



Philippians

A COMMENTARY OUTLINE

THE EPISTLE OF
MENTAL ATTITUDE

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I Introduction

or “*To All the Saints in Philippi*”

Philippians 1:1-11

PAUL’S GREETINGS 1:1-2

“Paul and Timothy bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:
²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

THE SERVANTS 1:1A

Even though Paul and Timothy are mentioned together, they are not co-authors of this letter. This can be seen by noting the first person pronoun *I* that starts verse 3. It is also proved by 2:20 where Timothy is referred to by the third person pronoun *he*. Usually Paul calls himself an apostle, but that is absent here. His authority is not in question among the Philippian believers, and the entire letter is highly personal and warm.

Timothy had been present at the founding of the church at Philippi (Acts 16:1-12), and he returned to visit on two occasions. Paul is about to send him to Philippi once again, and he designates them as *bond-servants*. Their backgrounds were as diverse as they could be—different in nationality, age, background, position, and experience. Despite this, they found a unity in their relationship of common submission to Jesus Christ.

THE SAINTS 1:1B

The Saints in General

The word *saints* means a *set apart one*. It is a title applied to all Christians and is intended to remind us of our duty to live lives pleasing to Him. The expression *in Christ Jesus* does two things. First it distinguishes the Christians in Philippi from the religious persons in Philippi. In the Greek mystery religions, devotees to the various gods were designated by the word *saint* also, but they were not in Christ Jesus. Second, it shows the basis of our sainthood, namely, union with Christ. Sever the words *in Christ* and the word

| *saints* disappears with it. The word *all* introduces a theme of the letter—unity among believers (see also 1:4, 7, 8, and 25).

The Saints in Particular

| The word *overseers* points to a position of leadership and authority. In secular use it referred to a supervisor in any capacity; a foreman of a construction crew is an example. The word *deacons* refers to a non-authority position within the local assembly. Philippians is the only epistle to mention them in the greeting. Perhaps this is because they had been involved in the project of getting together a gift for Paul and seeing it was handled in an orderly way.

PAUL'S ATTITUDE 1:3-8

DERIVED FROM HIS PAST EXPERIENCE 1:3-5

| “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴*always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all*, ⁵*in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.*”

The Basis of His Thanksgiving 1:3

| The word translated *in* is the preposition *epi*, which means *upon* and is used to express the basis upon which something rests. The word *all* shows that Paul does not have a specific incident in mind for which he is thankful, but rather is referring to his total experience with them. When Paul speaks of *my God*, he is speaking of his personal relationship with the Lord. When one thinks of the attributes of God and then realizes that we can each attach the personal pronoun *my* to Him, we have an amazing truth.

The Expression of His Thanksgiving 1:4

| First, the word *always* points to the consistency of his prayer and fulfills I Thessalonians 5:17 which says, “Pray without ceasing.” Second, the all inclusive nature is seen in that he prays for *all* of the Philippian believers. Third, the words *with joy* point to another keynote of this epistle (see 2:17-18, 3:1, 4:4, 10).

The Motivation of His Thanksgiving 1:5

| Paul was moved by their *participation* in the gospel. Here he uses the word *koinonia*, which refers to several things in the New Testament, most often to a financial sharing in the Lord's work. This is probably what he has in mind here in the light of 4:15-18.

| Fellowship is viewed three ways in Philippians. First, there was fellowship with Christ, which was revealed in suffering (1:29). Second, there was fellowship with one another, which was

revealed in unity (2:1-11). Finally, there was fellowship with Paul, which was revealed in financial giving (4:16).

DERIVED FROM HIS FUTURE HOPES 1:6-8

The Continuity of God's Work 1:6

"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."

God's Work Begun

The verb *confident* is a perfect tense, showing that Paul is expressing a settled conviction. It could be translated, "I have come to a settled conviction...." How does one arrive at such confidence? The answer lies in that God is the one who is doing the work. Uncertainty is introduced to the extent that man is involved; certainty is achieved by seeing all as in the hands of God. It should be noted that Paul does not trace the beginnings of the Philippian Christianity to his preaching or their response, but to God.

God's Work Continued

The term *will perfect* is a future tense verb and means *to complete or finish a job*.

God's Work Completed

God's work in the Philippian believers is not complete even to this day. Their bodies lie in graves to await the return of Christ and the final resurrection.

The Cooperation in God's Work 1:7-8

"For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus."

Identification with Paul in his imprisonment was dangerous because he was imprisoned for the sake of the gospel. His *defense* translates a word often used in a legal sense, which it probably carries here. The word *confirmation* refers to Paul's convictions that the Philippians shared.

PAUL'S PRAYER 1:9-11

HE PRAYS THEY WILL EXPERIENCE LOVE'S PROGRESSION 1:9

"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment..."

What is love? Love as directed toward God is the mental attitude of appreciation for His character and plan as revealed in Scripture, manifesting itself in obedience. Love as directed toward man is the mental attitude that demands that we do what is best for another in the light of eternity no matter what it costs us. That love was possessed is expressed by the words *your love*; that much growth was needed is expressed by the words *more and more*. These words do not allow any believer to rest in his present state of maturity. Love and knowledge are here related to one another. Knowledge is to control love; doctrine marks the boundary between love and sentimentality. The words *real knowledge* translate the single Greek word *epignosis*, which refers to full and complete knowledge. The word *discernment* has to do with the practical application of truth to life situations.

HE PRAYS THEY WILL GAIN LOVE'S PERCEPTION 1:10

"...so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ..."

The word *approve* means *to test something so as to approve*. It is used in some very early literature to refer to a physician who passed his examinations. The purpose of applying the test is to determine the *things that are excellent*—literally translated “the things that differ.” Paul is not talking about learning to discern right and wrong, but rather learning to discern between better and best. The definite article is used to show he is pointing to specific things, not things in general. The word *sincere* is a colorful compound word. It is a combination of the noun *sun* and a word meaning *to judge*. Thus, it means *to be judged in the sunlight*. The word *blameless* means *not to be stumbled over*. The word translated *until* in this verse is different than the word *until* in verse 6. It is the preposition *eis*, which means *direction toward*. We could translate “*for the day of Christ*.” We are to prepare now for the day that is yet to come.

HE PRAYS THEY WILL COME TO KNOW LOVE'S PRODUCTION 1:11

"...having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

First, the measure desired is expressed in the word *filled*, which points to God's desire to utilize every corner of our personality for fruit bearing. Second, the word *righteousness* is called a genitive of apposition, which means it defines what the fruit is. We could translate “fruit which is righteousness.” Third, the words *through Jesus Christ* show that it is our relationship to Him that not only determines salvation but also determines our fruit bearing. Finally, the goal of all of this is the glory of God.

APPLICATIONS FOR LIVING

An understanding and growing appreciation of God's grace manifested in Christ's work for us is a cornerstone doctrine for us in the church age (1:2). Without exception, Paul's epistles begin and end with a mention of grace. Take time to trace this out in each of his letters. In Philippians grace is mentioned in 1:2 and 4:23.

Confidence in the Christian life is obtained by keeping our eyes on the faithfulness of God (1:6). While God may appear to work slowly, He always works faithfully; and to the extent that we truly believe this, we find confidence and assurance.

The central issue in prayer should be spiritual matters (1:9-11). If one studies the content of Paul's prayers, they are inevitably made on behalf of believers and always center in a desire for their continuing growth and maturity. We would do well to emulate this kind of prayer.

NOTES

NOTES

Paul in Prison

or “Victory in Chains”

Philippians 1:12-26

VICTORY IN PRISON 1:12-18

SETTING THE SCENE

The Physical Scene

The first eleven verses have spoken of things as they existed at that time in Philippi. With verse 12 the scene shifts from Philippi to Rome where Paul is in prison. There is also a change from the focus on the Philippian believers to the apostle Paul.

The Psychological Scene

Common sense would say that since Paul is in jail the gospel is going to be hindered. After all, “God has only our feet, and Paul’s feet are in jail,” and “God has only our hands, and Paul’s hands are in handcuffs!” Paul is going to show how ridiculous it is to think that imprisonment could hinder the spread of the gospel. As a matter of fact, rather than hinder, it has helped as these verses will show us.

SUCCESS MAY BE ACHIEVED IN SUFFERING 1:12

“Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel...”

Paul’s Condition 1:12a

“Now I want you to know” is a variation of a statement common to most of Paul’s letters. When it is spoken, it does two things. First, it marks the beginning of an important assertion. Second, it implies that a misunderstanding exists on the part of his readers. The words *my circumstances* literally read, “the things that have come down on me.” It is a reference to the unpleasant aspects of his imprisonment for the gospel.

Paul's Correction 1:12b

Paul's correction of Philippian thinking is obscured by our translation. Immediately after the word *out* is the word *rather* and thus reads, "My circumstances have turned out rather...." He is correcting the opinion that his imprisonment is going to curtail the spread of the gospel. He is also going to show that not only is God's word not limited by circumstances but that it is rather aided by them.

Paul's Success 1:12c

Paul's success is marked by the word *progress*. This word in the verb form is a compound made up of a word *kopto*, which means *to cut*, plus the preposition *pro*, which means *before*. It is used for blazing a new path. Because of what has happened to Paul, new inroads for the gospel have been made. What human viewpoint says will hinder, instead, actually helps. The persecution of Acts 8 scattered Christians from Jerusalem and in so doing scattered the gospel.

SUCCESS MAY BE ACHIEVED BY LIMITATION 1:13-18**Paul's Imprisonment Caused Many to be Informed 1:13**

"...so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else..."

The praetorian guard refers to the soldiers in the regiments in Rome. Paul lived for two years with various Roman soldiers chained to his wrist. He was doubtless asked why he was in prison. As he replied that he was there for preaching Christ, we can be sure that the guard heard the gospel.

Paul's Imprisonment Caused Many to be Motivated 1:14-18***It Strengthened the Confidence of Many 1:14***

"...and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear."

Due to Paul's imprisonment, the ears of the praetorian guard were opened; and mouths were opened among believers in Rome.

It Determined the Conduct of Some 1:15-18

"Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; ¹⁶the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; ¹⁷the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. ¹⁸What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice."

Two kinds of witnesses are in view here—some acting from wrong motives (*envy and strife*) and some acting from good motives (*good will*). There is no indication that the content of the message of each was different—both preached Christ, a fact repeated three times (1:15, 17, 18). They were pro-Christ but anti-Paul. For those with the wrong motivation, important lessons may be learned. First, it is possible for men who teach truth to stand in bitter opposition to others who teach the same truth. Second, it is possible to teach truth for selfish reasons. Third, it is possible for believers to use the suffering of others to promote themselves.

When Paul says he rejoices in the activity of these men, he sets before us a beautiful example of loving truth more than he loved himself. This is a clear revelation of Paul's sense of values. To Paul, faithfulness to the truth was a virtue of primary importance. We are also shown that Paul evaluates other teachers on the basis of the truth they proclaim.

VICTORY OUT OF PRISON 1:19-26

PAUL'S ATTITUDE OF OPTIMISM 1:19

"For I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ..."

The strength of Paul's optimism is found in the words *I know*. It also becomes obvious when the difficult conditions in which Paul was forced to live are considered. The nature of Paul's optimism is seen in his anticipation of *deliverance*. Verse 26 of Chapter 1 shows that he fully expects to visit Philippi once again. Finally, the basis of his optimism is two-fold. First, he has reason to be optimistic because of the prayers of believers on his behalf. Second, he has reason to be optimistic because of the supply of the Holy Spirit. Both of these things are tied together in the Greek by one definite article. The prayers and supply of the Spirit are inseparable items.

PAUL'S ATTITUDE OF EXPECTATION 1:20-24

"...according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²²But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. ²³But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; ²⁴yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake."

Paul Expects that his Personal Testimony Will be Maintained 1:20a

Paul reveals a realistic view of himself anticipating that he will not be put to shame, that he will not fail. He does not fall to the peril of

overconfidence. His expectation that he will not be put to shame could refer to one of two coming events, or both. First, he may be thinking of his coming appearances before the Roman authorities. Second, he may be thinking of his ultimate appearance before Christ.

Paul Expects that Christ's Glory Will be Upheld 1:20b-21

The term *be exalted* is passive voice, meaning the subject (Christ) is acted upon. Paul does not say, "I will exalt Christ." He is not relying on his own courage and ability to honor Christ, but rather on the action of the Holy Spirit. The words *to me* in verse 21 are in an emphatic position. He is saying, "Whatever others may think makes no difference; my convictions are settled, and here they are." In what sense is living *Christ*?

- First, *to live is Christ* because He is the source of life (Colossians 3:4).
- Second, *to live is Christ* because He is the motive of all Paul does (Colossians 3:17).
- Third, *to live is Christ* because He is the pattern of Paul's life (Philippians 2:5).
- Fourth, *to live is Christ* because He is the hope of Paul's life (Philippians 3:21).
- Fifth, *to live is Christ* because He is the goal of Paul's life (Philippians 1:21).

Paul Expects that His Personal Ministry Will be Fruitful 1:22

Note that fruit can be borne only in this life. To die is gain, but to live is fruit. Which is best? The first is best from Paul's standpoint, the second from the Philippians' standpoint.

Paul Expects that the Philippian Believers' Growth Will be Maintained 1:23-24

Paul accumulates words when he speaks of being with Christ. Notice the triple "very much better." In spite of the glory of being with Christ, the growth and welfare of believers on earth is of primary importance.

Paul Expects to Remain Alive to Help them Mature 1:25-26

Though Paul was in jail and on trial, he did not know what turn of events might occur. However, verse 25 indicates a confidence that "I know that I shall remain...." What was the basis of this confidence? Had the legal proceedings taken a favorable turn? We do not know. We can be sure that the need of his presence among believers outweighed his desire to be with Christ.

The word *know* should not be taken in an absolute sense. It is certainly not the absolute knowledge of Romans 8:28. In Acts 20:25 Paul said he *knew* he would not see the Ephesian elders again

because of his approaching capture; and yet, when he was released from prison, he enjoyed a period of freedom in which he visited Macedonian churches.

APPLICATIONS FOR LIVING

Unpleasant circumstances are no hindrance to the progress of the gospel though they may be uncomfortable for the servant of the gospel (1:12). We may fully trust the sovereignty of God to work for the best. What may appear to be a hindrance to us may be the very tool that the Lord uses for His glory.

The message of the gospel is more important than the motive of the servant who proclaims it (1:15-18). To be sure, motivation is important, but it is not as important as faithfulness to the truth; and even when that motive is wrong, we should rejoice in the proclamation of Christ.

The benefit of other believers is more important than our own comfort in the presence of the Lord (1:22-24). This fact gives great emphasis to the purposefulness of life on this earth. It is more important for Paul to be present in Philippi than for Paul to be present in heaven.

NOTES

Exhortation to Unity

or “Firm in One Spirit and One Mind”

Philippians 1:27-2:18

THE DUTY OF UNITY 1:27-2:11

THE BELIEVER’S WALK 1:27-28

Its Necessity 1:27

“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel...”

The necessity of the Christian walk is emphasized by the imperative mood of the verb *conduct yourselves*. This translates the Greek verb *politeuo* (our word *politics*), which means *to perform the duties of a citizen*. It refers to one’s duty as a member of a body. Roman citizenship meant a great deal to the citizens of Philippi. Augustus had given the city two names: “Colonia, Augusta Julia Philipensis” and “*jus Italium*,” meaning *little Italy*. Paul is saying, “Just like you are dutiful citizens of Rome, so be dutiful citizens of Christ’s empire (3:20).” The word *only* at the beginning of verse 27 indicates that obedience to the command given here is to be given primary or sole attention. Paul is in prison and hopes to get out soon, but this is not the real issue; the real issue is living the Christian life now.

The word *worthy* means *having the weight of another thing* and could be translated *weigh as much as*. The believer’s conduct should be as much as the gospel that we believe. Conduct should be in balance with the doctrine that we believe.

To stand *firm in one spirit* refers to a united mental attitude. This is achieved by having our attitudes determined by the same system of beliefs and values determined by the word of God. When Paul speaks of *striving together*, he is using an athletic metaphor. The word is *sunathleo*, which means *to compete as a team* and fits well

with the emphasis of unified effort. The united effort is to revolve about *the faith*. The definite article points to *the faith* as a body of truth. The *striving* is not against anyone or anything but is for something positive.

Its Power 1:28

“...in no way alarmed by your opponents — which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God.”

Christian Conduct Produces Fearlessness

The *opponents* would consist of unbelievers. Christianity refused idolatry and, as such, would be regarded an enemy of the state. Concentrating on Christian conduct takes one's mind away from opposition that would normally cause fear.

Christian Conduct Provides Proof

The word *sign* was an Attic law term for a *writ of indictment*. Fearlessness proves the opponents are lost and also proves the Philippians are saved.

THE BELIEVER'S SUFFERING 1:29-30

Suffering Involves a Privilege 1:29

“For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”

First, it is a privilege because it is a gift of God's grace. The words *it has been granted* translate the verb *charizomai*, which means *gracious gift*. Second, it is a privilege because of the one on whose behalf we suffer. We suffer *for His sake* in the sense of continuing the suffering of Christ's earthly life. The same concept is found in Colossians 1:24.

Suffering Involves a Participation 1:30

“...experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.”

There is a sense in which the body of Christ suffers as a whole. Suffering on behalf of Christ is a privilege afforded the whole church.

THE BELIEVER'S UNITY 2:1-2

“If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, ²make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.”

The Incentive for Unity 2:1

The four items mentioned in verse 1 lay the groundwork for the command of verse 2. The word *encouragement* often bears the sense of exhortation that is the idea here. Our union with Christ carries with it an exhortation. It places an obligation upon us. The word translated *consolation* is a word used of coming alongside a person to stimulate them. RSV translates well at this point using the word *incentive*. Love for the Lord and love for other believers argues for unity. The Holy Spirit has placed all believers in one body of fellowship, and this argues further for unity.

The Command for Unity 2:2

First, the command for unity is general, expressed in the words *being of the same mind*. This, of course, is not a command for unity at the expense of truth. It assumes that the *same mind* is also the *right mind*. Second, the items that make up this unity complete the verse. It is to be a unity of love; it is to be a unity of sentiment; it is to be a unity of purpose.

THE BELIEVER'S HUMILITY 2:3-4

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; ⁴to not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

It Should be Reflected in Our Service to One Another 2:3

The word for *selfishness* is *eritheia* and is listed among the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:20 (translated *disputes*). It is said to be an attitude of the heart in James 3:14 (translated *selfish ambition*). The same rendering is found in Philippians 1:17, where it points to a wrong motivation in Christian service. The idea of humility was not highly regarded in Greek literature and thinking. Their concept of man's freedom led to contempt for any kind of subjection. A believer, on the other hand, is to view himself as less important than others. This does not mean we are to have a false or unrealistic view of our own gifts compared to others, but it does mean that consideration for others must precede concern for ourselves.

It Should be Reflected in Our Perspective on One Another 2:4

The exhortation here is to widen one's circle of consideration. We must learn to think beyond ourselves and give serious consideration to others.

THE BELIEVER'S EXAMPLE 2:5-11

The Attitude to Adopt 2:5

"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus..."

Set in front of us is the greatest of all examples of unselfishness. It is not placed in front of us for consideration but for emulation. First, we are to emulate the mental attitude of Jesus Christ. Change in conduct always begins with change in attitude. Second, the verb is in the imperative mood—an appeal to our volition. The exhortation of verse 5 looks back to 2:1-4 for its definition and forward to 2:6-8 for its illustration.

The Condescension to Emulate 2:6-11

The Exhibition of Condescension 2:6-8

“...who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

These verses view Jesus Christ in two phases of His career. First, verse 6 views Him in His pre-incarnate state; second, verses 7-8 view Him in His incarnate state. He is deity in the fullest sense of the word in both states. The difference lies in the way His deity was expressed. The queen of England may dress in rags and beg for food from door to door if she chooses, but she still remains the queen of England. Her nature is the same, but the expression of her nature is different. In His pre-incarnate state, Christ's nature was expressed in exaltation and glory. In His incarnate state, it was expressed in condescension and suffering.

Verse 6 speaks of Christ's deity in His pre-incarnate state. The verb *existed* is a present tense, which points to continuity. We could say he “always existed or eternally existed.” Just before His arrest, Jesus made mention of this glorious condition saying, “And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was (John 17:5).” One should note that it was not His deity that was given up in the incarnation; it was rather His glory. He surrendered riches for rags, glory for suffering.

The word *form* was a Greek philosophical term for the outer expression of the inner nature. The term *did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped* answers the question, “Is Christ willing to surrender deity in the exalted state for deity in the condescended state in the interest of man's salvation?” The word *equality* is an adverb and is a statement about the manner of His existence. He was willing to surrender the position of existing in a manner equal with God.

Verses 7 and 8 speak of Christ's deity in His incarnate state. The emptying spoken of refers to the setting aside of the prerogatives of deity. The raising of Lazarus would be an example of the exercising of the powers of deity; Matthew 26:53 points to the setting aside of those powers saying, “Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?”

The condescension of the incarnation involved three things. First, the incarnation involved a new subordination. The word *form* is the same as in verse 6, only here His deity expresses itself as a servant. The word *taking* shows that this is something new that he had not had before. Second, the incarnation involved a new identification. The words *being made* again indicate something new, namely, manhood. Jesus was truly man, but He was not merely man. Third, the incarnation involved a new humiliation. The verb *humbled* is active voice, showing that this was all voluntary and in no way forced—He chose the path of humiliation. The extent of the humiliation is expressed in the words *even death on a cross*. The noun *cross* has no article with it, laying stress on the kind of death He died.

The Reward of Condescension 2:9-11

“Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth,¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

THE EXALTATION OF JESUS CHRIST 2:9

The purpose of the death of Jesus Christ was to die as man’s substitute and bear the guilt and penalty of man’s sin. Did He succeed in that work? This is a vital question because the answer determines whether or not we can trust Him for salvation. Our answer is made evident in Philippians 2:9-11 because it tells us how God the Father responded to the cross death of His Son.

The link between Christ’s cross death and the Father’s response is shown by the word *therefore* which begins verse 9. The nature of that response is expressed by the verb *highly exalted*. It is a compound word made up of a verb meaning *to lift up* plus a preposition meaning *over* and is closely related to the English word *super*. God the Father *super-exalted* His Son. Further, the Father bestowed on him *the name*. The article *the* shows the name is not general but specific. It is obviously not the name *Jesus*, for this was given to Him at His birth whereas this name was given Him upon His death. It is rather Jesus as *Lord*.

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHRIST 2:10-11

His authority will be universal and unchallenged. Verse 10 is a statement about the final outcome of history. First, there will be universal submission to Jesus Christ. The words *every knee* are all inclusive—Madalyn O’Hare will bow the knee alongside Bertrand Russell. There will be universal agreement for all will say, *Jesus Christ is Lord*. Finally, there will be a universal accomplishment in that all will be *to the glory of God the Father*.

THE APPLICATION OF THE UNITY PRINCIPLES 2:13-18

THE APPLICATION IN GENERAL 2:12-13

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

The Human Responsibility 2:12

Verse 12 points to a weakness on the part of the believers at Philippi. They tended to be a bit lax in their Christian lives when Paul was not present (see also 1:27). Paul does not say they are to work *for* their salvation, but they are to work *out* their salvation. Philippians 1:1 and 7 make it clear that they were already saved. The term *work out* means *to carry something to its goal, its ultimate conclusion*. In English, we might say, “He worked out a solution to the problem.” We must remember that there are three phases of salvation. First is the justification phase wherein we enter the family of God by faith. Second, there is the sanctification phase that involves growth and development in the Christian life. Third, there is the glorification phase of salvation that occurs at Christ’s return when we will be made like Him.

The Divine Enablement 2:13

The words *to will* point to the Lord’s desire for us to will, to decide, to make quality choices. It is not the will of the Lord to crush the believer’s volition. He rather desires that we actively choose to please him. The words *to work* show the result of the choices of the will. Good choices lie behind fruitful production.

APPLICATION IN PARTICULAR 2:14-18

“Do all things without grumbling or disputing; ¹⁵that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, ¹⁶holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. ¹⁷But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. ¹⁸And you too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.”

We Are to Have a Distinctive Character 2:15

First, we are to have a distinctive character in terms of a growing maturity. The word *prove* is a Greek word that means *to become*. It refers to a condition at which they had not yet arrived but are to vigorously pursue. Second, we are to have a distinctive character in

terms of quality. The word *blameless* means *deserving no censure, freedom from defect*. Third, we are to have a distinctive character in terms of honesty. The word *innocent* means *unmixed*. It was used of wine without added water or of metal without alloy. Fourth, we are to have a distinctive character in terms of the culture. Here are two nouns that describe the environment in which these believers lived. Life at Philippi was *crooked*, which means *bent away from truth*. The noun *perverse* is a similar word for something that was twisted. Believers are to stand in complete contrast to their culture. As lights, we are to represent truth in this evil environment.

We Are to Hold Forth a Distinctive Message 2:16

The word *holding* does not merely mean *to grasp something*; it means *to offer something*. The word is used in secular documents of the act of offering wine to a guest. We obviously cannot hold forth what we do not hold fast. The expression *word of life* is a functional title because it tells what the word does—it begets and sustains spiritual life.

What to Anticipate 2:17-18

Paul has talked about running and toiling for the church. There is another possibility, however; he also has the privilege of pouring out his life for it and actually views himself as doing so. In this he rejoices, and the Philippian believers are to do likewise.

APPLICATIONS FOR LIVING

We must learn to consciously consider the welfare of other believers over ourselves (2:3). There is nothing more human than self-centeredness; it is part and parcel of man's nature. It is not a natural tendency to consider others, but it is nonetheless our duty.

The condescension of Christ is more than a theological puzzle; it is an example that we are bound to emulate (2:5-9).

The offering of the word of God to men is the duty of the local church (2:16). Witnessing is not an optional matter; we are here as lights.

NOTES

Paul's Future Plans or "Two Self-sacrificing Men"

Philippians 2:19-30

SELF-SACRIFICING TIMOTHY 2:19-24

TIMOTHY WAS SELFLESS IN CHRIST'S WORK 2:19-21

"But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. ²⁰For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. ²¹For they all seek their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus."

Paul's Motive 2:19a

The words *to you* can be taken as a dative of advantage and could be translated *for you* (for your advantage or benefit). The words *I hope in the Lord Jesus* show that all of Paul's words, motives, and actions flowed from Christ as his living center. The word *shortly* means *quickly and showing a zeal to do this immediately and without delay*.

Paul's Purpose 2:19b

The verb *encourage* is a compound word made up of a word meaning *well* or *healthy* and another word meaning *soul*. Good news about their growth would bring health to Paul's soul.

Paul's Companion 2:20

The words *no one* are first in the sentence and are, therefore, emphasized. Think of them as underlined in English. Outside of Timothy, Paul cannot think of even one who is self-sacrificing enough to concern himself with the spiritual welfare of the Philippian church. The expression *of kindred spirit* literally translated is *equal-souled*.

Paul's Observation 2:21

These are very strong words, but their meaning is clear and evidently true.

TIMOTHY WAS PROVEN IN THE WORK OF CHRIST 2:22-24

"But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. ²³Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; ²⁴and I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall be coming shortly."

You Can Confirm This Fact

The words *you know* point to the Philippians' previous contacts with Timothy. Through these experiences Timothy had proved to be genuine through-and-through.

I Can Confirm This Fact

This is indicated by *he served with me*. Timothy had proved himself through ministry with Paul. The preposition *with* shows that Timothy did not serve Paul but that he functioned with Paul in a mutual ministry. The relationship of Paul and Timothy is described in terms of a father and son. Paul had brought the gospel to Timothy and in this sense became his spiritual father. The words *as soon as I see how things go with me* imply that Paul was so concerned with the welfare of others that it would take a deliberate effort on his part to think of his own condition—a remarkable example of selflessness! What are these things about himself that he does not yet know? He is very possibly referring to martyrdom since the sword was continually over his head.

SELF-SACRIFICING EPAPHRODITUS 2:25-30

"But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need; ²⁶because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. ²⁷For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly in order that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you. ²⁹Therefore receive him in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; ³⁰because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me."

EPAPHRODITUS IS A GOOD COMPANION 2:25A

Because He and Paul Share a Common Life

This is indicated by the words *my brother*. The word *adelphos* means *from the same womb*. This designates the relationship that all Christians bear to one another in that our spiritual life is from the same source and our family privileges are the same.

Because He and Paul Share a Common Calling

| They are *fellow worker(s)*.

Because He and Paul Share a Common Battle

| They are *fellow soldier(s)*. The term refers to those who are in active combat serving on the front lines and encountering a common enemy.

EPAPHRODITUS IS A GOOD MESSENGER 2:25B-30

Because He Yearns for You 2:25b-26

| The tense of the verb *was longing* indicates an abiding condition. That this attitude is directed toward the Philippian church with no individual member excepted is shown by the words *you all*. Here is another remarkable example of selflessness. When we are sick, we want everyone to know about it so they can express sympathy and send a card. Epaphroditus was on his death bed and was distressed because his Philippian friends were distressed!

Because He Suffers for You 2:27, 30

| It is interesting to note that the restoration of Epaphroditus to health was due to the mercy of God, not the gift of healing. Paul, with all his gifts, could do nothing for Epaphroditus but depended solely on the sovereign mercy of God. Verse 30 pictures Epaphroditus as exhausting himself to the point of death in the interest of the cause of Christ.

Because He Encourages You 2:28-29

| Epaphroditus was a source of joy to the Philippian church. His personal presence will once again encourage them in their walk with the Lord.

APPLICATIONS FOR LIVING

The single most important characteristic of servanthood is selflessness (2:20-21). Even though this is true, there is no other quality that is in such rare supply. Egocentricity is a major battleground for every believer. The humiliation and condescension of Christ is to be our moving force.

The bond that ties Christians together is the bond of servanthood (2:25).

CChristian Maturity

or “Shunning, Pursuing, and Walking”

Philippians 3:1-21

SHUNNING ALL LEGALISM 3:1-11

THE WARNING GIVEN 3:1-6

The Safeguard of Repetition 3:1

“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.”

The exhortation to rejoice in the Lord is the antidote to legalism. Legalism rejoices in the accomplishments of man; true joy flows from a focus on the Lord.

The Value of Repetition from the Standpoint of the Teacher

Repetition is not to be considered a tedious task. The noun *trouble* is derived from a verb that means *to delay and thus become weary of waiting*. Paul repeats his teaching with as much enthusiasm as when he first taught it.

The Value of Repetition from the Standpoint of the Taught

The word for *safeguard* refers to anything that is firm and solid. Through repetition of truth, it becomes solid and firm to us or, as we would say, “It becomes second nature to us.” One of the major sins of the Old Testament is forgetfulness of God, and repetitive instruction is its cure. God’s truth is inexhaustible and can never be known to the fullest. It is true, as one has put it, “That which cannot be overlearned cannot be over-taught.”

The Citizens of Philippi 3:2-3

“Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; ³for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh...”

Some of Whom Were Dogs 3:2**THEIR CHARACTER**

The reference to dogs should not carry our minds to the domesticated pets many people own. The reference is to the packs of dogs that prowled the cities of the Middle East with no home or owner. They fed on the refuse and filth of the streets, fighting one another and attacking those who passed by. The metaphor is applied to two kinds of people. First, it is applied to those who despise truth (Matthew 7:6). Second, it is applied to those who persistently embrace error (II Peter 2:22).

THEIR CONDUCT

The term *evil workers* points to their efforts to distort the purity of the gospel through the misuse and rejection of God's grace.

THEIR DOCTRINE

When Paul uses the word *circumcision* in verse 2, he does not use the usual word. *Peritoma* is the normal word, which means *to cut around* and is used in the next verse. The word used in verse 2 is *katatoma* and means *mutilation*. When circumcision was trusted for salvation, it was viewed as nothing more than a useless mutilation. Heathen priests mutilated themselves, believing the gods would be satisfied by such action. Those in view in this verse taught salvation by religious rite and are therefore false teachers.

Some of Whom Were Saints 3:3**TRUE BELIEVERS GLORY IN CHRIST**

This means they find all their hope for salvation in His merits alone. Their confidence reaches upward to God not inward to self.

TRUE BELIEVERS REJECT THE FLESH

The verb *put no confidence* is a perfect tense expressing a settled conviction. Personal achievement is not relied on in any way in terms of obtaining a meritorious position before God.

The Example of Human Righteousness 3:4-6

"...although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more; ⁵circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless."

Paul Was a Pure-Blooded Jew

This is proved by his circumcision, by his national stock, by his national tribe, and by his parentage.

Paul Was a Strict Adherent of the Mosaic Law

This is proved by the sect to which he belonged. The Pharisees represented the strictest Jewish sect in existence. It was further

| proved by his zeal in persecuting the church. Finally, it is proved
| by his blamelessness.

THE GRACE PERSPECTIVE 3:7-11

In Relationship to His Past: Total Renunciation of All Personal Merit 3:7-9

Which Brought Him Greater Riches 3:7-8

“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ...”

The key idea here is that of attainment by abandonment. Paul must give up in order to get; he must let loose in order to take hold.

THE ABANDONMENT 3:7-8A

First, it involved the abandonment of *whatever things*. Within context, the reference would be to the list of things he has given us in verses 4-6. Paul learned that he could not hold on to his personal merit and have Christ at the same time. The perfect tense verb *I have counted* points to a deliberate and final decision. The word *gain* is plural because it takes in many items. The word *loss* is singular because it expresses the sum total of all his gains. All gains are counted as one loss.

Second, it involved the abandonment of *all things*. Verse 8 advances over verse 7 in two ways. It advances in substitution of the present tense for the perfect tense in the verb *I count*. Verse 7 points to a decisive moment whereas verse 8 shows an existing condition. It also advances in expanding *whatever things* to *all things*. Nothing with Christ is infinitely superior to everything without Him.

THE ATTAINMENT 3:8B

The word translated *rubbish* carries two possible ideas. First, it may refer to feces from the human body. Second, it may refer to garbage or spoiled food.

Which Brought Him a Perfect Righteousness 3:9

“...and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith...”

Righteousness that gives us a standing with God is provided on the basis of two things. First, it is based on our position, i.e., *may be found in Him*. Second, it is based on our faith. Two kinds of righteousness are here. They differ as to kind, for one is man produced and the other is God provided. One is worked for; the other is a gift. One is the fruit of labor; the other is given in response to faith.

In Relationship to His Present: Total Dedication to Deeper Knowledge of Christ 3: 10-11

“... that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”

It Consists in Knowing

First, Paul desires to know Christ's person. Since Paul already knows Christ, it is obvious that a deeper and fuller knowledge is what he has in mind. The rest of verse 10 particularizes this knowledge. Second, Paul desires to know Christ's power. The word *power* denotes that which overcomes resistance. Third, Paul desires personal and intimate fellowship with Christ in His suffering. The suffering of Jesus came from at least six sources.

- from humanity at large (John 15:18-25)
- from His own nature (John 1:11 and 8:41)
- from His own friends (Matthew 16:21-23)
- from the spirit world (Luke 22:53)
- from His own heavenly Father (Isaiah 53:10)
- from His own knowledge (Matthew 10:32).

It Consists in Conforming

Paul is not pointing to the actual act of dying, but rather to Christ's attitude in His death (Philippians 2:5-8).

It Consists in Attaining

The word *resurrection* is not the normal word used elsewhere for the resurrection. Translated literally, it is “the out resurrection from among the dead.” What is the *out resurrection*? It may be that Paul is referring to the event of I Thessalonians 4:13-18, which is sometimes called the rapture.

PURSuing FULL MATURITY 3:12-16

THE CONVICTIONS NEEDED FOR MATURITY 3:12

“Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.”

The Conscious Realization of the Lack of Full Maturity 3:12a

Paul tells us that he has not yet obtained maturity because he has just said he had given up everything to know Christ (3:7-8), and his readers might tend to think that he had therefore arrived at a state of complete maturity. The opening words of verse 12 show that this is not the case. He is keenly aware that he has not *already become perfect*. The word *perfect* means *to carry something through to its end; to carry to a goal*—the goal expressed in 3:10.

The Decisive Pursuit of the Goal of Full Maturity 3:12b

Consciousness of lack of maturity can lead in two directions. First, it could lead to a “What’s the use?” attitude. Second, it could and should lead to a “Let’s keep renewing the effort” attitude. This is what it did for Paul, and it should do the same for us.

The Precise Awareness of the Nature of Full Maturity 3:12c

For what was Paul *laid hold of by Christ Jesus*? The best answer comes from Galatians 1:15-16 where we are told that God called him “to reveal His Son in me.” Christlikeness is the essence of all maturity.

THE ATTITUDES NEEDED FOR MATURITY 3:13-14

“Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

An Introspective View

There are two emphatic words in verse 13; *I* and *myself*. Their emphasis implies that some of the Philippian believers had progressed quite well in the Christian life and were not afraid to say so. Paraphrased, Paul is saying, “Some of you may think you are very advanced in the Christian life; but *as for me*, I have much yet to gain.”

A Retrospective View

The word *forgetting* shows that Paul had developed the ability to isolate the past which consisted of two things. First, his past had involved sinful and God dishonoring acts. Philippians 3:6 says he had been “a persecutor of the church.” Second, his past had involved self-righteous conduct under the Law. In what sense does Paul forget these things? It obviously does not mean he obliterated all of these things from memory since he has just enumerated some of them (3:5-7). It means that he forgets in the sense that he does not allow them to absorb his attention and thus hinder his progress. He is not preoccupied with them.

A Prospective View

The word *goal* is an athletic metaphor referring to what one sets one’s eye on—the goal. It shows that progress is totally dependent on what one fixes his eyes upon.

THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ATTAIN MATURITY 3:15-16

“Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you;”

¹⁶however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.”

The Emulation Aspect 3:15

Paul’s attitude toward maturity needs to be emulated. Two different kinds of believers are addressed in verses 15-16. First, he addresses the mature. They are mature in a relative sense, which means even they need more maturity. The truly mature believer is continually revising, correcting, and improving his mental attitude. Second, Paul addresses the mistaken who have *a different attitude* than his. Notice that he leaves their correction in the hands of God.

The Consistency Aspect 3:16

Paul recognized that various levels of maturity existed in the church, as indicated by the words *to which we have obtained*. This verse says there is only one way to go, and that is forward.

WALKING BY EXAMPLE 3:17-21

THE DUTY TO WALK 3:17-19

“Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. ¹⁸For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.”

The Pattern 3:17

This command is free of egotism because Paul includes others as role models beside himself. Notice the plural *us*, which would include Epaphroditus and Timothy. Paul puts strict limitations on the extent to which we are to follow him in I Corinthians 11:1, saying we are to imitate him just as he imitates Christ. Observing and imitating an exemplary believer is a valid part of the Christian life. Timothy, Epaphroditus, and Paul were models to be imitated.

The Problem 3:18-19

Their Guilt 3:18

The lifestyle of those Paul is referring to was Epicurean in nature. The indulgence of physical appetite was regarded as the highest good in life. These were not part of the church at Philippi but nonetheless a threat to it.

To be an enemy of the cross of Christ means to live in a way that contradicts what the cross of Christ stands for. For the Judaizers, enmity to the cross was expressed by refusal to believe in its total

adequacy. For the unrestrained, enmity toward the cross was expressed by refusing to respond to its demands for holiness.

Their Destiny 3:19a

The word *destruction* does not mean annihilation. It refers to loss of well being, never to extinction of being.

Their God 3:19b

Cyclops in Euripides says, "My flocks which I sacrifice to no one but myself, and not to the gods, and to this my belly the greatest of the gods: for to eat and to drink each day, and to give one's self no trouble, this is the god for wise men." Paul is describing total sensualists.

Their Glory 3:19c

They exult in what should be a shame to them. Addiction to lusts is also implied.

Their Mentality 3:19d

The verb *set their minds* is the same word as found in 2:5. This involves a direct contrast to what a believer should think. The things they set their minds on are worldly.

THE DUTY TO WATCH 3:20-21

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; ²¹who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself"

Our Citizenship 3:20a

There is a double contrast between verses 19 and 20. *Our* of verse 20 stands in contrast to *their* in verse 19. Also the words *earthly things* in verse 19 contrast the word *heaven* in verse 20.

The metaphor of citizenship in a far distant city would be very appropriate for these Philippian believers. Philippi was a "little Rome." Most of the believers in Philippi had never been to the city of Rome where their citizenship lay.

Our Anticipation 3:20b

The church lives between remembrance and expectation. At the Lord's table we recall the Lord's cross work and look forward to the hope of His appearing (I Corinthians 11:26).

Our Transformation 3:21

The word *transform* means *to change the outward form of something*.
The word *conform* means *to display the essential character of*

| *something*. Our present body is described as *humble* and refers to its tendency toward sin, sickness, disease, death, and deterioration.

APPLICATIONS FOR LIVING

Repetition of truth is important and should not be avoided by the teacher or by the student (3:10).

We should carefully avoid the danger of failing to grow because we feel we are already mature (3:13).

Paul's Final Exhortations

or "Standing Firm in the Lord"

Philippians 4:1-9

THE NEED FOR STEADFASTNESS 4:1

"Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved."

The word *therefore* ties the exhortation to steadfastness to the promise of glorification in 3:21. This is a companion verse to I Corinthians 15:58 where Paul concludes the great resurrection chapter with a call for the believer to be steadfast in the light of his coming glorification. Steadfastness is also needed because of the *many* who are *enemies of the cross* (3:18).

THE CALL FOR UNITY 4:2-3

"I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord."

³*Indeed, true comrade, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life."*

THE FEUD 4:2

The Appeal to the Women

The *urge* is repeated to each woman individually. Paul is being fair and evenhanded; each is exhorted in the same way and with the same words. Being an apostle, Paul has the right to command, but instead he encourages. This gives both women a chance to exhibit obedience to the will of God by their own free choice.

The Cause of the Friction

We can say that the friction was not due to doctrinal disagreement because Paul would have corrected that directly. Perhaps these two ladies had a personality clash or a failure to understand one another.

er's viewpoint. Which one was wrong? We do not know; perhaps both.

The Cure for the Problem

This is found in the words *live in harmony in the Lord*. The Greek word is *phroneo*, which means *to adopt an attitude*. It is the same word used in 2:5 and translated *have this attitude*. The attitude required is that of willingness to consider the interests of another ahead of one's self.

THE FRIEND 4:3

This verse demonstrates the value of a third party. The man who was called upon to help heal the rift between the two women was especially qualified. The word *comrade* means *yokefellow* and refers to one who was able to work side-by-side with another in pulling a load.

THE SIGNS OF MATURITY 4:4-7

Joy 4:4

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"

First, the term *in the Lord* points to the source of the joy. It looks at who the Lord is and what He has done. Second, the word *always* describes the scope of the joy. This does not require that we rejoice for everything, but it does demand that we rejoice in the midst of every circumstance. It recognizes that in every circumstance God has His good purpose, even if the purpose is not obvious to us. Third, notice that the command is repeated in the last half of the verse. Why repeat? We repeat in order to clarify, and we repeat in order to enforce an idea.

REASONABLENESS 4:5

"Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near."

The word *forbearing* is best understood by knowing its antonym, which is *to strictly claim one's rights*. The spirit of the word is found in Philippians 2:3-4. Letting this spirit *be known to all men* does not mean to advertise it. It is not saying, "Look at me!" It means we are to make this attitude an undeniable part of our lives. The motivation for obedience here is the nearness of the Lord, and it is one of the chief motivators of believers in both the Old and New Testaments.

TRUST 4:6-7

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the

| *peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*"

The Contradiction of Trust: Worry 4:6a

| The words *be anxious* tell us that worry is a habit. The present tense of the verb preceded by a negative commands the cessation of something one is constantly doing. "Stop the habit of worrying!" The verb means *to pull in different directions* and expresses the concept of opposing forces tugging within one.

The Expression of Trust: Prayer 4:6b

| The word *but* is a strong adversative. The negative command not to worry is replaced with the positive one. One does not solve the problem of worry by concentrating on not worrying. The formula is: Replace worry with prayer. In worry we talk to ourselves; in prayer we talk to God. Worry is self-centered; prayer is God-centered.

The Scope of Trust: Everything 4:6b

| The words *in everything* are emphatic and come before the four words for prayer. We are to hold back nothing. Why? Certainly not because God does not know if we don't tell Him. We are to hold back nothing from our heavenly Father because it is mentally, spiritually, and emotionally healthy to express all things to Him.

The Protection of Trust: Peace 4:7

| In speaking of the *peace of God*, Paul is referring to the tranquility of mind that God gives when we handle worry the way He tells us to handle it. The term *which surpasses all comprehension* indicates the absolute sufficiency of God's peace. *Shall guard* is a military metaphor for a sentry standing guard at a gate. The word *heart* points to the emotions while *mind* points to the intellect. God protects us mentally and emotionally.

THE SUMMARY OF ATTITUDES 4:8-9

| "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things. ⁹The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you."

THE CHARACTER OF MATURE THOUGHTS 4:8

| These two verses are the final exhortations of the book. They tell what our minds should dwell upon. All of these things are foreign

to man by nature. The thinking of the believer, however, is to be both disciplined and directed.

It is interesting to note that the first item in the list relates to truth. Why is truth placed first? Because truth is the foundation upon which all else rests. The word *honorable* refers to things or people who are worthy of veneration and respect. The word *pure* emphasizes moral purity; and *lovely* refers to something that endears one to others. The expression of *good repute* refers to anything worth complementing or praising. The word *if* shifts to a conditional statement that requires the reader to exercise his own discrimination. It forces us to get actively involved in the process of identifying worthwhile things.

THE EXPRESSION OF MATURE THOUGHTS 4:9

Verse 9 moves from thinking to doing. They are to practice what they have been taught and what they have observed in Paul. The preposition *with* means *to be in the midst of*.

APPLICATIONS FOR LIVING

The cure for anxiety lies in our willingness to commit matters to the Lord in prayer (4:6).

The habit of doing this guarantees mental and emotional protection (4:7).

Paul's Commendation *or "Thank You for the Gift"*

Philippians 4:10-23

COMMENDATION FOR THE RECENT GIFT 4:10-14

"But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. ¹¹Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹²I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. ¹⁴Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction."

THE ARRIVAL OF THE GIFT MANIFESTED THEIR CONCERN FOR PAUL 4:10

The words *at last* do not involve a rebuke. Paul is not saying, "It's about time!" The delay in sending Paul support was due to lack of opportunity and nothing else. Perhaps they had limited means and it therefore took time to collect a gift for Paul. On the other hand, the delay could have been due to inability to find someone to travel to Rome to deliver the gift.

THE DELAY OF THE GIFT DEVELOPED PAUL'S MATURITY 4:11-14

In Learning to be Undisturbed by Circumstances 4:11-12

As Evidenced by His Lack of Complaint 4:11a

The word *want* means *deprivation*. Paul was content in all circumstances and never had a sense of deprivation, even when a need existed.

As Evidenced by His Self-Sufficiency 4:11b

The word *content* translates a Greek word that means *to be self-sufficient, to be independent of external conditions*. It was used by the

Stoics for the ideal condition. The word *learned* is important for two reasons. First, it shows this condition was not innate; man is uncontented by nature. Second, the word indicates entry into a new state, and thus, means *come to learn*. Paul had learned contentment in the “University of Christian Living” through adversity. Adversity is part of life, and we cannot avoid it. We can, however, choose our response to it and become either bitter or better.

As Evidenced by His Capacity for Life 4:12

It is impossible to enjoy and appreciate anything until we let go of it. This is the secret of enjoyment of material possessions (notice Paul calls this a *secret*). It is a secret because so few ever discover it. It has been well said, “He is no fool who gives up that which cannot be kept for that which cannot be lost.” How did Paul learn to be content in any state? The answer lies in that he regarded all things as from the hand of God. What is withheld is withheld by God, and what is given is given by God.

In Learning to Draw on Christ’s Power 4:13-14

In verse 11 we noted that the word *content* referred to self-sufficiency. Verse 13 shows that the root of Paul’s self-sufficiency is Christ’s sufficiency. The *all things* referred to here point specifically to the capacity for contentment. Verse 14 is important in maintaining balance. The Philippians could have said, “Paul is content, he sees all things as from the hand of God, why should we give?” This is not true at all. They had done a commendable thing in giving to Paul.

COMMENDATION FOR THE PAST GIFT 4:15-19

A COMMENTARY ON THE MAJORITY OF THE EARLY CHURCHES 4:15

“And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone...”

The majority of churches were completely insensitive and unresponsive to Paul’s material needs. The words *giving and receiving* are business terms referring to the credit and debit side of the ledger. It involves a service for which a legitimate financial debt is created. The word *shared* is the Greek verb from the noun *koinonia*, which means *fellowship*. Giving to the Lord’s work is a fellowship, a joint-participation with the one to whom it is given.

A COMMENTARY ON THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI 4:16-19

As to Their Generosity 4:16-17

“...for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. ¹⁷Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.”

As to Their Gift 4:18-19

“But I have received everything in full, and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice well-pleasing to God. ¹⁹And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

The Gift Was More Than Adequate

The term *received...in full* was used consistently of a receipt indicating payment in full.

The Gift Fulfilled Their Ministry as Believer-Priests

This is indicated by the word *aroma* and the word *sacrifice*.

The Gift Was Viewed with Pleasure by God

The Gift Did not Make the Givers Poorer

CONCLUSION 4:20-23

“Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen. ²¹Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. ²²All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household. ²³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”

It should be noted that each of Paul’s letters begins and ends with a mention of grace. It is as though grace were the framework for his letters.

APPLICATIONS FOR LIVING

The believer should learn to develop the capacity for contentment in life, with wealth and without wealth (4:12). This can only be learned when we view all things as from the hand of God.

Giving is worship, and giving is fellowship. Since giving is a kind of fellowship, we should be fully aware of how our money is being used.

NOTES