do it now as we submit our lives to Him, or we can do it at the judgment when we will all stand before His throne.

2:11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord:— Actions will not only indicate the sovereignty of Christ but words will as well. Every tongue belonging to all beings spoken of in verse 10 will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, that He is Yahweh; that He is the One True God. Jesus has all rights to my life; He is my Master. “Confess” means to acknowledge a debt owed. The word “confess” here is intense and it means to “confess out.” This is an outward consent, to consent fully, openly and publicly. God wants us to acknowledge openly, that is, publicly that Jesus is Lord.

2:11b ...to the glory of God the Father:— When we acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus, we glorify the Father. God is glorified and is highly exalted when men openly acknowledge Christ as Lord.

¹¹ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/category/philippians/page/15/>
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2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Believers are to “*work out their own salvation*” with fear and trembling. What does this mean? The word “*work out*” (*katergazesthe*) means to work on to the finish, to completion, to perfection. It always means to complete the effort and the work begun; to accomplish it perfectly. **The point is:** do not go half-way in salvation. Do not take bits and pieces when there is a whole parcel. Do not be satisfied with a little when you can have much. Go on; grow until salvation is completed in you. It is *your own salvation*. Once God has saved a person, that person is to get busy obeying God. He is to take hold of the new life and salvation God has given him, and he is to work on it until it is completed and finished, that is, until God takes him home and perfects it.

Paul says that *they had always obeyed God, not only when he was with them, but also when he was away*. Now, as he was facing death, he wanted them more than ever to work out their salvation—to continue obeying God. Note the word “*fear and trembling*.”

- We are to fear and tremble because of the trials and temptations of life. Anyone of them can throw us off or cause us to buckle under. The world and its temptations and trials are strong and the flesh is weak.
- We are to fear and tremble lest we disappoint the Lord. He saved us; He went to the ultimate limit; He demonstrated a perfect love by taking all our sins upon Himself and bearing our punishment.

Therefore, when we sin and fail, it cuts His heart to no end.

- We are to fear and tremble because we are to face the judgment seat of Christ. If we sin and fail to work out our own salvation we shall be judged severely and suffer loss—great loss.

2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. As we work out our own salvation, we to obey—obeying the stirrings of God within their hearts. The word “*worketh*” (*energon*) means to energize. God arouses, stirs, and energizes the heart of the believer to do God’s “*Will*.” These stirrings are of God—“*giving us both the will and power to do what pleases Him*.” It means that God does not leave us alone to work out our salvation and deliverance. **The point to see is:** God is forever working within us to complete our salvation (the work of sanctification). The tragedy is this: ignoring, neglecting, and refusing to respond to the stirrings and workings of God. Although the believer is responsible to work, the Lord actually produces the good works and spiritual fruit in the lives of believers. This is accomplished because He works through us by His indwelling Spirit. Keep in mind that salvation means deliverance. If the church is to be unified—if the believers are to walk in a spirit of unity, then they must look at their salvation—at the whole scope of their life and the glorious salvation God has given them—and they must do all they can to work out their own deliverance by obeying Him.

SUMMARY:

1Paul had said that they were involved in the same kind of struggle he had gone through. In others words faithful disciples should experience the same persecutions as their teacher but go through knowing the strength within to do so. Now he says if our consolation (*encouragement*) is in Christ; if our comfort is found in His love; if we have fellowship in His Spirit, then agreement will occur. Therefore, if our deepest affection, tender-heartedness and our compassionate yearnings and action comes forth from Him, it will result in unity and having the right attitude with others. He is reminding them that their faith should be rooted in Christ. Four things that we constantly receive through God’s grace and we need to pass on to others in a spirit of loving service are: 1.) The

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consolation we have in Christ 2.) The comfort found in His love 3.) The fellowship we have in the Spirit 4.) The bowels and mercies we enjoy. Now you can fulfill my joy... **2**All of this was to give Paul joy? He says "*Fulfill my joy; Be the cause of my joy*"; make his joy complete. How? – By oneness of attitude, living in harmony, being intent on one thing; having the same love...That's what Christ wants for the church. **3**Paul gives two negative attitudes to stay away from: strife and vainglory, but lowliness of mind is what we are to display, esteeming others better than ourselves. **4**We are not to look, consider, regard our aim on our own interests, but each on the interests of others (**2:1-4**).

Paul gives the perfect example of the mind which Christians should possess, which was in verses 3-4. "*You should have the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus. He always had the nature of God. But He did not think that He should hold on to His rights and honour as God. Instead He made Himself have no reputation. And He became a servant. He came in the form of a man. As a man He was humble. He obeyed God. So He was prepared to die – even to die on a cross. For this reason God raised Him up to the highest place. God has given Him the name that is higher than any other name. So in honour of the name of Jesus, every being in heaven, on earth and beneath the earth shall kneel. And all will declare that Jesus Christ is Lord. In this way, honour will come to God the Father*" (*The Easy English Bible Version*). **12**Paul is telling the believers to "*work out their own salvation*" with fear and trembling meaning to take hold of the new life and salvation God has given by continuing to acknowledge and obey Christ even while he is absent. **13**God will be the One who will work in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. This is accomplished because He works through us by His indwelling Spirit. Ask for His help to put forth the effort to take off the things in your life that you know are displeasing to God? And put out the effort to put on the things that are pleasing to God with reverential fear until God takes you home (**2:5-13**).

APPLICATION:

We will be forever asking ourselves, WWJD? His attitude was never with a selfish motive, but one of servanthood. His ambition was never about Himself but that of the Father's Will. His nature was that of a servant which concludes how our ministry should be. In the end, exaltation came from the Father not from man. It was all about the attitude in which He approached and did things. Jesus was highly exalted because He honored the Father in everything He did. As we empty ourselves, not esteeming ourselves, we become like Him.

[TOP](#)

PAUL WARNS THEM AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS:

3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. At the beginning of Chapter 3, Paul says, "*Finally.*" This is not the close of the letter but the beginning of Paul's last main teaching topic, warning the Philippians against false teachers. Paul explains that the believer must press on for Christ, first guarding themselves by:

1. rejoicing in the Lord (**3:1**).
2. heeding to what is written (in the scripture) (**3:1**).
3. watching out for false teachers (**3:2**).
4. Knowing that you are the true (spiritual) circumcision (**3:3**).

3:1a IN ORDER TO REJOICE, KNOW TO:

1. **GUARD YOURSELF BY REJOICING IN THE LORD.** As the believer walks through life, two things are always confronting him: circumstances and false teaching. No matter where he goes, the trials of life, both minor and major, confront him.
 - enticing temptations • lust of the eyes • lust of the flesh • greed • selfishness • argument
 - divisions • Inhuman behavior • criminal acts • death • accidents • disease

The list could go on and on. False teachings of this life also confront him. **The point is this:** If the believer is to press on in his Christian life, he must walk about rejoicing in the Lord. The great thing about rejoicing is that it places and keeps a person in the presence of Christ, knowing what He has done. Our mind cannot be in two places at once. If it is upon the Lord and His glorious salvation, then it cannot be upon the trials and false teachings of this world.

No matter what confronts the believer—no matter how terrible the trial—he knows that nothing can separate him from the Lord and His love—that he shall never die, but rather live eternally. Therefore, he knows that whatever comes upon him, it can never conquer and overcome him. Christ will give him supernatural power and strength to overcome it. And if he is called upon to lay down his body and move on to heaven, he knows that he shall never taste or experience death; he knows that Jesus Christ is going to escort him right on into God's presence immediately—quicker than the eye can blink—about $11/100$ of a second. The believer is forever secure in the keeping power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, he walks rejoicing in the Lord: he rejoices no matter what confronts him. Real joy is only found in fellowship with God.

3:1b AS PAUL KEEPS WRITING, KNOW TO:

2. **GUARD YOURSELF BY HEEDING TO WHAT IS WRITTEN,** that is, in the scriptures. Paul says that he is writing some things that he had apparently written before. Therefore, it must be repeated and the church must do what is being said. What scriptures says, was written to instruct us, and help us in pressing on for Christ. No person can press on apart from heeding the scriptures. If he fails to study and obey the scripture, he will cave in either to the trials of life or to false teaching. Only as we obey the scripture—the commandments of the Lord—can we show our love and loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ.

AS THE WORD KEEPS YOU SAFE, SO DOES A WARNING:

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

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3. **GUARD YOURSELF BY WATCHING OUT FOR FALSE TEACHERS.** Paul was always facing false teachers who were savage in their attacks upon him. He mentions three groups of false teachers in this verse.
1. **Beware of false teachers who act like "dogs" (*kunas*).** The word "dogs" was the lowest title possible to convey contempt and ridicule. They were the scavengers and snarlers who could be very vicious and dangerous. They were the false teachers who boasted in their religion, trusted in human attainment rather than divine atonement, trusted in the works of man rather than the grace of God. They perverted the gospel and substituted something else for the blood of Christ. These false teachers dogged Paul's footsteps snapping and snarling, biting and barking.
 2. **Beware of the false teachers who are evil workers.**
 - a. This refers to those who hold to and teach high standards of righteousness, morality, and religion being absolutely sure that they are righteous and good—at least good enough to be acceptable to God. There is just no way God would ever reject them—so they think.
 - b. They were mischief-makers who disturbed both the faith and the peace of believers. They were wolves in sheep's clothing, deceiving, deluding, and destroying the flock.

The point is this: There are those who are always opposing the Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation by grace alone. They do not accept that He is God's Son—that He is the Lord of man's life; the Lord who is to be given all. Therefore, they accept Christ's teaching, but ignore or deny salvation by His blood. They stand opposed to the gospel of salvation by His grace alone. They go about establishing their own way to God, doing whatever good they feel is needed to make themselves acceptable to Him. The result is false teaching—a way to God that stands against the Lord Jesus Christ and His way. Such false teachers are evil workers—stand opposing to the truth.

3. **Beware of false teachers who are of the concision. "Conclslon"** refers to mutilation (*Gr katatomē*) in contrast to circumcision (*Gr peritomē*).¹² Circumcision had now lost its spiritual significance, and was now become to those who rested on it as any ground of justification, a senseless mutilation. Legalists have only "concision," that is, the cutting off of the flesh. What God required was a "circumcision" of the heart.

NOTE:

These Judaizers were men who mixed ritual and law with the gospel of Christ. Paul's argument was that this teaching was the very opposite of the true gospel. A man is not saved by fleshly signs nor by rituals, or by his own ability to keep the law and regulations and rules. However, these men still hung on to their Judaistic religion, in particular to the rite of circumcision and to the Law of Moses. They believed a man became a Christian...

- by first becoming a Jew—with all its rituals and ceremonies and be circumcised...
- then the man could accept Christ as his Savior.

AS WE WORSHIP:

3:3 "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

4. **GUARD YOURSELF BY KNOWING THAT YOU ARE THE TRUE CIRCUMCISION.** Note believers are called "the circumcision." What does Paul mean?
 1. **Believers are those who worship God as He really wishes to be worshipped:** in the spirit; that is, they have circumcised or cut away the flesh as the means by which they worship God. Most people worship God...
 - by attending church services
 - by being circumcised or baptized or undergoing some other ritual by praying
 - by keeping the rituals and ceremonies of a church
 - by making occasional gifts to needy causes
 - by joining a church
 - by thinking of God occasionally
 - by

¹² <http://bible.cc/philippians/3-2.htm>

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observing special days

But note a critical point: As good as all of these are, they are not the basis of true worship. They are things that we do because we worship; they are the result and activities of worship. They are not the basis or spirit of worship. True, they may help us focus upon God and stir us to worship Him, but as stated, they are not the basis and spirit of worship. True worship has to be of the heart and spirit. Why? Because a man can attend church, keep all the rituals and ceremonies, and still be living in the depths of sin. But if a man's spirit is right with God, he worships God with a clean and pure heart, free from all sin and defilement. The truly circumcised person is the person who worships God in spirit.

2. **Believers are those who rejoice as God really wants us to rejoice:** in Christ Jesus. How can we boast and rejoice in ritual and ceremony and religion, when the Source—the Author and Finisher—of our faith, is Christ Jesus? Therefore, the true circumcision, the true believer does not boast in anything physical or material—not in ritual or ceremonial or religion. The true circumcision rejoices and boasts in Him who has given us Salvation and access to God, even in Christ Jesus our Lord.
3. **Believers are those who have no confidence in the flesh.** The flesh ages, deteriorates, and corrupts. And no matter what the flesh has done and accomplished in this physical world, it takes all its ability of works to the grave with it. The flesh dies and all that concerns the flesh dies with it. Therefore, the true circumcision, the true believer, has no confidence and puts no stock in the flesh. He has confidence only in Jesus Christ.

NOTE:

Before Christ, circumcision was the physical sign that a man was a follower of the true God. It was the sign that a man believed the promises that God had made to Abraham and Israel. God never intended circumcision to have any value other than being a sign. It was not to bring righteousness to any man—not even to Abraham. It was given only as a sign—a sign of the faith that a man already had in God's promises.

PAUL'S ADVANTAGES:

3:4 Paul says, **Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any man thinks he can trust in the works and attainments of his flesh, I more:—** In other words, *'I can trust and boast in the goodness and morality and works of the flesh as much as any man who has ever lived'*. Paul had achieved the height of self-righteousness. He ranks among the greatest of men who have attempted to work their way into God's presence. He did all the good he could to secure God's approval. Few, if any men, have ever attained what Paul did by human effort. Yet, it was all to no avail. His goodness and his attainments did not make him acceptable to God. And there is one primary reason: he could not make himself perfect. Paul presented his pedigree and claims to have more grounds for boasting than anyone else, however, it falls short of God's holy standards, no matter how impressive. Paul lists seven privileges and achievements which show the total inadequacy of man to save himself, and he divides the list under "Privileges of Birth..."

3:5 Paul begins the advantages from his family: **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;—**

1. ¹³**"Circumcision the eighth day":** Paul was saying that he had the right birth. So his Jewish parents obeyed the commands that God gave to Abraham (Genesis 17:12). He was a true child of Abraham. It cannot save you: Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in birth or in religious rituals and ceremonies. Yet, how many people think they are acceptable to God because they...

¹³ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/philippians-lbw.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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- have godly parents? • have godly grandparents? • have kept religious rituals and ceremonies?
- have a godly spouse? • have godly friends? (and they're all praying for you)

How many expect the godliness of others to just rub off on them –to count them and make them acceptable?

2. **"Of the stock of Israel":** Paul is saying that he had the right national heritage and a very special relationship with God. Israel was the name that God gave to Jacob (Genesis 32:28). When a Jew wished to stress his special relationship to God, he called himself an Israelite; that is, he was of the nation and descent of Israel which had a very special relationship with God, and who had received a very special name from God. It cannot save you: Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in ancestors or in social superiority. Yet, how many think that being born in a Christian nation and surrounded by Christian principles carry some merit with God?
 - an upper class? • a more elite church? • a more dynamic church? • a more active ministry?
3. **"Of the tribe of Benjamin":** Benjamin was the child of Rachel whom Jacob loved; the only son of Jacob that was born in the promised country (Genesis 35:16-18). And because Benjamin was considered the aristocratic tribe and of the tribe's courageous acts throughout Israel's history (Judg.5:14; Hos.5:8), it was a shoe-in. Paul was saying that he was of the highest aristocracy of the most noble of the most respectable persons of Israel. It cannot save you: Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in social or religious status. Yet, how many feel they are more acceptable to God because they belong to...

If "Privileges of Birth" are not impressive enough, then "Achievements by Self-Effort." Verse 5b-6 begins achievements by self-effort:

4. **"An Hebrew of the Hebrews":** Paul claimed to have the right language and the right customs. He had deliberately kept the Hebrew tongue and refused to forget it. In his day, this was extremely difficult, for the Jews were literally scattered across the world and the world had one common language, Greek. Paul had gone to Jerusalem in order to learn from Gamaliel, a famous Jewish teacher (Acts 22:3). Now Paul was well versed and speaking Hebrew, the Jewish language. It cannot save you: Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in religious faithfulness, nor in a spiritual language, nor in the ability to know and speak in religious terms. Yet, how many think that they are acceptable to God because they...
 - do good and are faithful in being good? • are faithful in talking about and sharing spiritual things?
 - are faithful in studying their religion, the Bible, and the great doctrines of the faith?
 - they know and use religious terms and languages?
5. **"A Pharisee":** Paul claimed to have had the right religion; to have been a Pharisee. He had chosen to be a Pharisee like his parents (Acts 23:6). Pharisees were the strictest of Jews; so strict that their very name meant "The Separated Ones." He devoted his life to the most "separated" and demanding religion ever known to man. He achieved "separation", exacting separation from other men. It cannot save you: Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in religion, nor even in being a follower of the true religion. Yet, how many feel the very opposite?

3:6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

6. **"Concerning Zeal":** Paul had zealously stood and fought for his religion. He sought to wipe out any cause that differed from his (Acts 22:2-21; 26:4-33; 1Corth.15:8-10; Gal.1:13). He was as zealous as a [person could be in trying to reach converts for his religion and in keeping his religion as pure as he could, but for the wrong reasons. It cannot save you: Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in religious commitments or zeal that are misguided. Few have ever been committed to their religion

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like Paul; few have ever been as faithful to the worship services, ordinances, rituals, and ceremonies of his religion like Paul.

7. **"Blameless"**: Paul claimed he had sought to keep the law, and he had kept it completely and fully—**being blameless**. This does not mean that Paul was sinless. It meant that when Paul sinned, he obeyed the law and took his sacrifice to the temple. He obeyed all the commandments, rituals, and ceremonies just like scripture said. He followed all the laws and instructions of the scripture. He was blameless—ritually and ceremonially—in the righteousness of the law. It cannot save you: Paul was saying that goodness and righteousness are not found in keeping all the rituals and ceremonies of religion. They are not even found in keeping all the commandments of the scripture, because you can't!

3:7 Paul says, **But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.** "Gain" means asset, profit, anything that would be an advantage. Paul had (in the past) natural pride in his Jewish attainment, but all these assets did not save him, justify him, give him peace, nor bring him into fellowship with God. As Paul focused on knowing Christ...

1. Paul had a past experience with Christ: and he counted his own righteousness as loss. Paul was referring to his conversion experience. There was a time when he had given up his own self-righteousness and works, his own attempts to become perfect—he could not gain righteousness—he could not make himself perfectly acceptable to God.
 - a. **Note**: that this is a definite time when Paul made a definite decision—a decision that he was unable to secure righteousness and perfection himself. He had to trust the love of God.
 - b. **Note**: that this did not mean that Paul quit trying to live for God. On the contrary, it meant that Paul tried more diligently than ever to live for God. When God saw Paul's total commitment to Christ, God knew that Paul's faith was genuine.

3:8 **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, that I may win Christ,—**

This reminds me of Jim Elliot's words: *"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."* This is what Paul experienced.

2. Paul had a continuous experience with Christ: he constantly counted all things as loss and as waste in order to win Christ. The word "count" is in the present tense; it is a continuous action. When a person has made the decision to seek after Christ, he is "to continue" to seek after the knowledge of Christ—to learn all he can about the righteousness and perfection of Jesus Christ.
 - It is not a matter of making a decision to follow Christ, and then turning and walking on as a person has always walked—doing his own thing and fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind.
 - It is making a decision to follow Christ and continuing to seek after the knowledge of Him—continuing to seek to know him more and more.
 - a. **Note**: that the knowledge of Christ is said to be excellent. The knowledge of Christ is the most excellent way in all the world. No other knowledge can give a person righteousness and perfection or make a person acceptable to God and give him the right to live eternally.
 - b. **Note**: what Paul says: *"I have suffered the loss of all things."* He now began to receive the persecution he had once dealt out to others. The words "have suffered" mean to forfeit and to cast away. The phrase "all things" includes not only the religious position Paul had attained, but the social, financial, intellectual and political gains he had made as well.
 - c. **Note**: his value system has been turned around in that he would even throw away these worldly

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glories as "rubbish" (really "dung"). All he lost was like worthless rubbish (dung) compared to the riches found in Christ.

3:9 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:—

3. Paul sought a future experience with Christ: he sought to be found in Christ. Paul was looking ahead either to death or to the return of Christ, and wanting to be found in Him. One cannot be truly in Christ while having their own righteousness because they contradict each other. "Found in Him" means being spiritually united to Christ and therefore found not guilty before God as divine judge. He would be completely united with Christ in heaven. ¹⁴Paul states that the righteousness he possessed before true salvation was his own righteousness and a person's own righteousness cannot save them. The law only showed us that we are unable to keep the law and that we are unable to be obedient to God.
- a. **Note:** a right relationship with God did not come by obeying the Law of Moses. This show us two things:
 - i. Righteousness of the law: trusting in the ceremonies of the Law of Moses for salvation.
 - ii. Righteousness which is through the faith of Christ: obeying the ordinances of the gospel of Christ and being saved by "*faith alone*." Paul received the righteousness of Christ as a free gift.
 - b. **Note:** ¹⁵Paul wants to live in the righteousness which is of God and comes to the true believer by the faith of Christ and not faith in Christ. The faith of Christ is what saves us, and then we are able to have faith in Christ. That faith is the faith which Christ is both the author and the finisher which we saw in Philippians 1:6. When we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, it is eternal and that righteousness never fades or gives way. The righteousness of the law was only temporary and needed to be renewed consistently through sacrifices and ceremonies. The righteousness of God is Christ Himself. It does not refer to a behavior or works or deeds of righteousness; no matter how good the works or deeds may be.

3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;— There is a goal, an aim that Paul was getting to; that we all may need to get to.

1. Paul sought a victorious experience with Christ:— He sought to know Christ—not to speculate about Him, but to know Him; to know His glorious power over the world and all that is in the world.
 - a. **To know Christ is to know the power of His resurrection**. This refers to three great things:
 - i. The power to raise Christ shows that God has the power to conquer all the trials and temptations of life. When God exercised this power, He conquered the most powerful trial that faces man—death. And He has the power to conquer any trial or temptation of man, no matter what it is.
 - ii. The resurrection of Jesus Christ shows that God has the power to give man a new life, and the power to live a new life before Him. After Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, man was not living his old life—the life he had before Christ's death. He now lives before God in newness of life, seated with God Almighty, and placed in his rightful place!
 - iii. The power to raise Christ from the dead shows that God has the power to raise men from the dead. The believer shall experience the great resurrection power of God and be resurrected from the dead.

The point of God's power is clear: Christ can conquer death, can live in us, and can raise us from the dead.

- b. **To know Christ is to know the fellowship of His sufferings**. Most of us are willing to share in the blessings of Christ, but we want nothing to do with the sufferings of Christ. We shrink from the ridicule, questioning, and abuse He had to bear. Paul wanted to share in the purpose for which

¹⁴ http://www.scionofzion.com/philippians_3_6_10.htm

¹⁵ http://www.scionofzion.com/philippians_3_6_10.htm

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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Christ was suffering. Why did Christ suffer? He suffered because He proclaimed the righteousness of God—because He proclaimed the way men could become acceptable to God and live forever. Paul was saying that he wanted to suffer right along with Christ, suffer for the same cause—suffer for proclaiming the righteousness and salvation of God.

Note one other thing: God draws close to the believer when he suffers for the cause of Christ. In fact, God's presence is so near and dear it is called "the spirit of glory and of God" which rest upon the suffering believer.

- c. **To know Christ is to be made conformable to His death.** Jesus Christ subjected Himself totally to God. He put his own flesh and desires to death; He did only what God willed and desired. Even when He died, His flesh did not desire to die, but nevertheless... Paul sought to be conformed to the death of Christ. He sought to subject Himself totally to God—to put His flesh and desires to death and to do only the will and desire of God.

3:11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

2. Paul sought an **eternal experience** with Christ: he sought to be resurrected from the dead. The words "if by any means" are not expressing doubt and uncertainty. Paul was not questioning the resurrection nor if he would be resurrected. Paul was simply saying what he had already stated (v v.7-11). He uses all he is and has—all the means at his disposal—for this one great purpose: to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Paul knew that he might die soon, but he had faith that he would be raised to life again. His death would not terrorize him. This was an opportunity for a richer and fuller life with Christ. Paul focused on knowing Christ in every way.

HAVE NOT ATTAINED

3:12 "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. When Christ saved Paul, that was just the beginning, not the end. He had been saved to live for Christ and to serve Christ, and as long as he was on this earth he was going to live for Christ and do all he could to serve Christ. Paul did not count himself as having yet attained. He was not yet perfect. He had made great progress in Christlikeness, but the goal is still before him and not behind him. The goal absorbed all his energy; this is an example of us. We should not let anything take our eyes off our goal—Christ!

1. Paul followed after perfection, after his God-given purpose. The word "**follow after**" (*dioko*) means to press; to pursue just like a runner in a race. There is no such thing as a genuine believer sitting still after he has been saved. The believer must not...
 - a. become comfortable, complacent, lethargic, or lazy;
 - b. waste time and lose opportunity;
 - c. begin to think he is safe and secure forever, doing what he likes and giving into his own desires.

NO, the believer must follow, run, and press after perfection—the perfection for which Christ has saved him. The believer must be active in living for Christ. Paul is encouraged, not discouraged, as he keeps up the chase in pursuit of the goal. Christ had laid hold of Paul on the Road to Damascus, and Paul's desire was to lay hold of Christ's purpose for his life. God desires to reveal His Son in Paul (Gal.1:16). Therefore, Paul ran the race to grab hold of the one who grabbed hold of Him at Salvation. If there is no following after Christ, no desire to gain Christ, to lose for Christ, to die for Christ, then there is no relationship with Christ.

HAVE NOT APPREHENDED

3:13 '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,—

2. Paul does not want the Christians at Philippi to believe false doctrine, so he strongly repeats what has been said:

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- a. ¹⁶He has not reached the place of completion of the race, the goal, but he's running to it, and the goal is Christ. The finish of the race is death, and the reward is the resurrection.
- i. Paul had reason to feel guilty: he held the coats of those who stoned Stephen, the first Christian martyr (Act 7:57, 58). We have all done things for which we are ashamed and we all live in the tension of what we had been, and what we want to be. It is especially difficult if others are not forgiving and willing to let the believer put his failure behind him.
 - ii. ¹⁷Some of the Christians in Philippi said that they were already perfect. They denied that people needed discipline in the Christian life. But Paul himself had not completely succeeded in the work that Christ had given him to do. And Paul knew that. He had only one aim. He uses the picture of a runner in a race. The runner must not look behind him. So Paul must not look back to his old life before he became a Christian. He must forget all his past failures and successes. He must not allow them to affect what he thought or did now. He must not lose his courage or become satisfied with himself. A runner makes every effort to look ahead. And he runs straight towards the line at the end of the race. Paul was making every effort to become perfect, that is, being mature as a Christian.
- b. Paul worked at forgetting the past. "This one thing I do. This is the single common denominator and sum of my life. I press for the greater and forget the lesser. I don't allow myself to be sidetracked from the goal and the prize, so whatever attempts to infringe itself upon me, to stop or to hinder me I forget it."
- i. It's good to forget all that hinders, and to remember all that helps.
 - ii. **But note:** Paul tells us how to deal with the past. How? By concentrating and controlling the mind, by reaching forth to those things which are before us. In one focused act, we are to forget and reach; and the next verse says then press toward (putting your back into it to go forward).

I PRESS TOWARD

3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

3. Paul pressed on toward the goal; toward God's purpose in Christ Jesus. And the purpose is to be conformed to the image of Christ—to be perfect even as He is perfect.
 - i. A runner who reached the line at the end of the race received a reward from the judge. After the race, the judge 'called up' the runner to receive his prize.
 - ii. Paul's prize when he has finished his 'race of faith' will be with Christ. It is compared to no other reward received.
 - iii. It is "prize of the high calling of God" or 'the upward calling.' It was a call from heaven and a call to heaven; to be like Christ and some day to be with Christ. God will call him to enjoy the glory of heaven for ever.

SPIRITUALLY MATURE

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. Paul is saying, as many as are spiritually mature and full grown. The word 'perfect' speaks of spiritual maturity; having our minds on what Christ has done at the cross, not of sinless perfection. And even if you think you are perfect, "God shall reveal even this unto you." There are three stages of perfection:

1. **First**, there is positional perfection or justification (Heb.10:14; Col.2:10).
2. **Secondly**, there is progressive perfection, or sanctification (2Corth.7:1; Eph.4:11-12; Gal.3:3).

¹⁶ <http://www.fotbc.org/commentary/50philippians.htm>

¹⁷ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/philippians-lbw.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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3. **Thirdly**, there is ultimate perfection in heaven or glorification (Eph.5:27; 1Jh.3:1-2).

The Philippians were not all mature; some were satisfied with low attainment and others with a medium attainment. But Paul says God will reveal this to them. God will not let the genuine believer rest unless his mind is on righteousness and purity. God pricks our hearts, and reveals that we are falling and coming short. God stirs us to get our minds back upon living like we should—upon pressing for perfection.

NEVERTHELESS, HOLD TRUE

3:16 **Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.** "**Nevertheless**", meaning on the other hand. Paul lets them know that what they have already attained, walk by that rule; all having the same mind. Paul is using 2 different Greek words. In verse 12, the word attained means—to take hold of something, whereas in verse 16, it refers to—arriving at a specific point, progress, if you please. Paul maintained the growth he had already achieved. Too many of us live up and down lives. We gain some discipline and some growth, then before too long, we slip right back. There are interruptions and the "*new man*" and "*new growth*" are forsaken and we slip back into being the "*old man*", living just like we used to live. We need to continue in the same straight path in which we have been walking, guided by the same divine truths and the unchanging principles of faith. We need to hold on to what we have, and what Jesus has shown us, then He will give us more so we can strive to go higher. ¹⁸When a group of Christians are growing in the faith and are all in unison about walking in the Spirit and thinking the same thing, then there will be a strong group of Christians. When each one begins to think differently, there will be disharmony in the group, only when there is Christian unity is there strength. The rule we walk in is the grace of God, and that will always be our standard.

3:17 **Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.**

Paul's reference to the Philippians calling them brethren is asking them to imitate him and observe those that are setting the right examples, and being models before them. Thousands of converts had looked to Paul as their teacher and model for the Christian life. His example still inspires us to Christlike service. We influence people by how we live and by what we do.

- If we follow good and do good, it encourages others to do good.
- If we follow bad and do bad, it sets a pattern of bad before others. It even causes some (in particular, the young and immature) to think that since we did it and still got along fairly well, they can do the same and get along fairly well too.

The point is this: the life we live sets a pattern for others to follow. This says something of critical value: we must live lives on the highest plane possible for others. It also says, we must mark those who walk as examples and follow after the great traits of their lives, by dissecting those traits and applying those traits to our lives. Every believer should follow Christ with so much commitment and diligence that he will become a dynamic example for others. Every believer should be able to say follow me—but follow my seeking to be like Christ. We are all teachers in some degree—teaching children, family, friends, co-workers etc. Our life must back up what we profess, or else we will cause people to stumble and fall. As we take note of others that are doing the same, it will shape and inspire us.

3:18 **(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: —** Earlier, Paul had spoken rather harshly about the legalistic teachers who oppose the gospel of the cross. Now with tears he tells them again that there are those who walk (live) among them who are enemies of the cross of Christ. They say that the word "**walk**" used to refer to Christians in verse 17; it also refers to church members in verse 18. Again, who are the enemies of the cross? There are many who walk as the enemies of the cross—no matter who they are, whether within or without the church. Unquestionably, the

¹⁸ http://www.scionofzion.com/philippians_3_16_21.htm
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enemies of the cross are many.

3:19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things).

1. Their end is "**destruction**" (*apoleia*). The word means perdition, destroyed, or slayed; to lose one's well-being; to be wasted and ruined and given a worthless existence. It does not mean that a person will cease to exist. It means a person will be destroyed and devastated and condemned to a worthless existence. He will suffer waste and loss and ruin forever and ever.
2. Their god is their "**belly**" (*koilia*) meaning their appetites and sensual, their desire for the physical pleasures of this world. Physical and material gratification is their god. **The point is this:** when a person has a craving and an appetite for such things, those things become their god. The craving begins to consume his thoughts, energy, and effort. Before long, his craving is taking up so much of his energy that he has very little if any time for God or for anything else.
3. Their **glory** (meaning what they boast in and depend on) is their shame;
 - They boast in their sin and shame
 - They boast in and pride themselves
 - in their comfort ○ in their drunkenness ○ in their gluttony ○ in their conquests ○ in their sex
 - in their partying ○ in what they eat ○ in what they have purchased ○ in how much they have in their authority and power
2. They **set their minds on earthly things.**
 - The worldly things also include the commendable things that are accepted by society such as:
 - Religious and spiritual pursuits ○ self-developmental programs ○ rules of virtue and morality
 - The pursuit of ambition or success ○ employment and jobs and business

Philippi was a Roman colony. Citizenship was an important subject to them because people born in Philippi were automatically Roman citizens.

3:20 For our conversation is in heaven from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:—

The word "**conversation**" (*politeuma*) means citizenship in this context. Paul further reminds the Philippians that they are heavenly citizens with a glorious eternal hope, therefore, should not be misled by these enemies of the cross. Heaven is our real home and our real culture. Here on earth we are travelers passing through. When we were born again, our primary concern shifted to the things of the kingdom of heaven. During this life, we Christians have dual citizenship. In this physical body we are citizens of a particular earthly government, and we should live as good citizens. But in the spirit, our citizenship is heavenly.

1. The believer's life is to be heaven-centered, for his citizenship is in heaven.
 - a. The Philippian believers know exactly what it meant to live in one place, and to be a citizen of another place. They knew exactly what it would mean to live upon the earth and...
 - i. dress as a citizen of heaven, and not of the earth
 - ii. speak as a citizen of heaven, and not of the earth
 - iii. engage in the pleasures of a citizen of heaven, and not of the earth
 - iv. live by the laws of heaven as well as the laws of earth
 - v. worship the God of heaven, and not the religions and gods of this earth
 - b. Believers are to live as citizens of heaven, and not of this world.
2. The believer's life is to be focused upon the return of Christ.
 - a. He is to be constantly looking for the Lord's return
 - b. The word "**look**" (*apekdechometha*) means to yearn, to eagerly look and wait for Christ's coming.

3:21 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.

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3. The believer's life is to focus upon the glorious body he is to receive when Christ returns.
 - a. The human body is **vile** and shameful (subject to disease, death, and decay).
 - b. The Lord Jesus shall change the believer's body and fashion or make it just like His glorious body. The word "**fashlon**" (*summorphon*) means the permanent, constant and unchangeable being of a person; receiving a spiritual body (like Christ's resurrected body).
 - c. **...according to the working** meaning by the mighty power of God.
 - i. All things are subject unto Him meaning **He is able even to subdue all things unto himself.**

We are to wait with eager expectation for the Second Coming of Christ. The hope of Jesus' return makes a total difference in our outlook on life. This is the normal attitude of a citizen of heaven.

SUMMARY:

¹⁹All such things were considered rubbish in relation to the excellence of knowing Christ Jesus (**3:7-8**). Therefore Paul had as his goal to be found in Christ, having that righteousness which is by faith in Jesus, knowing Him and the power of His resurrection, and even sharing in His sufferings, that he might by any means attain to the resurrection from the dead (**3:9-11**).

²⁰Jesus' love reaches out to us, and we respond in reaching closer to Him. As we are drawn closer to Him, we are continuously transformed. Paul says even for him this process is not finished. He is straining towards the goal as to win the prize. Paul says this attitude should be in every mature Christian. Even for those who do not have it, the Lord will teach them. Therefore, if they have attained this attitude, they should walk in it. That means EVERY Christian should have this attitude of continuous letting God transform him. However, Paul notes at the end that no matter at what stage of maturity, one should live out the Christian life from what he has already learned, so there is no excuse of slacking off (**3:12-16**).

Paul asks the brethren to be followers, be imitators together of him, and observe attentively them that are walking; who live after the pattern set. With tears he tells them again that there are those who walk (live) among them who are enemies of Christ, whose end is destruction. Our conversation and citizenship is in heaven. When He comes back, He will take these dying bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like His own (**3:17-21**).

APPLICATION:

Paul's goal was to know Christ. He place great value on knowing Christ—everything he had. What would you give up to gain and know Christ? Tell God about it first. Whatever you are striving for, especially if it's Christ, He is there to take you all the way to the finish line. Even if a time that you're about to give up tell God about it. This is not something you are left to do on your own. He's always there to give strength and help every time. Every time I turn around, He's making a Way!

[TOP](#)

¹⁹ http://executableoutlines.com/phil/phil_03.htm

²⁰ http://askchansir.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=75:summary-of-the-book-of-philippians&catid=34:philippians&Itemid=57

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. Paul had a strong yearning to see the brethren face to face. They were his joy because he had won them to Christ and they will be his crown of reward or wreath of victory at the Second Coming. He tells them... So he tells them to stand fast in the lord.

1. **The first step to peace is standing fast.** This verse is a transitional verse between what has been said and what is about to be said. Paul has just said...
 - a. there are enemies of the cross of Christ
 - b. the believers citizenship is in heaven
 - c. the Lord is going to return and take us out of this world into heaven, transforming our bodies.

The word "**stand fast**" (*stekete*) means simply to stand firm, persist, and persevere. It is the picture of a soldier standing fast against the onslaught of an enemy. He refuses to give ground no matter the pressure and strength of attack. He does not flinch; he is not unstable and he is never defeated. This is the same for a Christian believer—they are to stand fast no matter how great the trial, the pressure of the temptation or the influence, offer, and allurements made by others. Paul really cares about the brethren. But how does a believer stand fast when the temptation to surrender is so appealing and the trial is so terrible? Where can the believer find the strength to stand fast? There are two places:

- i. There is the believer's source of strength—the Lord Jesus Christ. Note the words "*stand fast in the Lord*." He must be living and moving and having his being in the Lord; that is, he must be...
 1. Praying, talking, and sharing with the Lord all day long.
 2. Keeping his thoughts upon the Lord; the glorious salvation, hope, and mission He has given believers.
 3. Serving and ministering for the Lord, bearing testimony of Him and meeting the needs of those who hurt and need help.

The point is this: the believer who walks; prays, and keeps his mind and thoughts upon the Lord is the believer who stands fast in the Lord. Common sense tells us this: We are in whatever we are thinking, talking, and walking. Very simply, think and talk about Him. Then our walk will also show that we are in Him.

- ii. There is the encouragement—the minister or brother who love and care about his fellow believer. Note what Paul, the minister says to those he deeply care about, those under his care:
 1. my dearly beloved brothers
 2. whom I long to see.
 3. my joy and crown.

The point is this: nothing encourages us any more than knowing that we are loved and cared for by others. The love of others stirs us to live like we should and to stand fast against temptation and trial. Believers are to...

- stand fast in the faith (1Corth.16:13);
- stand fast in the liberty of Christ (Gal.5:1);
- stand fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel (Phili.1:27);
- stand fast in the Lord which is the secret of peace (Phili.4:1);
- stand fast and hold the teachings or doctrines that have been taught (2Th.2:15).

4:2 I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. The plea is for all quarrelers to agree in the Lord. The source of the disturbance in the church was due to two prominent ladies in

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the church: Eurodias and Syntyche. Paul pleaded for the two ladies to get their minds together "*in the Lord*." Eurodias mean "*prosperous journey*" and Syntyche means "*pleasant acquaintance*." There is no time for arguing and divisiveness.

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. The need is for a true friend, a "*yokefellow*" to step in and help any who are quarreling. The word "*yokefellow*" (*sunzuge*) is thought by some to be a proper name given to some Christians when they were baptized; someone deeply respected by the people of the church. Therefore, "*yokefellow*" means a person who pulls and works cooperatively with others. Paul was that very one who cared; who was thought to be the one who could solve the dispute and bring about reconciliation; who admonishes them to be of the same mind in the Lord and think the same thing. Peace and unity must be preserved.

2. **The second step to peace is agreement and unity.** There is no peace if people are...

- arguing • bickering • biting • brawling • wrangling • disputing
- dissenting • grumbling • criticizing

The quarrelers were co-laborers in the gospel. They had helped Paul and Clement and others in the church. They needed to be serving in the gospel, not arguing and differing. Another thing was that their names were in the Book of Life. They were true believers who had slipped back into a life of sinful divisiveness. Most churches have one or more "*yokefellow*", persons...

- who love and care deeply for others.
- who are always helping and ministering to others.
- whom God has gifted and appointed to be ministerial helpers to the flock.
- who are highly respected and esteemed by most in the congregation.

It is possible to believe in Christ, work hard for His kingdom, and yet have broken relationships with others who are committed to the same cause. But there is no excuse fore remaining unreconciled.

4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. The Christian is not gloom, but glorious. Paul exhorts them to keep on rejoicing. Remember Paul is in prison, and the church is having a problem, yet Paul tells them, that they are to walk about rejoicing in the Lord. We talked about this same thing in Chapter 3. But Paul's attitude serves to teach us an important lesson: our inner attitudes do not have to reflect our outward circumstances. Paul was full of joy because he knew that no matter what happened to him, Jesus Christ was with him. Several times in this letter Paul urges the Philippians to be joyful.

3. **The third step to peace is rejoicing in the Lord.** This is a continued and repeated thing. Joy drives out discord and is contagious. Christians rejoice because they are in living union with Christ. Ultimate joy comes from Christ dwelling within us because the one who dwells within us will fulfill the final purpose for

4:5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. We now come to the fourth step to peace and an attitude to cultivate. The word "*moderation*" (*epieikes*) is translated as gentleness, forbearance, consideration, reasonableness, agreeableness, courtesy, patience, and softness. This is the opposite of stubbornness and thoughtlessness.

4. **The fourth step to peace is a strong gentleness.**

The exhortation not only deals with believers with the church, but with unbelievers. **The point is:** we must be gentle and forbearing in dealing with believers and unbelievers. We must reach out to the world with the gospel and treat unbelievers as well as believers with a loving gentleness and not with harshness.

- Too many of us are harsh and critical or neglectful and withdrawn.

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- Too many of us are wrapped in the cloak of religion having nothing to do with reaching out to the lost.
- The desperate need of the hour is for us to reach out with the gospel, in a spirit of love and gentleness.

Why? Because the Lord is at hand (near). He is coming, and when He comes, everyone of us will only hope that He will treat us with gentleness. Only if we are forgiving toward others will the Lord be forgiving toward us.

4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Paul gives a charge: be "**anxious**" (*merimnate*) about nothing. The idea is that the believer is not to worry or fret about a single thing. The word "**nothing**" (*meden*) means not even one thing. Humanly speaking the Philippians had every reason to worry and be anxious;

- They were suffering severe persecution (Phili.1:18-19)
- They were facing a disturbance in the church, some disunity and quarreling (Phili.1:27, 42)
- They had some carnal members within their fellowship, some members who were prideful, super-spiritual, and self-centered (Phili.2:3-4; 3:12)
- They were facing some false teachers who had joined their fellowship, and these teachers were fierce in attacking the cross of Christ (Phili.3:2-3, 18-19)
- Some of the believers were having to struggle for the necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter (Phili.4:19)

In the midst of such circumstances, the only way a person can keep from worrying is to receive an injection of supernatural power. This brings us to the next step to peace. The remedy for anxiety and worry is...

5. **The fifth step to peace is thru prayer.**

The four words used shows exactly how prayer is the answer.

1. The word "**prayer**" (*proseuche*) refers to the special times of communication with God; set times that we share in periods of devotion and worship.
2. The word "**supplication**" (*deesis*) refers to the prayers that focus upon special needs; we pour out our soul to God; struggle when facing times of deep and intense need. Therefore, we come and lay out before Him as a child: crying, pleading, and begging for His help, comfort, deliverance and peace.
3. The word "**thanksgiving**" (*eucharistia*) means that we thank and praise God for all that He is and for all that He has done for us all day long as we walk and move about.
4. The word "**requests**" (*aitemata*) means specific and definite needs. Our praying is not to be general, but specific. We are to lay before God exactly what is needed and we are not to fear that we are being too detailed with God or bothering God. Neither are we to hold back from asking because we fear He will not answer something so specific. Too often believers fear—not receiving the answer to a specific request; fear that it will show how weak they are spiritually if the request is not granted.

Note what scripture says: "**In everything**" pray like this—use all four ways of praying and use them to pray about everything in order to receive the promise—peace.

4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. The "*peace of God*" goes way beyond all that we can even ask or imagine. It excels and surpasses everything we could have hoped for. One may have peace with God without having the peace of God. **Peace with God** is dependent upon faith, and **peace of God** is dependent on prayer. **Peace with God** describes the state between God and the Christian, and the **peace of God** describes the condition within the Christian. "**Peace**" (*eirene*) means to be bound joined, and woven together. It means to be assured, confident, and secure in the love and care of God. It means to have a sense, a knowledge, a consciousness that God will...

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provide • guide • strengthen • sustain • deliver • encourage • save • give real life both now and forever.

A person can experience the peace of God only as he walks and moves about in prayer. Why? Because only God can deliver man through the most severe circumstances and tragedies of life. Only God can infuse assurance and security within the human soul. The wonderful promise of the peace of God is two-fold.

1. **First, *the peace of God passes all understanding;*** which surpasses all power of human reason or comprehension (Eph.3:20). It is a mystery. God does not promise that He will give us a full understanding of those matters we bring to Him in prayer. He only promises to give us peace. This is a state of being where you are calm in the heart and mind despite the fact that turmoil and strife are raging around you. It is a peace that is divine in origin. It is a peace that cannot be disrupted by the problems, disturbances and difficulties of life. Inner friction of soul often results in outer conflict with people. The peace of God in the Christian will keep peace in the church because it's bigger than our emotions. Our consistent communicating with God does it.
2. **Second, *the peace of God keeps our hearts and minds.*** Paul mentions the heart. He is referring to the seat of our emotions. The heart is the place from which our feelings come. When Paul mentions the mind, he is referring to the place where we do our thinking. The word "*shall keep*" (*phrouresei*) is a military word meaning to garrison, to keep guard and protect. When Paul wrote these very words, he had a Roman guard on either side of him. They were "*standing guard*" over the man of God. Paul says that God's peace is like a guard that protects the heart from wrong feelings and the mind from wrong thoughts!

4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever...

6. **The sixth step to peace is thru a Christlike mind.**

The word "*think*" (*logizesthe*) means to consider, reflect, and ponder. The idea is that of focusing our thoughts until they shape our behavior. The truth is:

- What we think is what we become.
- Where we have kept our minds is where we are.
- Our thoughts shape our behavior.
- What we do is what we think.

A person who will center his thoughts upon the world and its things, will live for the world and its things: money, wealth, land, property, houses, possessions, position, power, recognition, honor, social standing, fame, and a host of other worldly pursuits. A mind set upon the world and the flesh is what leads to anxiety and worry, emptiness and restlessness. This was the stress of the former point (v.v.6-7). A worldly mind never knows peace, not the peace of God. **The point is this:** when a person accepts Jesus Christ, his mind is renewed by the Spirit of God. Once a person has been converted to Christ and becomes a new man, he is to focus his thoughts upon the good things of life and upon God. Sinful and negative thoughts disrupt and destroy peace. For this reason, the believer is to struggle to conquer his mind and thoughts.

1. The charge is to think and practice having the mind of Christ to think on these things.
 - a. **Whatsoever things are true, (*alethe*):** real and genuine. Many things in the world seems to be true, but they are not; they are false and deceptive, an illusion, escapism. What we put in our minds determines what comes out in our words and actions. Keep your mind upon things that are true and there will be no room for evil, no room for worry, no room for fear, no room for vengeance, no room for confusion and trouble. A mind filled with and led by the Word of God is a stable mind!
 - b. **Whatsoever things are honest, (*semna*):** honorable, worthy, revered, highly respected, and noble; things of character, things honorable of persons or deeds. *Barclay says: "The word really describes that which has the dignity of holiness upon it, but it is on the things which are grave*

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and serious and dignified that the Christian will set his mind."

- c. **Whatsoever things are just, (*diakia*):** right and righteous behavior; Upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commandments of God—whatever conforms us to do the Will of God. The believer is to keep his thoughts upon his duty toward men and God—upon doing what is right toward both. A mind filled with just and righteous thoughts will know peace.
- d. **Whatsoever things are pure, (*hagna*):** morally clean, spotless, stainless, chaste, undefiled, free from moral pollution, filth, dirt, and impurities; clean, chaste, modest, and free from carnality. The believer's mind and thoughts are to be pure thoughts.
- e. **Whatsoever things are lovely, (*prospBILE*):** pleasing, winsome, kind, gracious; things that excite love and kindness and pleasing to the believer, which is to please God. The believer's thoughts are not to be thoughts of unkindness and meanness, grumbling and murmuring, criticism and reaction. We are to focus on things that are lovely—that build people up, not tear them down.
- f. **Whatsoever things are of good report; (*euphema*):** refutable, high-toned, worthy things; things of the highest quality; speaking things that are good and encouraging.
- g. **If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.**

Anything that encourages moral excellence and that is praiseworthy, then THINK, right now, on these things!

2. The source or power for a Christlike mind is twofold:

- a. There is the Word of God. Paul says that he had preached and taught the very virtues of positive thinking to the Philippians, and that they had learned them. What Paul had preached and taught was the Will of God; therefore, the source or power for positive thinking comes from the Word of God.

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.

- b. There are noble examples. Paul says that he lived as a testimony before the Philippians. Therefore, they could follow his example because he kept his thoughts and life upon the very virtues of the God of peace.

The word, "**Those things ...do.**" The believer is expected to control and discipline his mind because of what they've learned, received, heard and seen Paul do. And then the God of peace shall be with the believer.

This passage deals with stewardship, in particular the giving of money to meet the needs of ministers and missions for the spread of the gospel to the world. Paul was in prison facing the death penalty. The Philippians had heard that Paul was standing fast and continued to preach the gospel to everyone who visited him. The church was stirred to do two things: to take up a love offering, and to send a man, Epaphroditus, to minister to Paul's needs.

4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. The Philippians had sent a love offering and Paul's cup of joy overflowed. He rejoiced in the Lord; not in the gift, but their giving flourished again. Note the words "*flourished again*" (*anethalete*) means to revive again. It is the picture of plants and flowers sprouting, shooting up, and blossoming again. The key word is *again*. When the church had been founded, the believers had supported Paul and his mission work on a regular basis. But for some reason they had dropped their mission support. Why had they stopped sending support to Paul is unknown? Paul just passed over the issue by saying that he knew they cared for him, but they had just lacked opportunity to support him. However, **the point to see is:** they picked up the support of Paul once again, and their giving flourished and blossomed anew.

4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. Paul is <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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telling the people that he's not in want of anything because of whatever state he's found himself in, he's learned to be content. The word "**content**" (*autarkeia*) means to be self-sufficient; to be completely detached from circumstances, and still be in circumstances. This "*contentment*" was something he had learned. The lesson of contentment was one he learned by degrees in varying circumstances; lengthy trials and discipline. In all things he continued to be strong by the One who infuses his power. God teaches His servants to be content, no matter the circumstances. Note the word "**learned**." Paul did not always know this precious truth. We are not born contented nor do we gravitate instinctively toward contentment because it is a virtue that has to be learned. Paul had to learn to conquer circumstances and not to let circumstances conquer him. Contentment is a Christian virtue, a mark of Christian maturity. Note three things:

1. **4:12** Paul said, **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**. Paul says, "*I know how...* Paul was in prison and in chains; in want and in hunger. But note: he had learned *to be abased* (made low) *and I know how to abound* (be prosperous) *everywhere and in all things*." You might be saved and have much in this world, and still don't know the secret is in Christ.
2. **4:13** **I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me**. God teaches His servants that it's *through Christ* that they are *strengthened* to do and *can do all things* (4:13). Christ does not do everything for the believer; neither does the believer do everything for himself. The believer declares, "*I can*", and gets up and faces the circumstances head on. It is then that Christ steps in and infuses strength into the believer while the believer is tackling the problem. Then he can say "*I can do all things through Christ*." *'Because Christ gives him the strength to do them!'* Just Believe!
3. **4:14** **Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction**. The minister needs daily provisions; the gospel needs to be supported; so that, it can be carried around the world. Money and support are greatly needed. God can do the job without us; God can bypass us and put us on the shelf just like a useless book. But He wants His people to give generously. When they do, they perform a work that is well done; that is commendable and noble.

4:15 **Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only**. Paul is recalling to their remembrance that when the Philippian church was founded, they supported the ministry of Paul, and they were the only church who consistently gave.

4:16 **For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity**. And Paul says even in Thessalonica, for it was while he was in Thessalonica that the Philippians supported him while he faced severe persecution (Acts 17:1).

4:17 **Not because I deserve a gift, but I desire fruit that may abound to your account**. The church's giving was and still is (1.) sacrificial, and it's (2.) seen and (3.) rewarded by God. Paul says not because he deserves a gift, but he deserves fruit from his labor that it may abound to the people's account. The church's giving was not necessary, but it was needed. God will take care of His dear servant even if churches do not adequately care for the man-of-God. This has been part of the sufferings most ministers have to bear in order to carry the gospel forth to a world that's in desperate need. The gift cost the Philippian church. God saw who sacrificially gave to support Paul, and God deposited a reward to the Philippians' account. Paul is showing them that he didn't deserve a gift, but his desire was for the fruit; the reward would accumulate; explode into their account because of their gift! You can't get until you give! Nothing comes in until you let go!

4:18 **But I have all and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from**
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you, an odour a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. We can see the contentment in Paul: *"I have all and abound: I am full."* He received something money couldn't buy. The Philippians sent a fellow servant; a co-laborer to help Paul. Epaphroditus brought the things sent by the Philippians that lifted Paul so much that it seemed like a gift from heaven. Paul described it as a sweet smelling odor; an acceptable sacrifice, and that God was well pleased with their giving! This was a welcomed and pleasant taste of heaven!

SUMMARY:

Two Christian sisters prominent in the service of the church had a conflict. It was so serious that Paul had to write about it in a letter. He writes to his brethren in the church in Philippi; to the whole church. It is not the fact of disagreements which is the problem, but our failure to resolve them. Whole churches have split over what began as a problem between two people. Paul wants these sisters to resolve their conflict. So, Paul says to his dear brothers who he has longed to see to stand fast in the Lord. He appeals to Euodia and Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord, live in harmony as fellow Christians, and as sisters in Christ. He entreats true helpers to assist these women. He exhorts them to rejoice in the Lord always. Rejoice because of Christ. Let your graciousness overlook faults and failures of others. Why? For the Lord is at hand and may come at any moment. Paul first told them to rejoice. Now, he tells them to be careful for nothing, meaning stop being anxious and do not have the habit of worrying, but it will be by their prayer and supplication, and thankfulness that they will let their request be made known unto God that they will receive the promise of the peace they're looking for. Prayer is our alternative to fear and worry. We have no problem that He does not have an answer for. Now the peace of God can come in—through prayer. Not simply peace, but the God of peace; the peace God gives will surpass all their understanding; all their human reasoning to keep their hearts and minds through Jesus Christ. My acronym for PEACE is "**Pause Everyday Appreciating Christ's Embrace !**" – **PEACE! (4:1-7).**

Then he says finally brethren, meditate upon things worthy of virtue and praise, and follow Paul's example. Paul tells us to fix our thoughts on six steps to that peace: what is

²¹True - In speech; Honest - In action;

Just – With regard to others;

Pure - With regard to yourselves;

Lovely - And what's more lovely than truth?

Of good report - As is honesty, even where it is not practiced.

If there be any virtue - And all virtues are contained in justice.

If there be any praise - In those things which are deemed worthy.

Think on those things and practice those things that they have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in him. This is where the God of peace shall be with them. Paul says that he greatly rejoices in the Lord (4:8-9).

Now, this was the time that their care for him has flourished again, for they were always interested, but had no opportunity to show it. Paul was not complaining for he has learned that whatsoever state or situation he has found himself in, he will be content. This "*contentment*" was something he had learned. He knows how to face humble circumstances or how to face prosperity everywhere and in all things; whether full or hungry; abounding

²¹ www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/wesleys-explanatory-notes/philippians/philippians-4.html
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or suffering need. The reason is that he knows that he can do all things only through Christ which strengthens him. Still, Paul thanks them that they have done the right thing in contributing to the help of his affliction; that is sharing in his troubles (**4:10-14**).

Paul had received a love offering from the Philippians. He rejoiced when they were able to care for him again; not to hint that he was in great need, for he could do all things through Christ. Paul's expression of thanks over-flowed—expressing joy and gratitude for the gift they had sent by way of Epaphroditus. To Paul it made no difference whether he was freed or bound to a soldier, whether the day was hot and humid or bleak and frigid, whether the Philippians sent a gift or failed to make contact. He is thankful, even though he was quite content with the "state" or condition he found himself in, for he knew that their gift really blossomed to their account. They had discovered that giving sacrificially enriches the giver. We can see the contentment in Paul. He received something money couldn't buy. The Philippians sent through Epaphroditus a sweet smelling odor; an acceptable sacrifice, showing that God was well pleased with their giving! This was a welcomed and pleasant taste of heaven! (**4:15-18**).

APPLICATION:

Trusting God is the opposite of worry. Pray about everything, meditate on the Word of God, and finally, the peace of God will come, and thereby "*contentment*" will be learned.

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