

REJOICE IN THE LORD

**An Inductive study
of the Philippian epistle**

BY

O. William Cooper

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Fort Collins, Colorado 80526

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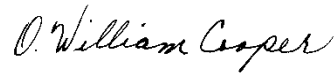
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While writing this book, I have been thinking about how much others have contributed to this completed work. Several people are involved in the "hands-on" work of producing such a study. Rev. Mary Neil and Mrs. Eve Lichtenwalter have become very proficient in asking, in a hundred different ways, "Is that really what you want to say?" For me, controlling a computer is a bit like herding squirrels. Fortunately, God brought Dr. Peter Stone into my life and he is a real trainer. He touches keys and the computer behaves like a well-trained seeing-eye dog.

At another level, discussions with my wife, Ruth, and our son, Kiel, have enabled me to make somewhat foggy ideas much clearer. As I studied from the Greek text, I wondered what I would have done if Dr. C. Donald McCaig had not shown me how important the language is and patiently taught me how to use it. My mind has been enriched by the ideas of hundreds of writers from whose work I have gained great insight.

For all of these, I give God thanks. I am indebted to each one for their generous help when I needed it most.

Gratefully,



O. William Cooper

May 24, 1999

IN MEMORIUM

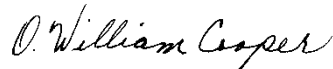
There is a vast multitude of intensely loyal servants of Christ who though weak and outnumbered are stronger than their enemies of the Gospel. They transcend national boundaries in all directions. They speak untold numbers of native languages and dialects in a variety of climes.

They have been isolated, but never gave into loneliness. They have been imprisoned at hard labor, but experienced an inner freedom matched nowhere else on earth. They have been beaten inhumanely, humiliated beyond imagination, but never abandoned their commitment to Christ. These politically incorrect faithful servants experienced brutality, insults, rape and mutilation. Finally, like their Lord, the faint but beautiful words escaped their lips, "it is finished."

They ultimately stood for their faith until life ebbed away and immortality ushered them into the presence of the one in whose name they willingly laid down their lives.

To these modern martyrs of the last half of the twentieth century whose dedication to Christ blasts through the luxurious comfort of our pain free discipleship to remind us that we, too, must take up our cross and follow our Lord. We humbly dedicate this study of the Philippian Epistle to the memory of their faithfulness.

With deepest respect and love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "O. William Cooper".

O. William Cooper

Ebenezer House
Livermore, Colorado
May 24, 1999

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INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. At one sitting, read the Philippian epistle. As you finish each chapter, write a summary of eight words or less.

1	
2	
3	
4	

2. Reread the Philippian epistle. Read more carefully this time. There are at least 54 statements about the Philippian Christians in these four chapters. Write down the location and a brief summary of each piece of information.
3. Study this list:
 - a. What problems does Paul address in these 54 pieces of information? Please search for these and write them down. If you do not find them all, don't worry. They are included in the Introduction that follows.
 - b. On the basis of this list, how would you describe the spiritual condition of the Philippian church?
4. Read the Philippian epistle once more. There are 56 commands in this epistle.
 - a. Write down the location and content summary for each command.
 - b. Now, study your list. On the basis of the commands Paul gave, identify the areas of concern he addressed.
 - c. Look at your list again. On the following table, list the number of commands you find in each chapter.

CHAPTER	1	2	3	4
COMMANDS				

- d. Observe this table for a few moments. What observation can you make on the basis of this brief study?

INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

Philippi is a city in Eastern Macedonia. This is a part of Europe as we know it today. It is located on a plain surrounded by mountains. It is located 10 miles inland from the Aegean Sea and about 70 miles north and east of Thessalonica.



The Egnatian Way, the main overland route between Asia and the West, went right through the city.

Philippi was a thoroughly Roman city and was named for Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great. In 356 B. C. Philip took the city of Krenides, enlarged it and built a wall around it. He brought in people from the nearby countryside to settle there.

Philip mounted a grand building program for the city. He built a forum the size of a football field. There was a huge open-air theater. He also built a great library and a number of Roman baths. Along with the grandeur of Roman culture and opulence came all the hideous forms of vice that characterized Roman life. This included the worship of hundreds of pagan deities and moral perversion in a hundred forms.

In 42 B. C. Mark Anthony and Octavian (better known as Augustus Caesar) defeated Brutus and Cassius in Philippi. You may remember that this feud started when Cassius assassinated Julius Caesar. Philippi was made a Roman colony in celebration of the victory, by Mark Anthony and Octavian. This entitled the residents to all the rights and privileges of those living in Italy. This was a great gift to them.

In 31 B. C., Octavian defeated the naval forces of Anthony and Cleopatra off the coast of Greece. In reprisal, the supporters of Anthony were punished by being removed from Italy and resettled in Philippi. This was a great tragedy for them, but it was really an outstanding expression of mercy on the part of the Roman ruler. On other occasions, they might have been put to death without a trial. As one might expect, this created a safer environment for the rulers in Rome, but also created a fractured political climate in Philippi. This was because other people of Philippi had great loyalty to the Roman ruler.

Paul visited Philippi around 49 A. D. on his second missionary journey. The account of this can be found in Acts 16:12-20:16. He also visited them on his third missionary journey. Acts 16:13 indicates that the Jews worshipped at the sea shore. There are two possible reasons for this fact:

1. It was not uncommon for Jews to worship at the shore of a river or sea if there were not enough Jewish men in the community to have a synagogue. One must keep in mind that for the Jews, worship and religious training were essentially a

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male responsibility. The rule was that they needed enough Jewish men for minion. The rule for minion, apparently dated from the time of Boaz in the book of Ruth. It required the presence of ten Jewish men in order to commence a study of Scripture.

2. Another possibility seems even more plausible. There is an arch still standing about one mile outside the edge of the city. This was a zoning marker. No foreign or undesirable religious sect could meet closer to the city than this point. This would, of course, include both Jews and Christians. In spite of this rule, Philippi was the first Christian church on European soil.

This is where Paul met Lydia. She was a seller of purple. Archeologists have found inscriptions in excavations there that mention this trade. Purple dye was made from shells found on the bottom of a bay in the nearby Aegean Sea as well as the Mediterranean Sea. Divers collected these shells from the bottom of this bay. They tell us that they had to crush 250,000 mollusks to make an ounce of dye. It is easy to see why this dye was so costly. It might be surprising to note that the name "Canaan" means "land of purple." It is not that this dye was made in Canaan, but that there was a lot of it in use there by the conquerors of the land.

Paul's letter to the Philippians

Paul's letter to the Philippian church was written from prison, perhaps Rome, along with the letters to Ephesus, Colosseae and the brief letter to Philemon.

It is appropriate to say that Paul founded the Philippian church. In his writing, it is clear that Paul had a special affection for this congregation. In this city, Paul was imprisoned without a trial. (Acts 16:19-40) This is evidence that the famous Roman legal system was loosely followed in the city. Justice was rather nebulous to say the least.

The focus of this epistle held that in an unfriendly cultural setting, the Christ-centered life is viable in the midst of abuse, persecutions and political attack. Paul stressed the need to be like-minded with Christ; to see life from His perspective; to act toward others with Christ's intentions. This epistle contains the best description of the mind of Christ to be found in the New Testament. Interestingly, Paul contrasts the mind of Christ (2:1-11) with the mind of Adam (Genesis 3:5). Paul particularly exhorted them to be identified with Christ in humility and obedience. This is the noblest achievement to which one might aspire.

The Recipients

Throughout this epistle, Paul made a number of references to the people in the Philippian church. A careful study of these pieces of information will give us some important insights into the lives of these people and the basis upon which Paul wrote to them. Here is a list of that information:

1:1 – They were saints.

1:1 – They had overseers and deacons.

1:5 – They were part of a continual participation in the Gospel.

1:6 – They were maturing Christians.

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- 1:7 – They stood by Paul in his imprisonment, defense and confirmation of the Gospel.
This suggests that others did not stand by him at that time. It speaks about the quality of their Christian character.
- 1:8 – Paul had great affection for them.
- 1:9 – They had agape love.
- 1:9 – They needed to grow in real knowledge and discernment.
- 1:10 – They needed to approve excellent things in order to be/become sincere and blameless.
- 1:11 – They needed to be filled with the fruit of righteousness.
- 1:24 – They needed the help of Paul in spiritual growth.
- 1:26 – These people had a proud confidence in Paul.
- 1:27 – They needed to conduct themselves in an ongoing manner worthy of the Gospel.
- 1:27 – They needed to stand firm in one spirit.
- 1:27 – They needed to stand firm in one mind.
- 1:27 – They needed to stand firm striving together for the faith.
- 1:28 – There was danger of their being alarmed by their opponents.
- 1:29 – They were gifted by God to believe and to suffer for Christ's sake.
- 2:2 – They needed to be of the same mind.
- 2:2 – They needed to maintain the same love.
- 2:2 – They needed to be united in spirit.
- 2:2 – They needed to be intent on one purpose.
- 2:3 – There was danger of their working from a basis of selfishness.
- 2:3 – There was danger of their working from a basis of self-conceit.
- 2:3 – They needed to work from humility of mind in relationship to each other.
- 2:4 – They needed to look out for each other rather than just for themselves.
- 2:5 – They needed to have the mind of Christ.
- 2:12 – They needed to work out their salvation in fear and trembling.
- 2:14 – There was danger of grumbling in their work.
- 2:15 – They needed to prove themselves blameless, innocent, children of God.
- 2:15 – They needed to prove themselves above reproach in a crooked world.
- 2:16 – They needed to hold fast the word of life.
- 2:18 – They needed to rejoice in suffering. See also 3:1
- 2:29 – They needed to hold their leaders in high regard.
- 3:1 – They needed to beware of the "dogs."
- 3:1 – They needed to beware of evil workers.
- 3:1 – They needed to beware of the false circumcision.
- 3:15 – Many of these believers were mature.
- 3:15 – They needed to observe the priorities that Paul followed.
- 3:16 – There was danger they will compromise their stand.
- 3:17-21 – They needed to watch out for false believers.
- 4:1 – They needed to stand firm in the Lord.
- 4:2 – Euodia and Syntyche were leaders who are out of harmony with each other.
- 4:3 – Euodia and Syntyche needed the help of other believers.
- 4:4 – They needed to rejoice in the Lord.
- 4:5 – They needed to let their forbearing spirit be known to all.
- 4:6 – There was danger they will experience anxiety.

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- 4:6 – They needed to turn anxiety over to God in prayer.
- 4:7 – They needed the peace of God to guard their hearts and minds in this struggle.
- 4:8 – They needed to focus their minds on the best.
- 4:9 – They needed to practice what Paul had taught them.
- 4:14 – They shared with Paul in his affliction.
- 4:15 – They supported Paul both spiritually and financially when other congregations did not.

If you study this list of 54 statements carefully, you will gain some important information about these Philippian believers. Here is a list of some of the information you will observe:

1. They were undergoing opposition and persecution.
2. They really struggled with the issue of unity.
3. There were disagreements among believers.
4. There was danger of their giving up in persecution and opposition.
5. They needed to rejoice even though they are suffering. This is, for them, a new view of rejoicing and joy.
6. They were being opposed by Jews who wanted to reinstate orthodox understandings. These outsiders wanted them to depend upon Christ and circumcision. They wanted them to rely on circumcision and the sacrificial system of the Jews for salvation.
7. These people needed to follow Paul's example.
8. Unlike popular current understandings, this is not a congregation swept up in the joy of the Lord, but a group of Christians who were suffering severely, from outside and inside the church, and it was not clear how it would work out. Paul had to work hard to pull these people together.

Exhortations In The Philippian Epistle

The letters Paul wrote to the churches were intended to bring solution to a problem he had heard of or had observed in the congregation. Philippians is no exception. There are 56 specific exhortations that Paul gave to these Christians in Philippi. They fall roughly into four categories. You will observe that there is some overlapping in these exhortations:

Spiritual Qualities

- 1:9 – Let love abound.
- 1:9 – Approve excellent things.
- 1:9 – Be sincere and blameless.
- 1:27 – In one mind, strive together for the faith.
- 2:2 – Have the same mind.
- 2:2 – Have the same love.
- 2:2 – Be united in spirit.
- 2:2 – Be intent on one purpose.
- 2:3 – Be humble of mind.
- 2:4 – Be as concerned for others as you are for yourself.
- 2:7 – Have the attitude of Christ

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- a. 2:7 – In terms of self sacrifice
 - b. 2:8 – In terms of humbling themselves
 - c. 2:8 – In terms of obedience to the point of death
- 2:15 – Prove yourselves to be innocent.
2:15 – Prove yourselves to be blameless.
2:15 – Prove yourself to be a child of God above reproach.
3:15 – Let those who are mature have the attitude of Paul.

Spiritual Actions

- 1:27 – Conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the Gospel.
1:27 – Stand firm in one spirit.
1:27 – Stand firm with one mind.
1:28 – Do not be alarmed by your opponents.
2:3 – Do nothing from selfishness.
2:12 - Work out your own salvation.
2:13 – Do all things without grumbling.
2:14 – Do all things without disputations.
2:16 – Hold fast the word of life.
2:18 – Rejoice in the same way Paul did.
3:1 – Rejoice in the Lord.
3:2 – Beware of the dogs.
3:2 – Beware of evil workers.
3:2 – Beware of the false circumcision.
3:16 – Keep living by the standard they had attained.
3:18 – Beware of false believers.
4:1 – Stand firm in the Lord.
4:2 – Euodia and Syntyche should stop feuding.
4:3 – The church should help these two women.
4:4 – Rejoice in the Lord always.
4:5 – Let your forbearing spirit be known to all
4:6 – Be anxious about nothing.
4:6 – In everything, let your requests be known to God.
4:8 – Let your mind dwell on whatever is true.
4:8 – Let your mind dwell on whatever is honorable.
4:8 – Let your mind dwell on whatever is righteous.
4:8 – Let your mind dwell on whatever is pure.
4:8 – Let your mind dwell on whatever is lovely.
4:8 – Let your mind dwell on whatever is of good repute.
4:8 – Let your mind dwell on whatever is excellent.
4:8 – Let your mind dwell on whatever is worthy of praise.
4:9 – Practice the things you have learned.
4:9 – Practice the things you have received.
4:9 - Practice the things you have heard.
4:9 – Practice the things you have seen in Paul.

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Spiritual Attitudes

4:5 – Let your forbearing spirit be known.

4:6 – Be anxious for nothing.

Spiritual motives.

2:3 – Do nothing from selfishness.

2:3 – Do nothing from empty conceit.

The Structure Of The Book

In terms of Paul's writing, Philippians is a bit unique. In almost all of Paul's epistles, excluding Philippians, the format is the same. The first part of the book deals with the appropriate doctrinal presentation and then the last part contains a long list of exhortations intended to correct the problem for which the doctrinal presentation was made. The epistle to the Romans is a case in point. Chapters 1 – 11 deal with the doctrinal presentation. Chapters 12-16 is a practical application based upon chapters 1 – 11. In these chapters, there is a long list of exhortations intended to suggest solutions for the problems addressed in chapters 1 – 11.

The book of Ephesians is an excellent example. Look at the following table.

CHAPTERS	1-3	4-6
EXHORTATIONS	3	86

Philippians is much different. Look at the way the book is constructed.

CHAPTER	1	2	3	4
EXHORTATIONS	8	20	7	21
TOTALS	28		28	

Observe that there are exactly the same number of exhortations in chapters one and two as there are in chapters three and four.

As early as 1:9 Paul issues his first exhortation. Clearly, Paul does not follow his usual pattern of describing the theological position involved and then offering a host of exhortations to deal with that problem. In this epistle, Paul intermingles the doctrinal and the practical. The "kenosis passage," 2:1-11, is an excellent illustration of this style.

This awareness seriously affects the way we look at this epistle. It suggests that much of what Paul does in this epistle is "cause and effect" in style. If this is true, and I believe that it is, it suggests a totally different emotional tone for this epistle. Paul is showing a level of intense emotion that he has not shown elsewhere. It tells us that Paul was much closer to this body of believers than he was to the other churches. This is not too difficult to understand since their mutual involvement is much higher than that of any of the other churches. It also can suggest that Paul feels a greater sense of urgency with this situation than he experienced with the others. It appears that this is true.

We will need to watch to see if this is borne out in the rest of the study.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 1
PAUL GREETED THE PHILIPPIAN CHRISTIANS
PHILIPPIANS 1:1 – 30

1. There are three paragraphs in the first chapter of the Philippian epistle. On the following table, write a summary of eight words or less for each paragraph.

1:1, 2	
1:3-11	
1:12-30	

2. In 1:1, 2, Paul greeted his friends in the Philippian church.
- a. There is good reason to believe that Paul very carefully identified himself in each epistle he wrote, other than I and II Thessalonians. How did Paul identify himself in Philippians?
 - b. In what other epistles did Paul identify himself in the same way?
 - c. In 1:2, Paul stated his benediction upon the recipients of the epistle. What did he request from God on their behalf? Why would this request be so important to these Christians?
3. In 1:5, Paul spoke of their "participation in the Gospel." In what ways had they participated?
4. In 1:6, Paul said, "He who began a good work in you will perfect it." What did Paul mean by his use of the word "perfect"?
5. In 1:7-9, Paul described his feelings concerning these Philippian Christians.
- a. Describe this relationship in your own words.
 - b. Why would Paul's feeling for them be so strong?
6. In 1:10, 11, Paul described some spiritual growth to which he would encourage them.
- a. Read 1:7-9, again, to see if you can discover the background out of which this growth comes.
 - b. How would you describe the "fruit of righteousness" which Paul mentioned in 1:11?
7. In 1:12-14, you find a single sentence.
- a. In verse 12, Paul referred to these Philippian Christians as "brethren." What do you understand the meaning of this address to be?
 - b. Read these verses again. How would you describe Paul's understanding of his imprisonment?

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8. In verse 14, Paul spoke of "the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment."
 - a. What does Paul mean by this?
 - b. Read verse 14 again. Why would this statement be true?
9. Verses 15 – 17 form a single sentence. In this sentence, Paul described the motives of those who preach the Gospel while he is in prison.
 - a. Spell out what Paul meant by the motives he identified.
 - b. How can one "preach Christ out of envy and strife?"
10. In verses 18-20, Paul expressed his reaction to the situation he described in verses 15-17. What was Paul's reaction?
11. In 1:21-25, Paul described his view of life as a Christian. In your own words, describe what he said.
12. In 1:26, Paul saluted their "proud confidence in me (Paul)." What does he mean by this?
13. In 1:27, 28, Paul gave four exhortations.
 - a. What are these exhortations?
 - b. What inference can we draw from these exhortations?
14. Verses 29, 30, form a single sentence. In this sentence, Paul drew a parallel.
 - a. What two things does Paul portray in parallel?
 - b. What message does he convey with this literary tool?
15. Review your study of chapter one.
 - a. What did you learn?
 - b. What parallel can you draw between what Paul said to these believers and the way we live and serve God today?

LESSON 1: – PHILIPPIANS 1:1 – 30

PAUL GREETED THE PHILIPPIAN CHRISTIANS

Introduction

There are three paragraphs in the first chapter of the Philippian epistle. A summary of each of these paragraphs appears on the following table.

1:1, 2	The greeting
1:3-11	Paul thanked God for the Philippian Christians
1:12-30	Paul recounted his imprisonment.

Philippians 1:1, 2 – The Greeting

Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons. Philippians 1:1

Observe that this letter was apparently written jointly by Paul and Timothy. There is serious conjecture that Paul dictated and Timothy wrote his words. It is difficult to consider that Timothy had anything to do with the content other than writing it down. One must admit, however, that the style of this epistle is drastically different from the other epistles of Paul. This follows after and agrees with the idea that Paul had poor eyesight and could no longer write his own letters.

Here, as in most every letter Paul wrote, he took special care to identify himself in a specific way. In each instance, Paul made this carefully chosen identification at the very beginning of his letters. Look at the way Paul identified himself in each of his epistles.

EPISTLE	IDENTIFICATION
Romans	Bond Servant
I Corinthians	An Apostle
II Corinthians	An Apostle
Galatians	An Apostle
Ephesians	An Apostle
Philippians	Bond Servant
Colossians	An Apostle
I Thessalonians	No identification
II Thessalonians	No identification
I Timothy	An Apostle
II Timothy	An Apostle
Titus	Bond Servant
Philemon	A Prisoner

Philippians is one of only three epistles in which Paul identified himself as a "bond servant." The fact that Paul identified himself in the epistle to Philemon as "a prisoner" causes us to wonder if he did not carefully identify himself, in most of the epistles in a way that had special meaning for this specific group. If this is true, and I believe it is, then we must ask ourselves why did Paul identify himself, in Philippians, as "a bondservant"? A bondservant was a slave who had been given the right to choose between freedom and being a servant for life. If he chose to serve his master for life, they would go to the city gate, make this announcement and then the master would take an awl and pierce the servant's

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ear. Ashes would then be rubbed into the wound to produce proud flesh. This would be a signal to everyone who saw him that he was a slave by choice, a slave of love. We will attempt to keep this in mind as we study and draw a conclusion near the end of our study.

Notice, also, the way in which Paul addressed this epistle – "To all the saints who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons." The question naturally arises, why would he include, almost as an afterthought, "including the overseers and deacons"? Grammatically, this is a way to emphasize that the letter was definitely intended to impact both the body of believers and their leaders. It also may indicate that there was a bit of friction between the leaders and the congregation. This would remove all doubt concerning the actual recipients of the letter.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:2

Paul followed definite patterns in his epistles. The salutations were one of these patterns. Look at the way Paul gave the salutation in each of his epistles.:

EPISTLE	SALUTATION
Romans	"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."
I Corinthians	The same
II Corinthians	The same
Galatians	The same
Ephesians	The same
Philippians	The same
Colossians	Grace to you and peace from God our Father
I Thessalonians	Grace to you and peace
II Thessalonians	Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
I Timothy	Grace mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.
II Timothy	The same
Titus	Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior
Philemon	Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

You will observe that eight of the thirteen salutations are worded exactly the same. Philippians, of course, is one of the eight. Observe, also, that "grace and peace" are a part of all thirteen salutations. Obviously, all thirteen salutations include a wish for a special blessing from God for the recipients. Twelve of the thirteen salutations include the blessing of both God the Father and the Son. Colossians is the only exception to this. Again, only I and II Timothy include a wish for mercy for the recipient.

We know that Paul was a very careful writer. Because of this, we must assume that these were not just nice wishes for the recipients. Paul had something specific in mind as he wrote. In this instance, it was the blessings in the salutations. Each one was specifically chosen with the particular needs of the church in mind.

Paul wished them "grace." – In all thirteen epistles, the word Paul used for "grace" was Charis" (χάρις). The emphasis of this word focuses on bringing pleasure. More than bringing pleasure, it is the mental framework that desires to bring pleasure to another. Paul was speaking of the divine favor that God bestows upon undeserving sinners. It is the

PAUL GREETED THE PHILIPPIAN CHRISTIANS

cordial disposition of God toward us when we deserve His great displeasure. This does not mean that these people have no grace from God, but that Paul wishes for them the continued grace of God in abundance.

Paul also wished them "peace." The word for peace is "eirene" (εἰρήνη). This word describes harmonious relationships between people and nations. It also describes reconciliation between groups or persons previously alienated. The word also carries the connotation of being complete or whole. In both instances, this is something that comes from Jesus and the Father. It is not the product of intense efforts by the believers.

Philippians 1:3-11 – Paul Thanked God For The Philippian Christians

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, Philippians 1:3

The word translated "thank" is "eucharisteo" (εὐχαριστέω). It is the word from which we get our word "eucharist" which identifies the communion service. This is a compound word that is made up as follows:

- a. "Eu" means "well."
- b. "Charizomai" means "to give freely."

It means "to give thanks." It is an expression of intense gratitude. This was Paul's attempt to express just how thankful he was about these people. The word translated "remembrance" is "mneia" (μνεία) and is always used in connection with prayer. It is akin to the word "mimnesko" which means "to remind." It is as if Paul is saying to them, "whenever I am reminded of you, I thank God." There are no memories of this group that do not bring forth thanksgiving in the mind of Paul. I am afraid that there are not a lot of people in the body of Christ about whom such a statement could be made.

Always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, Philippians 1:4

Paul continued his praise of their memory. It is like he is saying, "whenever I am reminded of you, I pray with great joy, no matter when I pray." It is a way of describing the indescribable joy he experienced just at the thought of them. It is also a way of saying that he has a covenant of prayer with them. He will constantly pray for them. It brought joy to Paul just to think about these converts to the faith.

In view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. Philippians 1:5

Paul never forgot the fact that these Christians had helped him financially from the very beginning of their walk with God. Paul described their gift as a participation in the carrying out of the Gospel imperative. The participation of the Philippian believers was consistent. It was not a quick bit of help and then forgotten. It happened regularly.

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. Philippians 1:6

The word translated "confident" is "pepoithesis" (πεποίθησις) and means to be persuaded with strength. Interestingly enough, Paul does not mention God as the one performing this work, but it is very clear that this is the one he has in mind.

Paul said, "He who began a good work." The word translated "began" is "enarchomai" (ἐνάρχομαι). This is a compound word made up of the following two words:

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- a. "En" means "in."
- b. "Archomai" means "to begin."

This word is sometimes used to speak of the time when God saved a person and changed their life. That is the intent in this instance. The foundation of the statement is that God started a transforming work in their lives. On the basis of this transformation which God initiated, God will now do something additional. He will perfect it. The word translated "perfect" is "epiteleo" (ἐπιτελέω). It is an intensive form of the word for "complete," "to fill to the top," "to bring to completion," "to finish." It does not infer flawlessness.

The form of this word is future indicative active. It is an action that is future and is ongoing once it begins. Paul indicated that this process will continue until the "day of Christ Jesus." This was a way of describing the coming of Christ. In other words, until this believer passes on to his reward or until the coming of Jesus Christ, this saint will continue to be perfected, brought to spiritual completeness. Paul described a process of spiritual growth. God began a good work in them. Their salvation was assured, but their spiritual growth was an ongoing process.

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. Philippians 1:7

Paul now explained why these people were so special in his thinking. They have a very special place in the heart of Paul. When Paul was imprisoned, they did not treat him as though they did not know him. Others did. It was physically threatening for anyone to admit that they knew an imprisoned Christian. He went on to say that they had even maintained their friendship with him while he was in the process of being tried for his faith. This was even more risky than admitting that you were a friend of a Christian in prison. When Paul was preaching the Gospel to people who had never heard it, the Philippian believers continued to remember him. They supported him in prayer as well as in financial needs. They treated his ministry to the unbeliever as a part of their own ministry. Paul described them as "partakers of grace with him." The word "partakers" is "sunkoinonos" (συγκοινωνός) and literally means "joint partakers" or "sharers." In this word you can also see our word "koinonia" which literally means "to share," "to have fellowship." They are participants with Paul in the grace of God. It is as much theirs as it is his.

For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:8

The word translated "long" is "epipotheo" (ἐπιποθέω). It is a very strong form of the word for longing. It is a very intense form of very deep desire. The form of this word is present indicative active. This simply means:

- a. **Present tense** – action that begins and never ceases. It is a lifestyle rather than a single act.
- b. **Indicative mood** – The mood of a word indicates the way in which it is understood. The indicative mood describes either a firm statement or a question. In this case it is a firm statement.
- c. **Active voice** – The "voice" of a verb indicates the relationship between the subject and verb. Active voice identifies the action of the subject upon the verb.

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Paul's "longing" for these Philippian Christians is not a casual thing. It is an ongoing feeling that never ceases.

On the other hand, the word translated "affection" is "splanchna" (σπλάγχνα) which literally means "bowels." The Greeks thought that the bowels were the seat of every violent emotion. The Jews, however, thought that the bowels were the seat of the tender affections. In this instance it describes the Hebrew understanding of tender mercies. Look at the verse again. Paul claimed to share the affection of Christ for these Christian people. There is no doubt that Paul had an intense love for the Christians in Philippi. In this verse, he attempted to express just how intense this love was and how strongly he felt about them. People sometimes think of Paul as hard-nosed and gruff. This verse gives one an insight into the tender heart of the apostle.

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, Philippians 1:9

In this verse, Paul gives his readers a glimpse into his prayer-life. One of his prayers for them has to do with the content and depth of their love. The word translated "pray" is "proseuchomai" (προσεύχομαι) a compound word. The makeup of the word is as follows:

- a. "Pros" means "toward."
- b. "Euchomai" means "to wish" or "express desire in petition to God"

That is exactly what Paul was saying in this verse. The form of the word "pray" is present tense. Paul was saying that this was something that he did constantly on their behalf. The word for "love" is "agape." It is love that is without boundaries and is an action, not a reaction. It would not be more or less depending upon the way others responded to them.

The word translated "abound" is "perisseuo" (περισεύω) and literally means "to exceed a certain number." It is the word that was used to describe the amount of food that was left over after the feeding of the 5,000. It is "to excel," "to have far more than is necessary for survival." Paul could have prayed for many things, but it was clear that their greatest need was for love.

Observe the result of this love. This love leads to "real knowledge." It should be noted that the word "real" does not appear in the Greek text. We need, therefore, to look carefully at the word for "knowledge." In the Greek language, there are two basic words for knowledge.

- a. "Oida" (οἶδα) describes the "fullness of knowledge." It is to know all there is to know about a subject. One might think that this would be Paul's choice for this particular situation. Paul would certainly want them to know everything possible about this subject.
- b. "Ginosko" (γινώσκω) which "identifies a progression or growth in knowledge."

This is knowledge that never stops increasing and growing.

It is a form of this second word that Paul used in this verse. "Epiginosko" (ἐπιγινώσκω) is a very intensive form of growing knowledge. It is to fully perceive and go on increasing in that perception. In many cases this word describes not only knowledge, but also a participation in that which is known. This is especially true when Paul spoke of "knowing Christ."

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Another ingredient in the direction of this overflowing love is "discernment." In the Greek text it reads, "all discernment." The word translated "discernment" is *aisthesis* (αἴσθησις) and means "to apprehend by the senses," "to discern with great depth," or "to judge." Paul wanted these believers to grow in their overflowing love so that their increasing discernment would enable them to apprehend and comprehend all the issues involved in any troubled situation involving the body of Christ. Paul's understanding of love is much more than an emotion. It is a means by which our usefulness in the kingdom is sharpened to such great intensity that we are enabled to discern the needs of the body at a level never before possible. It is to lack nothing in this need to grasp all the issues and facets of truth involved in a given situation. What a marvelous desire on the part of Paul!

So that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; Philippians 1:10

The word translated "so that" does not appear in the Greek text. The word is *eis* (εἰς) and is usually translated "for." It suggests that what follows will give us an understanding of the purpose for which Paul is going to pray this prayer for the Philippians. The word for "approve" is *dokimazo* (δοκιμάζω). The word was used by the refiners trade to describe the approval of a given metal as being pure. It described what was left when all the dross was skimmed off and only pure metal was left. Only at this point could the refiner "approve" the batch as pure. Observe that the text says "for the approving." The form of this word is a present infinitive. This was Paul's way of overemphasizing the ongoing nature of the subject at hand. It is an ongoing process in which they were involved. The things they were to approve were those which were "excellent." The word translated "excellent" is *diaphero* (διαφέρω). The word literally describes "something that is different." The import of this is that it is different in that it is far superior to something else. It is like a stamp of approval. The stated purpose of approving excellent things was that they could then be "sincere." The word translated "sincere" is *eilikrines* (εἰλικρινής) which describes "an unmixed substance," "something that is without alloy." It is pure. Part of being without moral alloy is to approve excellent things. This puts a totally different light on right choices than one usually hears.

In addition, the approval of excellent things enables one to be "blameless." The word translated "blameless" is *aproskopos* (ἀπρόσκοπος) and means "one who does not stumble or stub the toe." This deals with moral stumbling, not physical.

All of this is in preparation for our appearance on "the day of Christ." The inference here is that there is an accounting and that this approval of the excellent or different will enable us to be without moral alloy, to be pure and without stumbling when we stand before "the day of Christ," when we are examined for the way we have lived our lives.

Having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:11

This is a continuation of the sentence from verse 10. The word translated "filled" is *pleroo* (πληρόω) and means "to be made full." Notice that this is in the passive voice and suggests that this is something that is done to or for us and not something that we do ourselves. On more than one occasion, Paul used the word "fruit" to identify the results of spiritual growth in the life of the believer. The most obvious expression of this appears in Galatians 5:22 where Paul said, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace..." This fruit is

an outward expression of that power which is at work within us. In this case, it is the outward expression of righteousness that is at work in our lives.

The word translated "righteousness" is "dikaiosune" (δικαιοσύνη) which identifies "the quality of being right or just." It expresses itself in the character of our daily walk being changed by Christ. This means that it will not come by trying harder. It will not come by being more intense in our attempt to be obedient. Because it comes "through Jesus Christ," it also means that this is a unique Christian quality of life and can never be found even in the best non-Christian individuals. Finally, it should be noted that this will result in the glory and praise of God. It will not issue in praise of any Christian person.

The word translated "glory" is "doxa" (δόξα) and literally describes "an opinion" or "estimation." It is the honor God receives from our high opinion and estimation of His character and the relationship He sustains with us.

Again, praise is the word "epainos" (ἔπαινος) and literally means praise upon. It is understood to mean "an approbation," "an approval." It is "to highly commend." There is a difference between glory and praise. Glory is the worshipful opinion we have of God. Praise, on the other hand, is the resulting action that is caused by that worshipful opinion.

Philippians 1:12-30 – Paul Recounted His Imprisonment

Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, Philippians 1:12

Paul spoke of these Christians as "brethren" "adelphos" (ἀδελφός). Some think of this word as merely an identification of another Christian. It is that, but it is more. It is to think of that Christian as a member of the family. To be a family member places responsibility upon us. If a brother or sister is in trouble, a brother is required to come to their aid. In that culture, a brother, especially the heir or eldest brother is required to pay the debt of a brother who is imprisoned because of an unpaid debt. The essence of this identification in the New Testament is that we are responsible for each other as family members. We have common interests and concerns.

Paul began the sentence with the word "now." This usually points to a change in the direction of the conversation. You will note that this is the case in this verse. Paul used the word "know". There are two words translated "know" in the New Testament. The word "oida" (οἶδα) means to know fully. The word "ginosko" (γινώσκω) describes a progression in knowledge. That is the word that Paul used in this instance.

We need to keep in mind that Paul wrote this letter from prison. It might appear to be shocking that his circumstances in prison became a factor in producing real progress in the spread of the Gospel. In the Christian faith, even what may appear to be poor circumstances can have very good results. That is exactly what Paul suggests in this sentence. He was saying that the conditions are better because he is in prison than they would be if he had been spared that experience. This would be difficult for the non-believer to accept. It is, nevertheless, quite true.

So that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, Philippians 1:13

The word translated "so that" suggests that Paul is going to describe a purpose in his writing. The word translated "imprisonment" is literally "bonds" in the Greek text. In many

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instances, the word "bonds" was used to describe an imprisonment though the prisoner was locked up in a prison or a pit, but not literally tied hand and foot. In other instances, as was the case with Peter in the book of Acts, the prisoner was in prison and was also shackled to guards. Usually this was only done in extreme cases.

Paul's imprisonment was "in the cause of Christ." It had nothing to do with Paul's unlawful conduct. It had everything to do with the fact that Paul stood for the Lord Jesus Christ and was imprisoned for that stand.

Paul referred to the fact that the entire praetorian guard had become aware of his imprisonment. This group was a special contingent of Roman soldiers. They were charged with guarding the Roman emperor. Originally they were limited in service to the city of Rome. Later, however, they were assigned to other Roman provinces. They were an elite group and their pay and privileges were commensurate with their place of honor. The fact that this guard had become aware of his imprisonment was important because they had access to the emperor himself. Other than the guard, only people with political power had such access.

The question arises concerning why Paul mentioned the Praetorian Guard. It may indicate that Paul was being kept in the emperor's prison that was located in the palace and was watched over by members of the praetorian guard. Paul even went further. He said that everyone else knew about his imprisonment. Paul was not just talking about the fact that this was common knowledge. He was saying that this was a witness in spite of the fact that he was still a prisoner.

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. Philippians 1:14

This was a way of saying that there were those who had become followers of Jesus Christ because of their knowledge of Paul's imprisonment for the cause of the Gospel. We know that there were several members of Caesar's household, both servants and family members, that had become Christians. It could be that this was part of what Paul was pointing to in this verse. It certainly is the witness of which he spoke in the previous verse.

These believers having watched Paul's imprisonment, had much more courage to witness to the Gospel without being afraid because they had seen the courageous witness of Paul and the results of that witness. His imprisonment was a source of courage for others facing the same dangers.

Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; Philippians 1:15

In an epistle where the words "joy" and "rejoicing" appear so often, Paul also alludes to a very painful reality – division. There are those who preach the Gospel, but with divergent motives. There are those who preach the Gospel out of envy. Paul does not identify this, specifically, but it appears that the envy was directed toward him. It may have been a theological struggle. It may have been an organizational struggle conducted by people who wanted to be in charge, but were not.

Paul clearly identified the way this struggle showed itself. Both sides of the debate were preaching, but from divergent motives. Some of them preached just because they were called of God and they deeply desired to see lives changed. On the other hand there

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were those who used the opportunity to preach to further their position or to find a way to attack Paul.

The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; Philippians 1:16

It should be noted that in some manuscripts verses 16 and 17 are reversed. The truth is that we do not know in what order the original manuscripts were written. If you look at 15-17 together, it appears that the reverse order fits the statements best. Whether that was the way it was written is unclear. My preference would be to reverse the order to fit the context, but that has no basis in known fact.

Evaluating motives, as Paul appears to be doing in this case, is always a risky business. Still Paul identified what appeared to be the underlying motives of these men. In this verse, Paul spelled out what appeared to be the motive of those who preached the Gospel out of good will. He claimed that it was motivated by love. That is the only acceptable motive for proclaiming the word of God. Paul did not say, but it appears that he meant that this was a love for him as well as love for Jesus Christ. He said the apparent stimulus for this was the fact that they knew that Paul was appointed to die in defense of the Gospel. This was their way of identifying with him even though it could be costly.

Paul spoke of being "appointed for the defense of the Gospel." The word translated "appointed" is "keimai" (κεῖμαι) and presents a very graphic statement. It describes "one who is prostrate," "placed upon the mercy of the court." That is exactly how Paul, and the early church, saw the way he was being treated. It was because of the Gospel that Paul was thrown upon the mercy of the court; a court that was not always merciful. It was not because of Paul's misdeeds or his indiscretion in dealing with people who thought differently.

The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. Philippians 1:17

Paul's words, here, are a stinging indictment placed at the feet of those who opposed him. He said that the motive for their proclamation of the Gospel was not an unrelenting concern for the lost and commitment to serve Jesus Christ. Paul saw them preaching in order to satisfy their own selfish ambition. When Paul used the words "rather than from pure motives," he was actually accusing them of having impure motives. Though this was harsh, it probably was a true evaluation.

The word translated "pure" is translated in some versions as "not sincerely." The word Paul used is "hagnos" (ἁγνῶς) and is the same root as the word "holy." It means "to be free from contamination." It is to be free from the defilement of evil. Basically the word comes from the refiner's trade. They removed dross from the molten metal to produce pure gold. The parallel is clear. It is to be free from everything that would make us unlike the purity of Christ. These people were thinking, apparently, of their own situation and not about the Gospel. Paul identified what he considered to be their major concern – "Thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment." To be in prison at such a time and unable to do a thing about what they were doing would be a source of great distress. It appears that they wanted to cause him as much distress as possible. If indeed that were their motive, they could not have made a better choice. The word translated "distress" is "thlipsis" (θλίψις) and primarily identifies "anything that would burden one's spirit." It is that

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which adds pressure to life and causes tension. It is a form of anguish. This word was also used to describe the distress a woman experienced in childbirth. This is how Paul described the trouble they wanted to cause him.

What 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. Philippians 1:18

This is interesting if one compares his reaction to what ours might be. In most instances, if we were to confront such a situation, we would focus on the damage that would be done by those with mixed motives. Paul was able to look at the situation and still see the power of God. Because he operated from a pure motive and love for the Gospel, he could see that the Gospel was being preached. He knew that God would honor His word even in the hands of soiled servants. He also knew that God would deal with those who acted out of improper motives. This describes an unusual level of trust in God to protect His word.

Paul was determined to rejoice, even in the pressures his enemies wanted to force upon him. Part of Paul's reason for taking the pains to describe this situation was that he wanted them to be able to rejoice in the troubles that they would encounter because of the Gospel. It is clear that Paul was working from a basic premise – God can take improper motive and sinful desire and cause them to be used in such a way that the cause of Christ is furthered, even though that was not the intent. There are, of course, several Old Testament illustrations of this premise.

For I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, Philippians 1:19

Paul spoke out of unusual confidence. The word translated "know" is "oida" (οἶδα). As indicated earlier, there are two words translated "know." "Ginosko" describes a progressive accumulation of knowledge. The word used here describes complete, total knowledge.. It is absolute certainty of that which is known. Paul was convinced that all of these problems would be worked out in such a way that his deliverance would occur. This was to be accomplished through the prayers of the Philippian Christians. Paul had an unflinching trust in the power of prayer. Another source of Paul's deliverance was the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Paul knew that the Spirit is deeply involved in the struggles we have in our witness for Christ. The Holy Spirit is the agent of our deliverance and protection.

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. Philippians 1:20

Paul was thoroughly convinced that he would be released and be able to go to visit the Philippian Christians. There was absolutely no question in his mind. He used the words "expectation and hope" to describe just how confident he felt. The word translated "Expectation" is "apokaradokia" (ἀποκαρδοκία), a compound word. The word is composed as follows:

- a. "Apo"- - means "from."
- b. "Kara" means "the head."
- c. "Dokeo" means "to look or watch intensely."

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This is an urgent expectation. It is being oblivious to everything else until the priority is realized. The intensity of this word, compounded of three words, would be hard to overestimate.

The word for hope is "elpis" (ἐλπίς). This is "the happy, joyful anticipation of the future." The basis of this hope is the object upon which it is based. Hope is only as strong as the basis upon which we expect it to take place. In many instances in the New Testament, our hope is based upon the presence and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul's expectation and conviction consisted of at least two parts:

- a. **He would not be put to shame.** The word for shame is "aischunomai" (αἰσχύνομαι). This word was used to describe the shame a person felt if they were in any way physically disfigured. It was also used to describe that which results from disgracing oneself. In spite of his unfortunate imprisonment, Paul assured them that he would behave in such a way that he would not bring shame upon himself or the Gospel of God.
- b. **Christ would be boldly magnified in Paul's body.** The imprisonment of Christians was always a devastating thing. They suffered more than most any other prisoner. Nevertheless, Paul was totally convinced that he would be able to conduct himself in such a way that the cause of Christ would not be embarrassed by his conduct or lack of action.

The word translated "boldly" is "parrhesia" (παρρησία) and is a compound word. It is made up as follows:

- a. "Pas" means "all."
- b. "Ereo" means "to pour out." Paul was holding nothing back. There was nothing he was afraid to do in order to carry out his ministry for Christ.

The word translated "magnified": is "megaluno" (μεγαλύνω). The root of this word is "megas" which means "great." When Paul said Christ would be magnified, he meant that Christ would be held high as being great, greater than all other powers; greater than all other expressions of mercy.

Paul did not hide from the realities of his situation. He knew that he faced the definite possibility of being put to death. He was just as clear that if he did die, his death would be useful in the proclamation of the Gospel. If he lived, he would forcefully proclaim the Good News of the Gospel as long as he had breath.

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

The use of the word "for" suggests that this is an explanation of the previous point. This was a win-win situation for Paul. If he lived, he had the marvelous privilege of witnessing for Christ to people who had never heard the Good News. Should he die, he was equally convinced that he would share the immediate presence of Christ which was far better in his eyes. Most people would consider death a tragedy. Paul saw death, in the service of Jesus Christ, as an immeasurable bounty.

But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. Philippians 1:22

Observe that this sentence begins with the word "but." This suggests that a contrast is in progress. In this sentence, Paul dealt with the outcome of the available choices by the use of the conditional statement – "IF...THEN." IF he continues to live in the flesh, THEN it

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means that he can continue fruitfully his ministry of the Gospel. This he considered to be very good. There is, though not mentioned, an innate longing to depart and be with Christ. Paul indicated that he was stuck between the two choices.

Paul used the word "choose." It is "airaesomai" (αἰρήσομαι) and means "to take for myself." It is to select by taking rather than by showing a simple preference. By the use of this word, Paul indicated that he saw his situation as one in which he had a definite input and control. In that process, however, it did not mean that he would invest that control in the choice that would please him the most.

But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; Philippians 1:23

Paul's personal choice was very clear. It is obvious that he would rather depart and be with Christ. The problem came when he remembered that God may want him to remain and continue to minister on behalf of these churches. His desire to be obedient was as strong as his desire to depart and be with Christ. His personal choice was clear – he would rather depart and be with Christ.

Yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. Philippians 1:24

Paul saw his mission as remaining with them and to be their instructor. He concluded that this was more necessary for the time being. For most people, the choices are to depart and be with Christ or not to depart. In such cases the desire to remain alive is usually their first choice. That was not true for the apostle Paul. His choice was between personal desire to be with Christ and the need of obedience to Christ in order to minister on behalf of those whom he had brought into the faith.

And convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, Philippians 1:25

Even as he wrote these words, Paul was totally convinced that God wanted him to remain in order to teach the Philippian Christians and others. This whole process of choice gives us an insight into Paul's value system. Paul did not exist for personal gratification. His purpose in life was lived in order to assist his followers to grow in their faith in Jesus Christ.

The word translated "convinced" is "peitho" (πείθω) which means "to be strongly persuaded." It is to believe without reservation, to trust without condition. The word translated "know" is "oida" (οἶδα) which describes a total knowledge with no facet of information left out. Paul expresses the intensity of his conviction by the use of very strong words.

Paul made an interesting statement when he said, "I shall remain and continue..." The word for "remain" is "meno" (μένω) and means "to stay" or "dwelling." The form of the word is future indicative active. It designates more than simply identifying something in the future. One might say, "I shall remain and never stop remaining." It is a future action that would continue to be the case.

On the other hand, the word translated "continue" is equally interesting. It is the compound word "sumparameno" (σὺμπαράμηνω) and is formed as follows:

- a. "Sum" means "with."
- b. "Para" means "beside."

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c. "Meno" means "abide."

Look again at the formation of this word. First, the word "meno" appears in this word as well as in the previous one. Second, all three words contain the same idea.

In the phrase "continue to remain" you have a word that assured them of his presence. Now in the word "continue" the three parts of it speak of his continued presence with them. Add to this that it is in the future indicative form and it is a way of saying in the strongest possible form, "I will be here with you and will never stop being here with you."

So that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again. Philippians 1:26

Observe that the verse begins with the words, "so that." This means that a description of purpose is about to be given. Paul was very clear concerning the purpose of his coming to Philippi. It was primarily for the benefit of the Christians and not for himself. He would have to admit, however, that there was a benefit to him in that he missed them greatly.

The words "proud confidence" are the translation of a single Greek word, "kauchaomai" (καυχόμαι) which is sometimes translated "to boast" or "to glory." It can be used in a good sense as well as the proud, arrogant sense. Here, of course, it is used in the good sense of describing a deep conviction that God is at work through Paul. The Philippian Christians have a proud confidence in Paul, but it is focused on Jesus Christ. Paul wanted it to be clear that this was the purpose of his coming to see them. He wanted their relationship to Christ to grow because of his coming to be with them.

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; Philippians 1:27

Paul, here, is repeating his statement about the top priority – his visit was not the goal. The most important thing was that they should live a life worthy of the Gospel. This was his compelling reason for the visit. He wanted them to conduct themselves in a special way no matter what happened to him or to his visit.

Paul used three different pictures to describe the unity he wanted to find among them. These three pictures are a description of what he meant when he said "conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel."

a. **"Standing firm in one spirit"** – "Standing firm" is a translation of the word "steko" (στήκω) which means "to stand faithfully for Christ because of one's submission to His authority." It is to be totally dependent upon Christ without regard for the consequences. This is a picture of what happened in the lives of the martyrs.

The word "one" is "heis" (ἓίς) the numeral. It is a way of strongly emphasizing that you are speaking of singleness rather than of several.

The word translated "spirit" means "wind." The reason is that like wind, the attitude, the relationship between people though invisible can develop a mighty force. Paul's message in this statement is an urgent desire to see these people take an unequivocal stand for Christ in such unity that they will appear to be one person rather than many. We must keep in mind, however, the fact that he had to say this means that it is not true at the present time.

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- b. **"(Standing firm) with one mind"** – notice that the words "standing firm" are in parenthesis. This indicates that they do not appear in the text, but their presence is implied and necessary for the sentence to make sense. The meaning implied in this phrase is essentially the same as that used in the previous one.

Again, the word translated "one," though in the feminine form here, is exactly the same as in the previous phrase. It is an emphatic way of indicating a single person or thing as opposed to a host of them.

The word translated "mind" is "psuche" (ψυχή) and is usually translated "soul." In this instance it identifies the fiber of one's being. It is that which is as vital to one's purpose and character as blood is to life. In this phrase, Paul urged these Christians to have such a oneness among themselves that their purpose, character and motivation are as if they were one single person.

- c. **"Striving together for the faith of the Gospel"** – The word translated "striving together" is "sunathleo" (συναθλέω) and is a compound word which is formed as follows:

1. "Sun" means "with."

2, "Athleo" means "to contend as in the competitive games."

The idea of striving often creates an image of discord and disunity. That is not Paul's intent here. This is, rather, an expression of synergism, of working together like the cylinders of an automotive motor. This describes a relationship that leaves no room for the enemy to drive a wedge between them. The purpose or direction of their working together is to advance the faith of the Gospel, not personal benefit. In this and each of the other phrases, Paul was asking for a singleness of purpose which focused all their attention and purpose on the spread of the Gospel.

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. Philippians 1:28

This is an interesting statement in the Greek text. It literally reads, "and not being frightened in nothing." In the English language, a double negative means something positive and is even stronger than the single positive statement. The Greek language is different. This is a way of adding unusual emphasis. We are dealing with a very strong statement in this verse. Paul exhorted them to allow absolutely nothing their persecutors did to stir up the slightest bit of fear in them. Paul's purpose for this statement is very clear. If persecutors see that they have not frightened you, they have already lost. A modern statement of this is that you cannot defeat or destroy a man who has absolutely nothing to lose.

At this point, Paul inserted a contrast with the use of the word "but." If you cannot be frightened by anything, then it becomes a sign. It points in the direction of the destruction of your enemies. Paul then turned the idea around. He pointed out that this also points in the direction of our salvation. Having said this, Paul felt the strong need to remind them that this salvation was not the product of their strong resistance. It is a gift from God. The courage is a result of the salvation, not the cause of it.

For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, Philippians 1:29

The word translated "granted" is "charidzomai" (χαρίζομαι) and means "to show kindness" or "to show favor." It comes from the same root as "charis" (χάρις) which is the

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word for grace. The thing that Paul is going to describe is a gift. It is intended to convey not only the favor involved, but also to convey the idea that the recipient is considered special. The action involved is half the gift. The other half is the fact that it comes out of positive, loving spirit on the part of the giver – God.

The source of this gift is clear to Paul. God has granted this to us on behalf of Christ. God's expression of love to us, in this granting, is for the sake of Christ. It is intended to help us understand something of the love that Christ has for us.

The word translated "believing" is "pisteuo" (πιστεύω) and means "to be persuaded," "to believe." It is more important that this believing enables us to place our trust and confidence in that which is believed. It is not just that one thinks so and therefore it is true. It is that one is convinced that it is true and this believing expresses itself in reliance, confidence and action. The story of the tightrope walker is appropriate. He asks if you believe he can take you across Niagara Falls in a wheelbarrow. The answer is "yes." It only becomes real faith when you climb into the wheelbarrow. Believing in Christ is not something I do. Believing in Him is something that has been granted to me as a favor from God. Faith is a gift God grants to us because He loves us.

By inserting the word "and" between the words "believe" and "suffer," Paul has placed them on equal footing. The two words are equal and inseparable. One only can lay claim to the reality of belief to the extent that one is prepared to suffer for Christ. It is uncomfortable for us to consider, but one must go one step further and say that where there is pure belief, there will be some measure of suffering. Pain is not a virtue in itself, but scripturally, it always accompanies the expression of vibrant faith.

We should note carefully that this suffering is qualified. It is for the sake of Christ. There are those who suffer, but not for the sake of Christ. They suffer for a variety of reasons, most of which center around their self-interest or errors.

*Experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.
Philippians 1:30*

Some have looked upon this verse as Paul's way of bragging about his suffering. That is doubtful. Paul is simply using his experience as an illustration of what he has been trying to teach them. His focus is upon the Philippian Christians and not on himself. He said that they could anticipate the same kinds of experiences in their lives that they could now see in his. Paul was being quite honest. He did not want them to suddenly be surprised to learn that believing on Jesus Christ might well place them in an incrimination situation.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 2
COMMENDING THE MIND OF CHRIST IN HARMONY
PHILIPPIANS 2:1 – 30

1. There are three paragraphs in Philippians chapter two. On the following table, write a summary of eight words or less for each paragraph.

2:1-11	
2:12-18	
2:19-30	

2. In 2:1-11, Paul gave us an insightful picture of the mind of Christ.
- a. In 2:1, 2, Paul wrote a long conditional statement. (conditional statements can be identified by the use of "IF...THEN..." statements.)
 1. There are four conditions (IF statements) and four consequences ("THEN" statements) which in this sentence are inferred rather than being spelled out. What is the relationship of the "condition" (IF) statements to the "consequence" (THEN) statements?
 2. Describe what Paul meant by:
 - a. "Any encouragement in Christ"
 - b. "Any consolation of love"
 - c. Any fellowship of the Spirit"
 - d. "Any affection and compassion"
 3. Describe what Paul meant by:
 - a. "Being of the same mind"
 - b. "Maintaining the same love"
 - c. "United in spirit"
 - d. "Intent on one purpose"
 4. Review your answers to the two previous questions. What inferences can you draw from these statements?
 - b. Read 2:3 very carefully.
 1. In view of the fact that Paul gave these instructions, what logical assumptions can we draw from this verse?
 2. Paul said, "let each of you regard one another as more important than himself."
 - a. How would you deal with the suggestion that this instruction is self-demeaning?
 - b. How would you deal with the suggestion that some make – "If everyone in the church did this, then the church would be made up of people who are out of touch with themselves"?
 - c. In 2:4, Paul described a personal outlook that is both biblically and socially sound. How would you deal with the suggestion made by some that this is a self-contradictory command?
 - d. In 2:5-7, Paul dealt with Jesus as a role model or illustration of the truth that he was teaching.

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1. Read 2:5, 6, again. What truth does this statement illustrate?
 2. Read 2:7 again. What message was Paul trying to illustrate with this statement?
 - e. In 2:8, Paul described Jesus' attitude toward His mission. How would you explain how becoming "obedient to the point of death" was "a humbling of Himself"?
 - f. In 2:9-11, Paul described the Father's response to the obedient humbling of Jesus. What did Paul say?
3. In 2:12-18, Paul gives an application of what he said about Jesus in 2:1-11.
- a. In 2:12, 13, there is a single sentence.
 1. In 2:12, Paul said, "work out your salvation with fear and trembling." What did he mean by this statement?
 2. Again, in 2:13, Paul said, "It is God who is at work in you..." How would you deal with the apparent contradiction between the statements in 2:12 and 2:13?
 - b. In 2:14-16, Paul gave a series of instructions.
 1. In 2:14, Paul instructed them to refrain from "grumbling and disputing." What inference can we draw from this instruction?
 2. In 2:15, Paul drew a contrast between the believers and the world. What did he say about each group?
 3. In 2:16, Paul spoke of "the day of Christ." How would you explain this to a new believer?
 - c. In 2:17, Paul described his own situation. What was he saying about his ministry?
 - d. In 2:18, Paul urged them to follow his example. What was he really saying?
4. In 2:19-30, Paul shifted his attention to the two men he sent to Philippi.
- a. In 2:19-23, Paul talked about Timothy.
 1. Paul made at least six statements and inferences about Timothy in these verses.
 2. What statements did Paul make?
 3. What picture of Timothy has Paul presented?
 - b. In 2:24, Paul spoke of what he trusted would happen to him. Historically, we know that this did not happen. How can we explain this?
 - c. In 2:25-30, Paul turned his attention to Epaphroditus.
 1. In 2:25, Paul used five phrases to describe Epaphroditus.
 - a. What did Paul say?
 - b. In your own words, how would you describe Epaphroditus?
 2. In 2:26-28, Paul explained why he was so set on sending Epaphroditus to Philippi. Explain Paul's reasoning as expressed in 2:26-28.
 3. In 2:29, Paul gave two instructions concerning their reception of Epaphroditus
 - a. What instructions did Paul give?
 - b. Why would Paul have to say, "Hold men like him in high regard"?
 - d. In 2:30, Paul tied the service of Epaphroditus to the Philippian congregation.
 1. How did Paul do this?
 2. What difference would this make?
5. Review your study of chapter two.

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- a. Paul began the chapter describing the self-sacrifice of Jesus for the sake of the Gospel. He concluded the chapter describing the self-sacrifice of Epaphroditus for the sake of the Gospel. What is the relationship between these two parts of the chapter.
- b. Reflect upon this chapter in view of your own service to God. What did you discover?

LESSON 2: – PHILIPPIANS 2:1 – 30

COMMENDING THE MIND OF CHRIST IN HARMONY

There are three paragraphs in the second chapter of Philippians. A brief summary of each paragraph appears on the following table.

2:1-11	Exhortation – have the mind of Christ
2:12-18	Command – in harmony, be blameless
2:19-30	Paul commended Timothy and Epaphroditus to them

Philippians 2:1-11 – Exhortation – Have The Mind Of Christ

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 Philippians 2:1

The word "therefore" suggests a coming conclusion. Chapter one ends with a double emphasis.

- a. Paul's plea to live a holy life worthy of the Gospel
- b. A plea to face up to the persecution which is inevitable.

Paul now moves to the conclusion – the atmosphere which is necessary to accomplish these two emphases. This is the beginning of the famous "kenosis passage." The word "kenosis" means "to empty." The word is taken from the text where Jesus emptied Himself. The conclusion comes in the form of a series of conditional statements. This can easily be identified by the presence of the words "if...then." Observe that Paul used a very repetitious style. This was for the purpose of lending a very strong emphasis to his words. In this conditional statement, Paul lists four conditions and four desired results.

Look carefully at the conditions:

- a. **"If there is any encouragement in Christ"** – The word translated "encouragement" is paraklesis" (παράκλησις). This is the word from which we get our word "paraclete." This is a compound word:
 1. "Para" means "beside."
 2. "Kaleo" means "to call."

This is the word that was used when a scribe stood beside a widow in court to defend her against persons, often Pharisees, who would illegally take advantage of her. In Jerusalem today an attorney's street sign will often read "paraclete." This word was used in the statement "Looking for the comfort of Israel." For centuries Israel experienced great sorrow and suffering. They looked for their Messiah who would bring an end to this pain and devastation. The Christians in Philippi were suffering in much the same way that Jews had suffered for centuries. Paul really said a couple of things in this statement:

- a. There is comfort in the midst of our struggle to be faithful in Christ though we languish in the midst of persecution.
- b. Christ is the only comfort that will be helpful in such circumstances.
- c. It is like saying, "If there is any comfort in Christ, **AND THERE IS...**"

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- b. **"If there is any consolation of love"** – The word translated "consolation" is "paramuthion" (παράμυθιον) which is sometimes used as a synonym for "paraclete." This, too, is a compound word. It is formed in the following manner:

1. "Para" means "beside."
2. "Muthos" means "to speak."

This is what happens when a mother whispers softly in a frightened baby's ear and suddenly the little one calms down. The choice of the word "paramuthion" in this conditional statement rather than the very similar "paramuthia" is important. "Paramuthion" focuses attention upon the source of the consolation, while "paramuthia" focuses upon the process of receiving this consolation. The focus is clearly on Christ as the giver of such calming consolation.

Love is the power behind this consolation. Paul does not identify the source of this love. One can only assume that he is talking about the love of God. It is fair to assume Paul is talking about the agape love that Christians have for each other. This too is a conditional (IF...THEN) statement. It is like saying, "If there is any comfort of love, **AND THERE IS.**"

- c. **"If there is any fellowship of the Spirit"** – This is the third such conditional statement. It is written this way in order to achieve a very strong emphasis. The word translated "fellowship" is "koinonia" (κοινωνία) and literally means "to share in common." It is "to be partakers with each other." This describes a mutual participation in the life and ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is a blending of life and ministry as we mutually participate in the ministry of the Holy Spirit as He teaches us and draws us closer to Christ. Again, it is like saying, "If there is any fellowship of the Spirit, **AND THERE IS.**"
- d. **"If there is any affection"** – The word translated "affection" is "splanchna" (σπλάγχνα) The Greeks thought that the intestinal area was the seat of all very strong passions. On the contrary, the Jewish people thought of the intestinal area as the location of the tenderest affections and emotions. Paul is the only New Testament writer to use this particular word. Observe that in this phrase there is no attachment as in the previous three – "encouragement IN CHRIST," "consolation OF LOVE," "fellowship OF THE SPIRIT." We assume that this suggests that Paul was thinking of affection or compassion by individual Christians for other Christians. It is a bit like saying, "If there is any affection, **AND THERE IS.**"
- e. **"If there is any compassion"** - The word translated "compassion" is "oiktirmos" (οἰκτιρισμός) and identifies the internal organs of the body. It is sometimes translated "pity," a deep concern for the hardships of others, the mercy which God alone supplies. It also is sometimes translated "mercy." Compassion and affection may sound closely related. They are, but they are not the same. Affection focuses upon strong, tender emotions. These can include pity, kindness, goodwill, etc. Compassion, on the other hand, is also a strong emotion, but focuses upon the desperate need of those in difficulty. As in previous instances, it is as though Paul said, "If there is any compassion, **AND THERE IS.**"

At the beginning of our study of this sentence, we pointed out that this is a conditional sentence. Up to now, we have discussed the "if" statements. The balance of the sentence provides the "then" part of the condition.

COMMENDING THE MIND OF CHRIST IN HARMONY

Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Philippians 2:2

In this verse, Paul will describe the ingredients necessary to make his joy complete. The word translated "complete" is pleroo" (πληρόω) and means "to fill to the top." It comes from the "agora" (ἀγορά) or market place. They had troubles with short measures as we sometimes do. They decided that a measure was full of grain when it was filled to the top and ran over on all sides. It was said to be "filled-full."

The word translated "joy" is "chara" (χαρά). The words "joy" and "rejoice" are found several times in this epistle. This happens sufficiently often that people have mistakenly thought that this was the only New Testament epistle in which the author did not have to address any real problems. In fact, there are several. Joy is the opposite of sorrow and weeping. It is the human response to pleasant, desirable circumstances or situations. Paul said that certain things would fill his joyfulness to the very top. In this instance, however, Paul invested the word with a whole set of new meanings. If you check the context of each use of the words "joy" and "rejoicing," you will discover that Paul was really saying that for the Christian, joy is to be realized with no reference to the circumstances at all. The Christian can have joy even as he is about to be martyred. Again, the Christian can experience joy when every circumstance of life appears to be far less than perfect.

- a. **"Being of the same mind"** – The four different words involved in this statement merit our special attention. The words are (ἵνα, τὸ, αὐτὸ, φρονῆτε). We need to look at each of these words separately
 1. "ἵνα" means "that."
 2. "τὸ" means "the."
 3. "αὐτὸ" means "same."
 4. "φρονῆτε" means "to think or to be minded in a certain way." This is a present active participle. This form, as previously indicated, uses strong emphasis by using two parts which have the same stress. The present tense indicates an ongoing lifestyle. The participle identifies action that is ongoing. One might translate the word, "being of the same mind and never stop being of the same mind."

This does not mean that every person in the church had the same thought at the same time. It does mean that the focus of their attention was all in the same direction, though they might differ widely in some details. This describes, at least, a very cooperative trend of thought.

- b. **"(Maintaining) the same love"** – The word "maintaining" is in parentheses because it is assumed, but does not appear at this point in the sentence.. The word "same" is "auto" (αὐτὸ) and is not easy to describe. It is the opposite of different, but does not describe lockstep precision. It is a looser understanding. One might say that Paul wanted these Christians to love each other in the same way that Christ loved them.

The word for "love" is "agape" (ἀγάπη). As you probably know, this love is self-sacrificing. It is the word the New Testament used to describe the love of God. It is totally without conditions. A person is loved simply because they are. There are no demands and no limits. A person is loved and the loving never ceases or chang-

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es. This is the kind of love Paul wanted each member of the Philippian church to have for every other member.

- c. **"United in spirit"** – At this point, the Greek text might be translated "having one soul." The word translated "have" is "echo" (ἔχω). It means "to have," but in a special way. The focus is upon holding fast something important that could slip away if not given great care.

The word translated "soul" is "sumpsuchoi" (σὺμψυχοί) which is a compound word. Much of the time, a compound word is used in order to add very strong emphasis. In this instance, the word is broken down as follows:

1. "Sum" means "with."
2. "Psuche" means "soul."

This compounding of the word makes the word much stronger than the word "psuche" or "soul" which is the word most often used. Paul wanted to make the statement as emphatic as possible. This phrase deals with that part of our being that responds to God. Paul's words are a strong way to say he wanted them to have a singleness of relationship with God. He wanted them to reach out to God as though they were one person. This is not a single event or action, but a way of life to which they cling tenaciously.

- d. **"Intent on one purpose"** – The Greek text might well be translated "minding the one thing." The word translated "minding" is "phreneo" (φρονέω) and means "to be mindful," "to be keenly aware of something." The implication is a focus on moral reflection. There are times when this word is translated "single-minded." Paul said he wanted these Christians to possess a singleness of moral and spiritual growth and concern.

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; Philippians 2:3

In this verse, Paul turned his attention in the direction of negative qualities. It is like saying, "I want you to do these things (verse two), but I want you to refrain from doing these things (verse three)."

- a. **"Do nothing from selfishness"** – The word translated "nothing" is "ouden" (οὐδέν). This is a very strong form of the word. It is like saying "absolutely nothing." It indicates that Paul was very intense about this idea.

The word translated "selfishness" is "erithia" (ἐριθία). More often than not, this word is used to identify personal ambition, self seeking, or a rivalry of any kind. This quality grows out of personal jealousy. It always identifies personal concern without consideration for the implications one's personal gain might have upon others. This word was often used to describe the feelings of a hired servant toward his or her master. Paul sought a quality relationship among the Christians in Philippi that would allow them to care so deeply for each other, to be so absorbed in their determination to serve God and each other that there would be no time for interest in selfish concern.

- b. **"(Do nothing) from empty conceit"** – Observe that the parentheses are used because the words "do nothing" do not appear in the text, but are certainly the sense of the writer. The text really says, "or self-glory." The word translated "self-glory" is "kenodoxion" (κενοδοξίον). It is a compound word and the meaning of the two words involved is telling.

1. "Kenos" means "empty."
2. "Doxa" means "glory."

What a statement Paul made! It is not just that this is selfish. It is also empty, dishonest and meaningless.

The word "but" suggests that a strong contrast is in progress. Having talked about "empty conceit," Paul now turns his attention to "considering others more important than yourself."

- c. **"Consider others more important than yourself."**

The Greek translation is a bit different than our English versions. One might translate it, "Esteem one another (as) surpassing themselves." The word translated "regard" or "esteem" is "hegeomai" (ηγέομαι). It literally means to lead before the mind. It is to consider or hold in high esteem. The form of this word is "present middle participle." Interestingly, both the "present tense" and the "participle" indicate ongoing action. This provides a very strong emphasis, which is what Paul intended. The middle voice indicates that this is something the person works upon themselves. Paul described a daily process of holding yourself in a certain esteem relationship with others. This has been misunderstood by some. They feel that this requires that a person have no positive view of their abilities or skills. That is not the intent. One can have a healthy, positive way of deferring to others that does not demean in any way.

The words translated "more important" or "surpassing" are "huperecho" (ὑπερέχω). This word is compounded of two words:

1. "Huper" means "over."
2. "Echo" means "to hold ability, possessions, relations etc."
3. There is nothing in this understanding that suggests that one deprecate one's sense of worth.

The form of this word is a present active participle. This simply means:

1. Present tense describes action that begins and does not stop.
2. Active voice describes action that the subject initiates.
3. The participle identifies action that is ongoing.

As you can see, Paul has intentionally chosen two different forms – present tense and participle – both of which identify action that begins and does not end. This is a way to suggest very strong emphasis. This was Paul's way to suggest that others have abilities we do not possess. This is in contrast to the natural tendency to think of oneself as being superior. Rather than an instruction to self-abasement, this is the attempt to be sensitive to the value God has placed in every human being. Again, this is something Paul wants them to do and never stop doing.

- d. **"In humility"**

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The word translated "humility" is "tapeinophrosune" (ταπεινοφροσύνη). Here, again, Paul used a compound word for purposes of emphasis. The construction of the word is as follows:

- a. "Tapeinos" means "low-lying," "lowly," "to make low like the mountains" in Luke 3:5.
- b. "Phren" means "mind."

This is an attitude, an atmosphere in which we are able to see the value of ourselves and others equally. This does not happen on its own. It is something we make happen because of our attitude toward others. Because we have this humility, we are able to see the importance, the value of others.

Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Philippians 2:4

The Greek is not all that graphic, but it is explicit. You might translate it as, "not their own things, everyone consider carefully, but also the things of others." This verse deals with two kinds of things:

- a. The "things" that are mine.
- b. The "things" that belong to others.

The Greek has a way of placing these on a par and that was Paul's intent. He was dealing with the issue of selfishness. He was also dealing with the issue of mutual concern. This also requires humility as he previously instructed them. Again, he was not instructing them to abandon concern for themselves. He was asking them to be as considerate of the things of others as of their own.

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, Philippians 2:5

Some Greek manuscripts begin this sentence with the word "for." Our best manuscripts, however, do not contain the word. The word translated "attitude" is "phreneo" (φρενέω) and as we have seen earlier it literally means "mind." It describes a way of thinking, a proper use of the mind. This word describes a value system that affects the way we think of everything, including other people. It describes the framework that informs the way we make decisions and form actions dealing with other people. Paul identified what he wanted as an attempt to get these people to view others the way Jesus viewed others. He was saying, use the pattern of Jesus as a guide for the way you think; a pattern for the way you deal with everyone.

Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, Philippians 2:6

In the brief confines of this paragraph, Paul has demonstrated a grasp of the mind of Christ to be found nowhere else in Scripture. Having stated this in principle form, Paul now attempts to spell out exactly what he meant using the action of Jesus as his example. Paul begins with the statement, "although He existed in the form of God." Paul began by affirming the deity of Jesus Christ. There could be no compromise of the Christ being the Son of God. Paul identified the position of Jesus. He then proceeded to describe Jesus' attitude about Himself. The pride of position was not something Jesus clutched to Himself. Some texts are translated, "did not think it robbery to be equal with God." Jesus was

not rejecting Deity. He simply did not take pride in that position. For our Lord, Deity was a fact of life, not a longing .

But emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Philippians 2:7

We are now in deep theological waters! Paul opened the verse with the word "but" and this indicates that a serious contrast is about to unfold.

Paul continued, "He emptied Himself." The word translated "emptied" is "kenoo" (κενόω). This does not mean that Jesus ceased to be God. He did not give up on being the Messiah. He set aside his majesty though keeping the deity that was always His. He did this in order to care completely for the needs of mankind.

"Taking the form of a servant"

The word translated "taking" is "lambano" (λαμβάνω) and means "to take," "to lay hold of," "to hold in one's grip so that it will not slip away." Paul was not describing an isolated incident, but rather a way of life, an attitude toward life.

The word translated "form" is "morphē" (μορφή) and means "the characteristic features." Jesus took all of the characteristic features of what it means to be both a human being and a servant and made them His own, a part of His being. Observe that Jesus took the form of a bond servant. This is different from a servant. A person could become a servant through the misfortunes of war, financial instability or for a crime. A person could only become a "bondservant" by choice. If a servant loved his master and was well treated by him, when his time of service was over, he might not want to leave. If so, he would tell his master and they together went to the magistrates of the city. The servant announced his intent to become a "bond servant." At this point the master would place the servant's head against a post and pierced his ear with an awl. Ashes were then rubbed into the wound in order to create proud flesh. Forever, anyone who saw this man would know that he was a servant by choice. Jesus became a bond-servant on our behalf. Jesus became a bond-servant in order to carry out the mission for which the Father had sent Him..

The word "and" ties the two parts of this sentence together as equals. There is an interesting situation here. The foundation of the sentence is "He emptied Himself..." Contingent upon this fact, two other things take place.

- a. He took the form of a bond-servant.
- b. He was being made in the likeness of men.

We need to investigate the meaning of "being made in the likeness of men." The words "being made" come from the Greek word "ginomai" (γίνομαι) which means "to become." The form of this word is second aorist participle. The important piece of information here is that the emphasis is on the action and not on the timing. The participle describes ongoing action.

The word translated "likeness" can be misleading if one does not look at it carefully. The word for "likeness" is "homoion" (ὁμοίωμα). It is something that is made LIKE something else. It is a resemblance. Historically this has led some to think that Jesus had a body like ours, but that it only resembles ours and was not really, fully human. That is a fallacy. Jesus was totally human, in every respect, just as we are, except that he had no sin.

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And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:8

"And being found in appearance as a man"

The idea of "being found" is expressed in "huerisko" (εὐρίσκω). This was not a process where He progressed and finally materialized as a human being. It came to their attention suddenly much as a new-born baby would be seen for the first time.

"In fashion"

The word translated "fashion" is "schema" (σχῆμα) and means "figure" or "fashion." It describes everything visible that would identify Jesus as a human being.

"As a man":

Jesus was not a phantom. He had all the characteristics of a human being. If He were not totally human, then He could not deal with the problems our humanity presents. He had to be as human as every person in order to minister on our behalf.

"He humbled Himself"

The word translated "humbled" is "taipaeinoo" (ταπεινώω). It means "to make low," it is something that Jesus did to Himself. The Greek text has two ways of saying that He did it to Himself. This is a form of very strong emphasis. No one else made Him low. It is to place oneself in a position below what is expected, below one's station in life. Following his term of office, President Jimmy Carter spends his time helping build houses for the poor who cannot afford a house of their own. That is humbling himself with a purpose.

Jesus had a position as the Son of God. He set aside that great honor and took the lowly form of a human being. He did it on His own accord.

"By becoming obedient to the point of death"

The word "by" does not appear in the Greek text. It does, however, give us a good understanding of what the Greek text attempts to say. The word translated "becoming" is "ginomai" (γίνομαι) in the Greek and describes a change in situation. This does not mean that Jesus had been disobedient. It does point out that whereas Jesus had been the Son of God in heaven, He became the Son of God in human form, in order that He might do the things the Father asked Him to do on earth. Indeed, Jesus' becoming a man was absolutely essential in order for Him to be totally obedient to the wishes of His Father.

The word translated "obedient" is "hupekoos" (ὑπήκοος) which means "to listen to a superior," or "to place oneself under the authority of a superior." The wording can be confusing. It sounds as though Jesus' obedience was to death. In fact, Paul said that Jesus was obedient to the Father to the point of death.

"Even"

The word translated "even" is "de" (δέ). It is most often used for purposes of emphasis. That is the case here. What follows is a picture of just how obedient Jesus was. Paul wants to place a very strong emphasis on this.

"Death on the cross"

Historically there have been many arguments about whether Jesus was really dead or just unconscious for a while. The word translated "death" is "thanatos" (θάνατος) meaning "to separate the spirit from the body." It is what happens when the body ceases to function as a body and immediately begins the process of returning to dust. It is, as some have put it, "He was dead, dead." This was a "cross kind of death." This had as much to do with punishment for a crime as it did with terminating a life. The focus was on the fact that the person was dying as a result of crimes for which he was guilty or took ownership. This is exactly what Jesus did. The sin that Jesus took upon Himself placed him in a position to be punished by dying in the shame of being crucified on a cross. This was the worst form of punishment that was used by the Roman army of occupation. It was intended, by the Romans, to be an object lesson for the populous. If you violate the law, this is what will happen to you.

Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, Philippians 2:9

The word translated "therefore" "dio" (διό) is a connective and indicates a statement of purpose is forthcoming. It also is used to indicate the coming of a conclusion. It could well be translated "consequently." If you look at the Greek text, however, you would note that, in fact, Paul used two connectives here. Paul added the word "kai" (καί) which we translate "and." When you add these two connectives, you have an even stronger, more emphatic statement of purpose. It is like saying, "because Jesus did what He did, God has highly exalted Him." The exaltation is based upon the self-sacrificing humility on the part of Jesus. God is the subject of this sentence. He is the one who exalted Jesus. In one sense, we do not exalt Jesus, we only strongly affirm the exaltation God has placed upon Him because of His humble obedience in taking our sins to the cross.

"God highly exalted Him"

The word translated "highly exalted" is the compound word "huperupsoo" (ὑερωψόω). It is made up as follows:

- a. "Huper" means "over."
- b. "Hupsoo" means "to lift" or "raise up."

You will observe that these two words mean essentially the same thing. Paul has emphasized his point by adding words that have essentially the same meaning. It is what is meant when one says, "if a rose says, 'I love you, a dozen roses removes all doubt.'" The word "Him," referring to Jesus, is in the accusative form. This is a structural way to say clearly this person is the recipient of the action of God. This is something that God did to or for Jesus.

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"And bestowed on Him the name"

The word translated "bestowed" is a derivative of the word "charidzomai" (χαράιζομαι) which means "to grant," but it is more than giving something. The idea involved is that the granting is a way to show favor and honor. It is the idea involved when the Queen of England grants the honor of knighthood upon a person in that kingdom.

God the Father bestowed upon Jesus the honor of a name that is above, greater than all names. This is a way of saying that Jesus has greater honor and greater favor than all others who exist or ever existed. It is a picture of His surpassing greatness.

"Which is above every name"

As one can plainly see, Paul does not hesitate to draw a comparison or contrast between Jesus and every other person who has ever lived. We must keep in mind that the meaning of names had a particular significance in that culture. No one would be named just because of a fad. People were named because the parents wanted that child to have certain qualities or wanted the child to be like some great personage. Paul has indicated that the name of Jesus is greater than any other name. The inference is that He is also greater than any other person who ever lived.

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, Philippians 2:10

The use of the word "that" suggests that a statement of purpose is forthcoming. Paul said that the Father purposed that all creation should worship His son, Jesus Christ. Paul was suggesting that the very mention of the name Jesus would cause people to bow in reverence and worship. Paul also pointed out that this applied to people who had long since died as well as those who were currently on the scene. It was his way of describing a worship scene that was all encompassing. Paul did not suggest that the letters of the name "Jesus" had great power, but rather that the name calls forth certain awareness of the person described by that name. The name Hitler certainly brings to mind certain remembrances. By the same token, the name "Mother Theresa" brings to mind a totally different kind of remembrance. The name of Jesus calls to mind one who was at once more loving and more powerful than any other human being in any generation.

Paul's use of the words, "In heaven, and on earth and under the earth," is a way of expressing inclusiveness. It says that all people of every generation that ever lived would bow the knee before Him. Bowing the knee is an expression that describes showing deference and obeisance, worship and adoration.

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:11

The word "that" does not appear in the Greek text. The word "and" indicates that this verse is a continuation of the idea in the previous verse. Further, it also indicates that the following idea is on an equal with the previous idea.

The word translated "confess" is "exomologeō" (ἐξομολογέω) and means "to acknowledge," "to give assent" or "to agree fully." Paul described a picture in which people who opposed Jesus would change their mind and acknowledge that He indeed was the Son of God, though they had previously denied it. Again, people who had held true to this

belief would continue to hold that position. Worship acknowledges the greatness of who Jesus is. Confession, on the other hand, acknowledges my response to who Jesus is. This does not mean that every human being loved Jesus with all their hearts. It does mean that all humanity, even those who denied or ignored His deity, will acknowledge that in fact, Jesus Christ is "Lord, the master of life," not just another person. It means that all who worshipped other gods and rejected God the Father and His Son, will come to acknowledge that their worship was ill-placed and that Jesus was entitled to the worship they never gave Him. It means that all that the Old Testament said about the coming Messiah, but which scholars rejected, is in fact true and they acknowledge that they were in error in that rejection. All the worship and honor that is finally heaped upon Jesus will bring glory to the Father. This, of course, was the purpose Jesus pursued in all that He did.

Observe that Paul indicated the purpose of this affirmation. When former enemies acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, they give honor to Him. Paul indicates that these people bring honor to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:12-18 – Command – In Harmony, Be Blameless

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; Philippians 2:12

Paul has just taken eleven verses to describe who Jesus was, how He functioned and what the results of that would be. He has not taken even a word to apply this beautiful picture of the Master to the lives of the Christians. In this paragraph, Paul will take all that he has said about Jesus and call upon these believers to make it a part of the way they live with each other.

"So then"

The word translated "so then" is "hose" (ὅστε). It is often translated "wherefore" or "therefore." Whatever the choice, this is the function that the word serves. It suggests that a minor conclusion is being reached.

"My beloved"

This word translated "beloved" is "agape." This is one of Paul's favorite words. It deals with love that has no boundaries or requirements. It is to love just because the person exists. In this instance, it describes Paul's attitude toward the believers in Philippi. He loves them just because they are, not because they deserve his affection.

In this instance, Paul draws a parallel. In the same way that they have been obedient even though Paul is in prison, so now they are to be obedient as they "work out their salvation with fear and trembling."

The word translated "work out" is "katergadzo" (κατεργάζω) and has been the cause of some consternation in the church. This is a compound word and is made up as follows:

- a. "Kata" means "down" or "against."
- b. "Ergazomai" means "to toil" or "to labor."

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Paul has used this word very carefully. It means one should work out or against; they should think through their uncertainty about what all this means in their lives. The form of this word is present middle imperative. This simply means:

- a. Present tense – this is action that begins and does not stop. It is a lifestyle.
- b. Middle voice – this describes action that the subject of the sentence initiates for him/herself.
- c. Imperative mood – this is a command

Paul has identified an ongoing activity that must be a part of their lives as long as they live. It must be as much a part of them as breathing. The implications of this thought are so tremendous that it will, indeed, take the rest of their lives to understand it as fully as humanly possible.

Some have looked at this word and concluded that one can earn salvation through good works. This is hardly what Paul had in mind. We must keep in mind that Paul is writing to Christians. "Work out" has to do with continually making decisions, for our lives in the present, that reflect what Paul had described of the mind of Christ as portrayed in the previous paragraph. It suggests that we are to reflect with every decision how this will reflect the attitude Jesus displayed in verses 1-11. These people were being instructed to work hard at becoming more and more like their Master, Jesus Christ.

"With fear and trembling"

The word translated "fear" is "phobos" (φόβος) and literally means "flight caused by being scared." It is a form of dread or terror. Obviously, Paul does not want them to be traumatized. He does, however, want them to experience the alertness one experiences when they become aware of just what could happen to them if they are lax.

The word translated "trembling" is "tromos" (τρόμος) from which we get our English word "tremor" or "tremble." In Ephesians 6:5, Paul used the same two words together. There is a relationship between these two words that should be important to us. The word "fear" describes the nature of their alertness. The word "tremble," on the other hand, describes the extent of their alertness. Paul described a situation that was filled with extreme emotion and anticipation.

*For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure
Philippians 2:13*

The verse begins with the word "for." This suggests that Paul will now give a reason for the information that preceded. He wanted them to be totally alert because God is the one who was at work in them, not themselves. God is busy accomplishing His will in their lives. Their alertness is not to accomplish their own works, but to be available and cooperative as God works in their lives.

God is accomplishing His good pleasure in the life of the growing Christian. We must be keenly aware of the fact that it is His good pleasure that is to be accomplished, not ours. We would like for changes to take place without a struggle. That may not be, probably would not be in our best interest, but it feels better because we are afraid of the struggle; afraid that we will fail. We approach growing in a way that pleases Him and accomplishes His will when we are comfortable allowing God to take us through the struggle in order to become more like Him. We know that this more nearly accomplishes His will for our lives, even though it may involve greater struggle on the path.

Do all things without grumbling or disputing; Philippians 2:14

Having described his desire for them in broad terms, now Paul gave some specific instructions in order to accomplish these goals.

He instructed them to "do all things without grumbling or disputing." It is logical to assume that it is only necessary to give such an instruction if there is evidence of grumbling and disputing in the fellowship of Christians in Philippi. Paul wrote to correct this error.

The word "grumbling" is "gonguso" (γογγύζω) and means "to murmur." It is what the Israelites did when they were in the desert. It represents a level of dissatisfaction with what one has to the point of complaining. It is to be preoccupied with minor things that do not please to the exclusion of the better and more helpful things that are already a part of one's life. This involves a level of ingratitude for the good that we do have. One cannot grumble unless there is some level of superior feeling that one deserves better than one has or better than others have. There are several instructions to "rejoice" in this epistle. One cannot both grumble and rejoice at the same time.

Paul also instructed these Christians to refrain from "disputing." This word is "dialogizomai" (διαλογίζομαι). This is an interesting word. It means "to keep score" "to argue with yourself over an issue to the point that you begin to argue with others." This becomes addicting. People who do this eventually argue with others about almost everything. This encourages an atmosphere of challenge where one challenges others, usually people in control, about almost everything and every decision. This keeps leaders on the defensive and refuses to allow them to rejoice in what God is doing in the body of the church. It creates a combative atmosphere that causes friction rather than peace within the body of Christ.

We must ask ourselves, in view of the fact that this epistle is known for its joy and the fact that Paul did not have to chide them for any problem, why then does he have to instruct them to "do all things without grumbling and disputing"? The truth is that Paul repeatedly throughout the epistle finds it necessary to give this kind of instruction. You do not have to instruct children to be careful of the deep water in a sand desert. You find it necessary to give strong, direct instructions against grumbling when grumbling is going on. You find it necessary to command Christians not to indulge in disputes because this is going on. That is what Paul encountered in the Philippian church. Paul used the beautiful picture of the humility of Jesus as a background against which to measure their lives as they grow in His likeness.

That 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, Philippians 2:15

This sentence begins with the word "that." Whenever we encounter this word in the epistles, it immediately warns us that a statement of purpose is about to be given. That is the case in this instance as well.

Paul wrote, "that you might prove yourself to be blameless and innocent." As long as grumbling and disputing are continuing, it is not possible for a person to demonstrate the fact that they are blameless and innocent. We need to look at the makeup of this word.

- a. **Blameless** – The Greek word is "amemptos" (ἀμεμπτος). This is a difficult word to explain. It literally means "not blamed." Blame means "to find fault," "to con-

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demn." In the strictest sense, Jesus was blamed for many things as have the saints of every age. The idea that Paul was trying to suggest was that though others may blame the saints for many things, such blame was unfounded, as it was in the case of Jesus. Paul was not saying that they would never blame you for anything. That has been an impossibility in every generation. He said that they would never be able to prove the blame if you refuse to grumble or dispute.

- b. **"Innocent"** – The word translated "innocent" is "akeraios" (ἀκέραιος) and literally means "to be unmixed." It is a way to describe something that has no foreign mixture; something that is pure. It is the same idea as the Latin word for sincere, "to be without wax," "to be just exactly what you appear to be." The word was widely used in the wine industry. Wine that was "akeraios" was pure wine; it had no mixture of water to increase the volume.

Again, grumbling and disputing within the body will make it impossible for these believers to demonstrate the fact that they are exactly what they appear to be; that there is no evil mixture in their character which would mar their witness as children of God.

- c. **"Children of God above reproach"** – When Paul used this description, "children of God," he was not so much describing family lineage, though that is involved, as he was describing the traits of character that were characteristic of the family. There is an old saying that "an apple never falls far from the tree." By this they meant that the character of the family will be revealed in the children. This is also true in the family of God. When there is grumbling and disputing in the family, it is not possible to demonstrate that we are God's children; reflectors of His character in the world.

Paul modified this statement by describing them as "above reproach." The Greek word is "amomos" (ἄμωμος). The word literally means "with no blemish." There is a parallel in the Old Testament picture. When a sacrifice was brought to the temple to be offered, it must first be examined and declared to be without blemish of any kind. Only then could it be used as a gift to God. We, as believers, must carefully examine ourselves to make sure that there is no blemish in us; no fault of any kind that would render us useless in the service of God. This, of course, is not a possible announcement as long as there is grumbling and disputing present within the body of Christ.

At the conclusion of this verse, there is a three way contrast which Paul used. This is how it works:

1. Paul stated the positive situation.
2. He contrasted this with the negative statement.
3. He then added emphasis by restating the positive.

This is how he said it:

- a. **You are "above reproach"** – As previously indicated, "above reproach" means "to be carefully examined and found to be totally without blame."
- b. **You are living in the midst of "a crooked and perverse generation."** The two situations could hardly be more different from each other.
 1. The word "crooked" is "skolios" (σκολιός). You may be aware of the fact that the English word "skoliosis" means a lateral curvature of the spine. It is an or-

thopedic term to describe the difference between straight bones and those that are curved or twisted with distortion. A person who is crooked means that the person is deformed in character and conduct. It is being less than our spirit was intended to be.

2. The word "perverse" is "diastrepho" (διαστρέφω) and means "to twist," or "distort." This is a compound word.
 - a. "Dia" means "through."
 - b. "Strepho" means "to twist," "to make it to become something that it was not." It is to turn something around in the opposite direction. It is one thing to have something bad. It is quite another to take something that is known for being very good and turn it into something bad. There always will be those who do not realize that it has become bad and will be caught off guard by the switch. This is what "perverse" is all about.
 - c. **"Among whom you appear as lights in the world"** – This does not have the strong appeal for us that it had for them. We are accustomed to good lights. They had no such advantage. Light was something good and positive. It also was unusual. That is what the apostle Paul thought of their position in the world.

As indicated earlier, the apostle built a strong emphasis by stating their positive credentials in contrast with the negative credentials of the world. He then followed this with a very strong presentation of their quality by referring to them as light in the world. The inference is that the world is dark. This is a beautiful picture of the Philippian church as Paul knew them.

Holding 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. Philippians 2:16

The author continued the sentence with a very interesting word. "Holding fast" or "ep-echo" (ἐπέξω) is a compound word that, as usual, was presented for purposes of emphasis. The two words were as follows:

- a. "Epi" means "upon" or "forth."
- b. "Echo" means "to have" or "to hold." It is the word used to describe steadfast adherence to the faith. It is an aggressive way to describe the way we cling to the word and instruction of God in order to be His people in the world.
- c. Paul created a very strong emphasis by using this compound word. Add to this the fact that it is in the present active participle form. This form stresses the fact that the action is ongoing, never ceasing. This is about as strong a word form as he could put together. One might literally translate the word, "really hold fast the word of life and never stop holding fast the word of life." In his mind it would be unthinkable to let go.

"The word of life" is usually thought of as the Scriptures. That certainly is involved. In this instance, however, it is more. He also is talking about the word that gives life; the Good News that Christ has set us free from the law of sin and death and brought us into the family of God by means of the cross.

The word "so that" suggests that a statement of purpose is forthcoming. This will deal with the purpose of their holding fast the word of life. Paul said, "so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory..." There is much dispute about the meaning of "the day of Christ." It is highly possible that we draw more fine lines in this discussion than they

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did. Paul was talking about a time when one's works would be evaluated. He was saying that in his own situation, his cause for glory was in the fact that he did not run or toil in vain. This is a picture of a marathon race. One runs in vain if they do not finish the race; if they do not win the prize for which they trained and struggled in the race. It is to run and not stop.

Paul talked about running "in vain." The word for "in vein" is "kenos" (κένος) and means "empty." The great tragedy in life is to work for a lifetime and have nothing to show for all your efforts. It is to this that Paul points. If they would hold fast the word of life, then his efforts would not result in emptiness.

Paul emphasized the point by using a second word picture – "working in vain." Paul worked very hard to develop the body of Christ in Philippi. If they did not hold fast the word of life, then all his work was emptiness. There would be nothing to show for all the work that he had done.

But 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. Philippians 2:17

The word "but" introduces a contrast. In the previous verse he talked about making sure that he did not run or work in vain in relationship to the believers in Philippi. Now he is talking about the possibility that he might, indeed, have worked in vain. He had to deal with the possibility that his work might be totally for naught.

He dealt with the possibility of wasting effort by comparing it with a "drink offering." The Jews brought their sacrifice to the altar for presentation to God. It was not uncommon that they would bring a vessel of wine to pour upon the altar as a "drink offering" to express their joy in the opportunity to give this sacrifice to God for His goodness to them. Paul described himself as a priest, in this scenario, who would for joy pour out not the wine, but his own blood as a sacrifice of joy on behalf of the people of Philippi. Paul had described what these people meant to him; how gladly he would offer himself on behalf of their faith. This is a picture of real concern.

And you too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me. Philippians 2:18

This statement is very emphatic. Paul had just described how willing he was to sacrifice himself on behalf of their faith. He is now urging them to follow his example. He is not urging them to sacrifice themselves. He urged them to rejoice while making a sacrifice of themselves to God. In that process, they also shared their joy with Paul.

The form of the word translated "rejoice" is present indicative active. This form describes an ongoing lifestyle rather than a single action. It is like saying "rejoice and never stop rejoicing." Paul had set the example and now he asked them to follow that example. The joy Paul mentioned was more than light-heartedness. It was an active rejoicing in the way God used the sacrifice of their lives.

Philippians 2:19-30 – Paul Commended Timothy and Epaphroditus to Them

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. Philippians 2:19

COMMENDING THE MIND OF CHRIST IN HARMONY

Again, the word "but" suggests a coming contrast. Having described his willingness to sacrifice himself and urging them to be prepared to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their fellowship in the Gospel, now Paul talks about what he intends to do in the present.

Paul wants to send Timothy to them. One of his reasons for sending Timothy was to see just how these Christians were doing; to find out how they were faring in their Christian walk. Paul suggested that a positive report from Timothy would be a great encouragement to him. Paul lived to see growth in the people whom he had led to the Lord.

For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. Philippians 2:20

This is an explanation of why Paul would send Timothy. This had to be a genuine sorrow for Paul because he had such a burden for these people and their spiritual welfare. It would be a great distress that he could not find others who had a similar concern for the people of God.

Paul spoke of one who would be "genuinely concerned." This suggests that there were others who had a concern, but it was not genuine. There is obvious pathos in his words. It was a shock to Paul to discover that there were those in the church who were as selfishly motivated as the Pharisees were.

For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:21

This is a point of great distress for Paul. He was distressed that there were those who were called servants of Christ, but their interest was in themselves and not in the flock of God. They did not have an unswerving commitment to the interests of Jesus Christ, but rather to their own profit.

But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. Philippians 2:22

The word "but" suggests a contrast between the coming material and that which has already been covered. Having described the motivation of others, now Paul turns to describe the concerns of Timothy. These, of course, will be a great contrast to the others.

Paul reminded the Philippian Christians that they knew of Timothy's proven worth. He compared Timothy's service with Paul with a child's work with his father. In that day, a boy would learn his father's trade and eventually take over the business. This is the way Paul described Timothy's service with him. Timothy served with Paul in the work of spreading the Gospel and he served as though it was his own ministry and not Paul's. The way Paul wrote suggests that there were some negotiations in progress concerning his incarceration. These negotiations were not yet complete. It also hints at the possibility that some of the things that were going on were not entirely in keeping with the purity of Roman law. As happened so often, the treatment of Christians was sometimes an abuse of justice and the defenseless believers were taken advantage of and suffered unnecessarily.

Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; Philippians 2:23

The use of the word "therefore" suggests a coming conclusion. The conclusion is that Paul will send Timothy without fear of anything. He was promising them that just as soon as it

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was clear what the government was going to do with Paul, he would send Timothy to them. This makes sense. Timothy would not only be able to go to Philippi, but he would also be able to take the news with him concerning what was going to happen to Paul.

And I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall be coming shortly. Philippians 2:24

Paul could not say for certain what was going to happen to him. He knew what should happen to him, but politics being what it is, anything could and might happen. The forces opposing Paul were politically powerful. They had ties to the people in power and could get them to do what they wanted no matter what the law might decree. Paul trusted, however, that he would soon be able to come to visit with the Philippian church personally.

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; Philippians 2:25

Paul is now going to explain the coming of Epaphroditus. Paul considered it essential to send Epaphroditus to them for two reasons:

- a. Epaphroditus was from Philippi and they had not seen him recently.
- b. Epaphroditus had been sick to the point of death. This was an excellent opportunity for them to see for themselves that though he had been deathly sick, he was now alive and quite well.

Observe the way Paul referred to Epaphroditus:

- a. **"My brother"** – For the early church, "brother" described not just a blood tie, but a personal relationship. A brother, in that culture, had the responsibility for other members of the family. If they were in trouble, he had to pay for their release. He was responsible to make sure that they had enough to eat and to care for their safety. Paul said that he and Epaphroditus had that relationship with each other even though they had no literal family ties.
- b. **"Fellow-worker"** – Greek word translated "fellow-worker" is "sunergos" (συνεργός) which is a compound word:
 1. "Sun" means "with."
 2. "Ergos" means "to work" or "to labor."A "fellow-worker" is one who works with, one who shares the work in every possible way. That is the relationship that Paul saw in Epaphroditus in relationship to the Gospel.
- c. **"Fellow soldier"** – The Greek word translated "fellow soldier" is "sustratiotes" (συστρατιώτης) which is also a compound word:
 1. "Sus" comes from the word "sun" which means "with."
 2. "Stratiotes" means "a soldier."A "fellow soldier" is a metaphor that describes one who fights alongside another in a common battle. That is exactly what Paul and Epaphroditus had been doing.
- d. **"Your messenger"** – The word "messenger" is literally "apostle." The word "apostle" is a compound word as well.
 1. "Apo" means "from."
 2. "Stello" means "to send."

COMMENDING THE MIND OF CHRIST IN HARMONY

An apostle is one sent from another. The eleven became "apostles" when Jesus sent them into the world. That is exactly what Epaphroditus was. He was sent from the Philippian church with a message and gift to Paul. Now Paul was sending Epaphroditus as a messenger to the Philippian church.

- e. "**Minister to my need**" – The word "minister" is an ancient Greek word "leitourgeo" (λειτουργέω) which was used to describe a person's filling public office at his own expense. The emphasis is on the service and not on the absence of pay. The absence of pay deals with the motive. The person does not serve because he will be paid well. He serves because he has a desire to serve the common good. This is what Paul said Epaphroditus was doing on his behalf.

Because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. Philippians 2:26

In this verse, Paul described two of the feelings of Epaphroditus:

1. He was "**longing**" for the Christians of Philippi. The word translated "longing" is "epipostheo" (ἐπιποσθέω) which is a very strong form expressed in a compound word.
 - a. "'Epi" means "upon."
 - b. "Postheo" means "to desire." This is a very intense form of desiring the people of Philippi.
2. He was **distressed** – The word translated "distressed" is "ademoneo" (ἀδημονέω) and describes an intense form of distress. This is the word that was used to describe the sorrow Jesus experienced in the garden of Gethsemane, in Mark 14:33. Epaphroditus was greatly troubled because the Philippian Christians had heard that he was sick, but did not know the details or how he was faring.

For 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. Philippians 2:27

The word "for" indicates that an explanation is forthcoming. In the previous verse, Paul mentioned the fact that Epaphroditus had been sick. Paul continued by specifying just how sick his fellow-servant had been – "to the point of death." Some translations report this, "coming near to death."

The word "but" identifies a coming contrast. Having mentioned that Epaphroditus was so sick that he almost died, Paul now indicated that God had mercy on him and he did not die. Paul continued by identifying his own relationship with Epaphroditus. When God showed mercy to Epaphroditus it was an expression of mercy for Paul as well. The apostle already was in a troubled situation because of his imprisonment. To lose Epaphroditus would be an ever greater sorrow for him. This describes both their personal relationship and the ministry that Epaphroditus carried on as he served with Paul.

Therefore 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. Philippians 2:28

The word "therefore" precedes a conclusion. The conclusion was that because Epaphroditus had been sick and they were concerned about him; because he was so lonesome for the

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Christians in Philippi; because he was such a valued servant of God and coworker with Paul, the apostle was very eager to send him to bring the message to the Philippian church.

"In order that" suggests purpose. The purpose of Paul's eagerness to send Epaphroditus to them was to accomplish two things:

1. That they might rejoice when they see him for themselves.
2. That Paul would be less concerned about the Philippian Christians because Epaphroditus was there to help them and give Paul a very dependable report.

There is a depth of understanding and concern in this statement that appears to escape those who see Paul as a gruff, uncaring person.

Therefore receive him in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; Philippians 2:29

Paul added another conclusion to the one previously given in verse 28. It is as though Paul had said, "Because Epaphroditus comes from Philippi, and because he has been very sick and you have not known the outcome of his illness, and because he misses you so much, and because he is such a faithful worker in the Gospel; receive him with joy."

Paul also dealt with a strong Jewish tradition - giving great respect to those who are teachers of the law. He said, "hold such ones honored." The word translated "honored" is "entimos" (ἐντιμός) which is a word compounded for purposes of emphasis:

- a. "En" means "in."
- b. "Timos" means "honor."

The word means "to be precious because of who the person is and what they have done." It is a comparative form. This is because there are varying degrees of honor. Some, because of their self-sacrifice, deserve more honor than others. Paul spoke of Epaphroditus as one who should be held in honor because of the way he conducted himself in relationship to the Gospel.

Because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me. Philippians 2:30

The use of the word "because" indicates that a reason is forthcoming. In this instance, the reason is why they should hold Epaphroditus in honor. It is not just that he almost died. It is that he almost died in the work of Christ. Paul was saying that Epaphroditus came very close to becoming a martyr for the cause of Christ. Paul became more specific. He said that Epaphroditus risked his life to do the work of the Gospel on behalf of the Christians in Philippi. For this reason, these Christians should hold their friend in very high respect. He had risked his life for the Gospel while serving on their behalf. For this they should rejoice and express deep joy.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 3
MAKING CHRIST THE PRIORITY
PHILIPPIANS 3:1 – 21

1. There are only two paragraphs in Philippians chapter three. On the following table, write a summary of eight words or less for each paragraph.

3:1-16	
3:17-21	

2. In 3:1-16, Paul dealt with his own Jewish heritage.
- a. In 3:1, Paul urged the Philippian believers to rejoice and at the same time hinted of trouble ahead. How does one deal with such an apparent contradiction?
 - b. In 3:2, Paul identified three groups these Christians should beware of:
 1. Who are these groups?
 2. What threat does each group represent?
 - c. In 3:3, Paul identified the meaning of "the true circumcision." What did he say?
 - d. In 3:4-6, Paul listed his own Jewish pedigree.
 1. How did Paul describe the importance Jewish people would place on his heritage?
 2. What emphasis can you see as you study Paul's heritage?
 3. How can we explain Paul's statement, in 3:6, "as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless"?
 - e. In 3:7, 8, Paul described his reaction to his own heritage.
 1. What was his reaction?
 2. Read the two verses again. What means did Paul use to add strong emphasis to his statement?
 3. In 3:8, Paul said, "for whom (Christ) I have suffered the loss of all things..." What could Paul mean by this statement?
 - f. In 3:9, Paul presented an important contrast.
 1. What two things did he contrast?
 2. What does he say about each one?
 - g. In 3:10, 11, Paul spelled out his own hopes and spiritual agenda. There are five parts he described.
 1. What are the five concerns?
 2. How would you summarize these concerns in one simple statement?
 - h. In 3:12-14, Paul issued a series of carefully worded disclaimers.
 1. What reasons can you suggest that would make this appropriate for him to offer?
 2. What was he saying in his disclaimers?
 - i. In 3:15, 16, Paul gave some serious instructions.
 1. How would you explain the apparent impossible statement Paul made when he said, "as many as are perfect..."?
 2. In verse 15, Paul contrasted two "attitudes."

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- a. Identify and describe each one.
 - b. Paul said, "If in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you." This manner of dealing with an opposing view seems totally uncharacteristic of Paul. How would you explain this situation?
 - c. In 3:16, Paul added a statement that seems to reinforce the "attitude" to which he was committed. How would you describe the intent of this verse?
3. In 3:17-21, Paul gave a picture of the believers situation here and now.
- a. In 3:17, Paul exhorted his fellow Christians to follow his example. To some Christians, this would seem like the height of arrogance. How would you describe it? Why?
 - b. In 3:18, 19, you have a single sentence. This is a very emotional statement.
 1. In 3:18, Paul spoke of "enemies of the cross." He spoke of them in such a way that it appears that they present themselves as Christians, but are not. Reflect on this statement.
 2. In these two verses, Paul used five phrases to describe these impostors:
 - a. How does he describe them?
 - b. What does each phrase mean?
 - c. In 3:20, 21, Paul explained his attack on these pretenders to the faith.
 1. In these verses, Paul clearly identified two things that Jesus will do. What are they?
 2. In verse 21, Paul described our present and future situation. How does he describe them?
 3. Paul also identified the means by which Jesus will accomplish this miracle in our lives. What means did he suggest?
4. Review your study of chapter three.
- a. What commands did Paul give these Christians?
 - b. What effect does he promise will result from such obedience?
 - c. In view of your study of this chapter:
 1. What was Paul saying you need to do in order to be obedient and faithful to God?
 2. What difference can we expect this to make in our lives and ministry?

LESSON 3: – PHILIPPIANS 3:1 – 4:1
MAKING CHRIST THE PRIORITY

Introduction

There are only two paragraphs in the third chapter of the Philippiian epistle. A summary of each paragraph appears on the following table.

3:1-16	Paul chose Christ above heritage
3:17-4:1	Citizens of Heaven: subject to Christ

Philippians 3:1-16 - Paul Chose Christ Above Heritage

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. Philippians 3:1

The word "finally" suggests both a change in the direction of the discourse and the approach of the closing statements. We are only half way through the book, but Paul is closing at least this part of his discourse.

As was his custom, Paul refers to the people of the church as "brethren." Some people see this as a way to identify the recipients as Christians. It is that, but it is more. It is a way of identifying the relationship between Christians. They are family. In that culture, family had a very special connotation. If you are family, you are responsible for other members of the family. If they are in trouble, then you will buy them back. If others threaten them, you will be their defense even at personal risk. This is what Abraham did when he went to get Lot back from the kings who captured him.

Paul commanded them to "rejoice in the Lord." The words "joy" and "rejoicing" are frequently misunderstood. They often are thought of as a positive response to positive, comfortable circumstances. In fact, they are a response of who I am – a child of God in the face of adversity – in connection with life with all its problems and struggles. Joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit. This suggests that joy finds its source in God and is engendered in the heart of the believer by God.

Joy is the quality of character created within the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit. This suggests that it is a uniquely Christian quality. Rejoicing is the expression of that joy which the Holy Spirit brings to the believer.

In this sentence, the word "rejoice" is in the present indicative active form. This is not a command to do something and it is accomplished. It is rather an instrument to make rejoicing a way of life. It is to be a part of our character and personality. Paul was really saying, "rejoice in the Lord and keep on rejoicing in the Lord." Our rejoicing is in the Lord. The cause of our rejoicing is not happy circumstances. It is not a happy expression because things are going well. Indeed, the circumstances may become quite unpleasant.

Rejoicing is an expression of how great our Lord really is. Jesus is the focus of our rejoicing. This is Paul's call to never-ending rejoicing with no reference to the quality of circumstances in which we find ourselves

Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; Philippians 3:2

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Paul abruptly changes the tone of the epistle with a severe warning against three groups:

- a. **"Beware of the dogs"** - The word "beware" is literally "blepo" (βλέπω) which means, "to look," "to see," "to contemplate." Paul was talking about intense observation.

Also, the word "blepo" is in the present indicative active form. Simply speaking, Paul was saying look carefully and never stop looking with careful observation. This is an unending process, a way of life, rather than a specific act.

The word "dogs" is "kuon" (κύων). It means "hound." We have a species of dog that bears this name. This, is obviously a symbolic reference. It is a word that the Jews used to identify the Gentiles. It was a word that the Jews used to identify anyone who was ceremonially impure. They used the term to single out persons who were impudent, shameless, profane; persons of questionable moral character. Wild dogs had a reputation of destroying something good to satisfy their own needs. Paul used the term in a spiritual sense to warn them against people who, to satisfy their own needs and agenda, would subvert their faith and destroy them spiritually.

- b. **"Beware of the evil workers"** - The repetition of the word "beware" or "blepo" was his way of adding emphasis to an already strong statement. Paul here described people whose character is evil, whose values are immoral and whose way of life is contrary to God. This word describes more the quality of one's character than an evaluation of any specific act.

The word "workers" is "ergates" (ἐργάτης) which means "laborer." It is one who performs manual labor.

These two words are interesting. Paul used the words to describe a person whose character was evil and immoral and whose character produced work, which was similarly evil in character. It was his way of saying that our character has an observable effect upon our activities. Work growing out of an evil heart will be evil in nature. Paul instructed these believers to watch such persons very carefully.

- c. **"Beware of the false circumcision"** – We should be aware of the fact that the Greek text reads a bit differently. You might translate it this way, "Beware of the concision." The word "concision" is "katatome" (κατατομή), a compound word. Its composition is as follows:
 1. "kata" – means "down."
 2. "Temno" – means "to cut."

It was literally used to describe a mutilation. Paul used this word in what appears to be an expression of contempt. He was contrasting the true circumcision with the Pharisaic attitude.

Paul was dealing with the strict Jewish insistence on circumcision to become a part of the covenant community. This may seem unimportant from our point of view, but the implications are serious. Paul insisted that Salvation was by grace alone. The Pharisaic influence insisted that salvation was by grace plus circumcision. The net result was a diminishing of the perceived power of Christ to redeem the individual.

Granted there are some who feel there were no problems in the Philippian church, but Paul is very concerned about these real dangers that they faced. His instruction to beware of these things suggests that they were quite real and that the danger was intense.

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for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, Philippians 3:3

In this verse, Paul changed the meaning of circumcision. The Jews thought that circumcision was an act of obedience that established a person in the covenant family. Paul changed that to say that circumcision was not an outward action, but an inward condition. It really identified people who do three things:

- a. **"Worship in the Spirit of God"** – The word rendered "worship" is "Latreuo" (λατρεύω) and means "to work for hire." The emphasis is not on conducting a worship service, but on being a servant of God. Certainly, this word may include acts of devotion, but the basic emphasis is upon serving. Paul said that the circumcision is made up of people who, enabled by the Holy Spirit, serve God with their whole heart. Unfortunately, there are hosts of people in the church who are willing to sing praise songs, but are not willing to roll up their sleeves and go to work for God.
- b. **"Glory in Christ Jesus"** – The word "glory" is "kauchaomai" (καυχάομαι) and means "to boast," "to glory," "to rejoice." There is more emphasis on boasting than on glorying. It is to be remembered that this is boasting in God and not in self. Again, Paul said that the circumcision is made up of those who boast, not in themselves, but in Jesus Christ.
- c. **Put no confidence in the flesh"** – The word translated "no confidence" is "peitho" (πειθω) and means, "to be persuaded," "to prevail upon," "to bring about a change of mind by the influence of reason or moral considerations." Paul said that the circumcision is made up of people who are absolutely not impressed with the ability of the flesh. The reverse of this is that the circumcision is made up of people who are impressed, whose minds are changed by the power of God in Jesus Christ. The true circumcision places no trust in one's physical heritage at all.

This statement would be a severe shock to strict Jews. They were absolutely convinced that the physical circumcision was their entrance into the family of God. Paul confronted this ancient Jewish understanding. The Jews placed a great deal of emphasis on their physical heritage. The fact that they were circumcised Jews separated them from every other people on the face of the earth. It made them different from everyone else.

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: Philippians 3:4

Paul always had to speak carefully because of his detractors. Every statement had to be made with them in mind. This is an example of that frame of mind. It is as though he was anticipating the response that they would make to his position. They might say, "Such a statement is understandable if you have no heritage to lean upon. Our heritage, however, is much superior to that." Paul was saying that he had a better heritage than most of the Jews, but still he believed that one couldn't place their confidence in the flesh, the heritage of their ancestry.

circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; Philippians 3:5

Every Jewish, male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day following birth. Paul affirmed that this was his Jewish heritage. He claimed a heritage in the tribe of Benjamin.

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This was not one of the outstanding tribes, but nonetheless, it was one of the twelve tribes and Paul was a member of it because of his mother's heritage.

He claimed to be "a Hebrew of Hebrews." It is like saying I am a Hebrew upon whom other Hebrews can look as an example of their faith. We must remember that Paul must be very careful in his statements about himself. There were those in the opposition who knew Paul very well. Had he made unfounded statements, they would be quick to bring this to his attention and charge him with fraud.

Paul further said of himself, "As to the law, a Pharisee." There were several factions of the Jewish people. These groups divided over the Law and their relationship to it. Look at the identification Paul made:

1. There were **Pharisees** – This group made the oral interpretation of the Law of Moses about as important as the Law itself. Unfortunately, the group was as political as they were religious. The Pharisees found their roots in the Hassidic community, which was very strict. Out of this background came the Pharisee's insistence on every detail of the Law as interpreted by the Scribes. They were proud of the fact that they numbered 613 laws for which they were totally responsible to be obedient. Their concern was far more with outward appearances than with the intent of the heart.

They believed in the resurrection. They tended to be common people and did not claim many that were rich and powerful. In the time of Jesus, however, some of them had become members of the Sanhedrin and controlled more power than their numbers would merit.

2. **Sadducees** – This group denied the resurrection. They also denied the tradition of the elders, the body of oral tradition that attempted to interpret the Law of Moses. This group was made up of people from the higher class of people – priests, aristocrats, and merchants. In most instances, the High Priest was a Sadducee.
3. **Scribes** – This group represented not so much a theological position as a level of scholarly achievement and practice. They represented a privileged upper class in Israel. One could be both a priest and a scribe, though it did not happen often because the training to be a scribe began at age 14 and continued until a person was 40 years of age. Scribes were not paid for their interpretive work, but supported their families with another profession.

Paul claimed to have been a Pharisee. It was his way of stressing the fact that he had determined to keep every detail of the Law before he came to know Christ.

as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. Philippians 3:6

It wasn't so much that Paul was proud that he had persecuted the church. It was that he wanted them to know that he had been a very zealous Pharisee. Zealous Pharisees persecuted the church. It was the evidence that they were, in fact, zealous Pharisees. He certainly had been one.

Paul was singling out the things that identified a person who was intensely committed to place the Law first in their lives. The zeal for the Law and aggression against anyone who would not agree and follow them was the key evidence.

The Pharisees were convinced that no one in the Jewish community was as righteous as they were. They counted righteousness as strict adherence to the law. Attitude and mo-

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tive were not part of their evaluation of themselves. Thus, Paul spoke of himself as blameless concerning righteousness in the Law. Paul chose his words very carefully. There are several Greek words which are translated "blameless." Two are used most often.

- a. "Amomos" (ἄμωμος) means "to be without blemish." Only Jesus honestly could make such a claim. He was guilty of nothing for which He could be blamed. They did blame Him for many things, but their attacks were false. He was, in fact, blameless.
- b. "Amemptos" (ἄμεμπτος) This word says nothing about the individuals ability to do acts which are blameworthy. It simply says that they lived in such a way that people would not think to blame them, to hold them accountable for misdeeds. It is a description of their reputation, not their character.

Paul wisely chose the latter term. He knew, full well, that he was blamable, but had a good reputation among the Jewish people.

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Philippians 3:7

The sentence begins with the word "but." The word is "alla" (ἀλλὰ) and comes from the root that means "different." It is a strong form to indicate contrast.

This verse is an admission that there were things about his Jewish reputation that were considered extremely valuable to a Jew. In his attempt to describe how thoroughly he abandoned his mindset as a Pharisee, Paul affirmed that all of the things that gave him special recognition and status among the Jews, he had pushed aside as worthless in order that he might make his full commitment to Jesus Christ. Paul set up an intentional contrast within this verse. It is a double contrast. It contrasts his former life with his present life. It also contrasts his former values with his present values.

- a. The word "gain" is "kerdos" (κέρδος). It is thought by some to mean the same as making a profit.
- b. The word "loss" is "zemia" (ζεμία) and literally means "damaged." It is like a ship that is damaged, rendered useless, by a storm.
- c. Paul considered the things that gave him his high reputation in his former way of life to be damaged goods because of Christ.

More 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, Philippians 3:8

The use of the words "more than that," is a way of making a statement and then making the statement even stronger than initially stated. Making the second statement more sweeping than the first usually does this. Paul began by renouncing the things that gave him a great reputation. He went further by counting **everything** as "damaged goods." The word "loss" in this verse is exactly the same as the word for "loss" in the previous verse.

Paul spoke of "knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." There are two basic words for "knowing" in the Greek language.

1. "Ginosko" (γινώσκω) – deals with the beginning and process of knowledge.
2. "Oida" – (οἶδα) – deals with the completeness of knowledge.

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Appropriately, Paul spoke of the "ginosko" kind of knowledge. This is appropriate because our limited human ability to know never can fully know Jesus Christ. It is our great privilege, however, to constantly increase in our awareness of the greatness of our Savior.

Again, the apostle talked about "surpassing value" or "excellency" of knowing Christ. The word translated "surpassing value" is "huperecho" (ὑπερέχω). This is a compound word that is composed as follows:

- a. "Huper" means "over."
- b. "Echo" means "to have."

This is a reference to something that is superior to something else. It is the greater among equals. A king is the greatest power in his country. The king of all kings is a surpassing power to any other king. That is "surpassing value."

Paul explained what he meant by this bold statement. It is not that he hated his reputation. He appreciated and cultivated that reputation. It is that Paul found something that was far more important and worthwhile than his reputation. When compared with the value of knowing Christ Jesus as Lord of his life, Paul decided that his reputation and all that it provided were like damaged goods.

Paul continued by describing what this meant in his daily life. Just to be clear about what he meant, Paul stated that he had lost everything that he owned in order to make Jesus Christ Lord of his life. This, of course, was absolutely true. As a member of the Sanhedrin, Paul was a very wealthy man. Because of his new faith in Christ, he lost it all. Paul was held in high esteem among the leaders of the Pharisees and the Jewish community. When Paul claimed Jesus Christ as his Messiah, he lost all the reputation and the wealth of money and things that such a reputation could provide.

Paul was not satisfied. He wanted to state his position even more clearly than he had already. He intensified his statement, by adding, "and count them but rubbish." The word "rubbish" is "skubalon" (σκύβαλον). It is used in two different ways:

- a. It was used to describe excrement whether human or animal.
- b. It was also used to describe the garbage left over following a feast.

Paul, always adept at a turn on words, used a statement that reversed a scathing attack that Pharisees used against believers. It was common for strict Jews to refer to Gentiles and Christians as "dogs." At the same time, they loved to speak of themselves in lavish terms as being guests at the banquet table of God. Paul turned the image around and used it against them. He spoke of the things these strict Jews cherished most as "garbage" and then spoke of "gaining Christ" as the greatest gift he could possibly receive.

Paul spoke of "gaining Christ." The word "gain" is "kerdaino" (κερδαίνω) and means "to gain," "to make a profit," or "to win someone over." Observe that each of these understandings contain the idea of intense pursuit. Paul did not suggest that one could "gain Christ" by intense effort. He rather attempted to describe how important that gift was to him.

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, Philippians 3:9

Paul invested the phrase "in Christ" or "in Him" with very strong, specific meaning. It is a way of describing a personal relationship with Christ. Paul's focus, in this statement, has to do with being found or identified as being "in Christ" by others rather than claiming this

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for himself. Indeed, it is probable that his reference is to God finding him in this relationship.

Paul continued by talking about his righteousness. The word translated "righteousness" is "dikaiousune" (δικαιοσύνη) and has been variously translated. Jesus used the term to convey the idea of being right or just. An action is righteous if in all ways it conforms to the revealed will of God. Paul often used this word to suggest the same idea, but tied it with right action rather than just being right.

Observe the way Paul made this statement, "not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through Christ Jesus..." Paul assumes that there will be righteousness in him. His concern is to describe and identify the kind of righteousness this will be.

Paul drew a strong contrast concerning his righteousness. The following table attempts to differentiate between the two kinds of righteousness.

Righteousness of his own	Righteousness in Christ Jesus
Source – Self Derived from keeping the law	Source – God Comes through faith in Christ
Means - Involves great personal effort This attempts to be earned.	Means - Involves no personal effort This is a gift.

that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; Philippians 3:10

As you read these verses, you become aware of an increased tempo in the author's thinking and emotions. This is certainly true in this verse. In this verse there is a list of four intense desires of the apostle.

1. **"That I may know him"** – There are two basic words that mean "to know" in the Greek language.
 - a. "Ginosko" (γινώσκω) - this word describes "the process of acquiring knowledge." It is the progression of discovering one fact upon another. This is an unending process which, in this life, we will never complete prior to the funeral.
 - b. "Oida" (οἶδα) This word describes "the fullness, the completeness of knowledge." The word that Paul used is "ginosko." Paul was saying there is so much to know and discover about our Lord that he would never completely grasp His greatness. We should also note the form in which Paul wrote this statement. This is in the aorist tense. This tense focuses not on the time of the action, but on the action itself. Paul was so intent upon knowing Christ that the time – past, present or future – was totally inconsequential. The way Paul wrote this emphasizes how singularly important it was to him to know Jesus. It is almost as if he had written this in the present indicative active form – that I may know and keep on knowing.
2. **"(That I may know) the power of His resurrection"** – The words "that I may know" are in parenthesis because the words do not appear in the text, but in such a list always are implied. People discover or know power by experiencing its greatness. When you see an elephant place its foot on a tree and mash it to the ground, you have experienced power and you "know" power, at least to that extent. Again, if you see a giant bulldozer push effortlessly through tons of dirt and stone, you have experienced power. You "know" it at a deeper level than you did before that experience.

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Paul was intensely eager to know the power of Christ's resurrection. We must deal with the identity of the "power of His resurrection." There are a number of things that are accomplished by the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus is the culmination of His sacrifice on our behalf. In that sacrifice, Jesus dealt with our sin. Like our first parents, our sin brought us death. In His resurrection, Jesus completed His sacrifice by abolishing our sin and destroying forever the death that has caused every generation of people to live in fear. We can see the result of resurrection. At the tomb, Mary saw Jesus alive when only recently she had seen His lifeless body. We cannot see the forgiveness of sin. The resurrection is the visible expression of Christ's completed sacrifice that evidences the forgiveness of sin. The resurrection of Jesus is the evidence, the symbol of our hope. There is no hope for strength in the present and heaven in the future if there is no resurrection.

3. **"(That I may know) the fellowship of His sufferings"** – Christians tend to have an unusual view of the word "fellowship" "koinonia" (κοινωνία). We translate it "fellowship," but we too often understand fellowship as "coffee-time." In fact, "koinonia" is an intensely active and sacrificial experience. It insists that we share each others pain; that we share sacrificially with others in the body of Christ. Paul cried out that he was determined to increasingly discover and share the sufferings of Christ, even if that meant the cross for him. Ultimately, of course, Paul did share that suffering, though not on a cross. The word "sufferings" is "pathema" (πάθημα) which identifies "an affliction," "an intense ill treatment."
4. **"Being conformed to His death"** – The word for "conformed" is "summorphizo" (συμμορφίζω), is a compound word which is formed as follows:
 - a. "Sum" means "with."
 - b. "Morphe" means "form."

It is to share the same form. The word was used in the pottery trade to describe something that was formed in a mold. The end product had the same form or shape as the mold itself. Paul was talking about a total identification with Christ. It is to be available to share the sufferings that ultimately took the life of Christ.

The form of this word expresses the strength of Paul's idea. It is a present passive participle. This form conveys three ideas:

- a. Present tense – action that is ongoing. It is a lifestyle rather than a single action.
- b. Passive voice – this identifies action on behalf of these Christians as opposed to action they take themselves. This is not something that they do, but rather something they allow to happen to them.
- c. Participle – This is a second expression of action that is currently in process. It was a familiar tool that Paul used to double the emphasis on the fact that this is a process rather than a completed act.

This word speaks of growing in conformity to the sacrifice of Christ. This comes to pass as the carnal self increasingly dies.

In order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Philippians 3:11

The words "in order that" indicate that a purpose is being given. That purpose is that Paul may attain to "the resurrection of the dead." The word "attain" is "katantao" (καταντάω) and means, "to arrive at," "to reach," "to come alongside." The resurrection of the dead was the goal Paul was straining to reach.

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It is interesting that the Greek text is a bit more deliberate. One might translate it, "If somehow or by some means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead." This translation suggests the apostle's total abandonment of himself to totally identify with Christ in order that he might participate in the resurrection of the dead. One must then ask, was Paul saying that those who do not so enthusiastically invest themselves in knowing Christ would not attain this resurrection? That is a difficult question. It does say, however, that attaining to the resurrection of the dead will involve the four ingredients mentioned in the previous verse.

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. Philippians 3:12

As indicated earlier, Paul took special care, in his writing, to deal with his detractors. This is a case in point. He knew that they would be quick to point out that he was far more human and fallible than verse twelve could be considered as suggesting. Paul was not saying that he was perfect, but they would say that he was claiming to be if at all possible.

Some of the words in this sentence need more careful investigation:

The word "**obtained**" is "lambano" (λαμβάνω) which means "to take," "to receive." Paul, as he often did, took an illustration from athletics. After a race, the winner would receive a prize, often a crown of olive leaves. Paul has drawn a parallel. It is as though he said, the winner of a race receives a prize. I am a contestant, but I have not received the prize and I know that I have not won as yet.

"**Become perfect**" –

the word is "teleioo" (τελειόω). This word is often translated "perfect." The emphasis is more on finished or complete rather than on flawless. It is as though Paul said, I have not finished growing in my faith as God intends for me to do." Paul was not saying that he was approaching flawless perfection. Many times the form in which a word is placed is as insightful as the word that is used. That is true in this case. The form that Paul used is called "passive voice." This describes something that is done to a person, rather than something that they do for themselves. That is exactly what Paul wanted to convey. He was growing by leaps and bounds in his spiritual life, but he wanted it to be perfectly clear that this was something that God did, and could take credit for, not something that Paul did and could brag about.

The word for "**press on**" is "dioko" (διώκω) which means, "to pursue." The idea of pursuing needs clarification. One can pursue in order to destroy. This is what the lion does to the zebra. There is also the idea of pursuing in which there is no hostile intent. It is this to which Paul refers. He was desperately intent to pursue that lifestyle of purity and service for which God laid hold upon him. Again the form is as informative as the word itself. The word for "press on" is in the present indicative active form. Simply put, this describes action that begins and never stops. One might translate this, "I press on and never stop pressing on." It describes a lifestyle rather than a single action.

"**Lay hold**" – The word is "katalambano" (καταλαμβάνω). This is a heightened or strengthened form of the word that is translated "obtained." It is a compound word:

- a. "Kata" means "down".
- b. "Lambano" means "to receive," or "to obtain."

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This compound word was used to describe the attainment of a difficult goal. Paul said that he continually pressed on in order that he might attain or achieve the goal that to this point he had not succeeded in attaining. The form of this word is aorist active subjunctive. Simply put, this means that the emphasis is on the action, not the time in which it took place. The active voice means that the subject, which in this case is Paul, is the one doing the acting. The subjunctive mood is used to express an intense desire that has not been realized. In this case, Paul said that he would press on and never stop in order to lay hold or receive that for which he was totally investing himself and his life.

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, Philippians 3:13

Paul repeated his use of the word "brethren." This accomplished two things: It reminded them that this is how he thought of them. Second, it identified the fact that he felt some responsibility for them. The reverse of this is that they should feel some responsibility for him as well.

Again, he was quick to admit that he had not arrived. He added emphasis to this by using the same word "laid hold" that he had used in the previous verse. Though the word "yet" appears in our text, it does not appear in the Greek text. The addition of the word "yet" in our text certainly conveys the idea that Paul was presenting to the Philippians.

In the true style of a teacher, Paul first told them what he had not done in order to then tell them what he is doing. This is one of the most effective tools for definition.

Paul spoke firmly about "forgetting." The word is "epilanthanomai" (ἐπιλανθάνομαι) and is a compound word:

- a. "Epi" means "upon."
- b. "Lanthanomai" means "to forget."

The basic word is "lanthano." The word is intensified by adding the word "epi." It literally means, "to escape." This is what happens when something escapes our memory or notice. It is in the present tense. This gives the idea of something that is in the process of happening every day. The word he used gives his idea great force to say that he is really pushing these things out of his mind. His ancestry is superb, but he has neither the time nor the interest to focus his attention upon it. The past, his heritage, must be pushed out of his attention in order to focus on things that are much more important. It is difficult for us to grasp the full impact of this statement. We are fond of our heritage, but it does not have basic, essential meaning for us. Paul came from a culture where one's heritage was everything. He set it aside as incidental to his first priority, God.

Paul was using a well-worn tool of teaching – express the negative and then stress the positive. "Forgetting what lies behind, and reaching forward to what lies ahead," is Paul's formula for spiritual growth. The word for "reaching forward" is "epekteino" (ἐπεκτείνω). It is a compound word, composed as follows:

- a. "Epi" means "forth."
- b. "Ekteino" means "to stretch out."

This is a very intensive form of this word "to stretch." As happened so often, Paul borrowed an idea from the athletic games to stress his point. At the end of a race, the runners would stretch out as far as they could without falling down in order to place part of their body across the finish line before the next runner. Paul invests the same extreme effort in

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his attempt to participate in that which is yet ahead in his wrenching efforts to become the kind of person God wanted him to be.

*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 3:14*

There are 12 different Greek words that are translated as "press" in the English texts. Paul chose the word "dioko" (διώκω) which is usually translated "pursue." We have encountered this word before. It means to follow someone or something without any hostile intent. Paul added pressure to this word by stating it in the present indicative active form. It could well be translated, "I pursue strongly and never stop strongly pursuing the goal." This is not an act, but a lifestyle, something that he always does.

He stretches toward the goal in order to receive the "prize." The prize was the reward that the judges awarded to the one who crossed the finish line first and whom they judged as having violated none of the rules of the race.

We should be very clear, the "prize" and "the upward call of God" are not one and the same. That prize will be bestowed in relation to his participation in the upward call of God. It is as though "the upward call of God" is the race for which the prize was given.

This "upward call of God" is "In Christ Jesus." This is a unique Christian concern. If one is not "in Christ Jesus" then that person is not even participating in the race, no matter how wonderful their way of life may be.

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; Philippians 3:15

The word "therefore" "oun" (οὖν) indicates a conclusion is approaching. It is quite common that this word is followed by an exhortation. That is the case in this sentence.

Paul qualified his exhortation. It is aimed at those who are "perfect." The use of this word has caused a great deal of consternation in the church. It does not mean those who have removed the eraser from their pencil because they no longer make any mistakes. A better translation for the word is "complete," "that which has reached its goal," "those who are mature," "full grown." The exhortation for these people is, "have this attitude." "Have this attitude," is literally, "think this." It is in the subjunctive mood. By using this form, Paul intensified the urgency of his exhortation. It let them know that he really wanted this to happen. He told them to disregard their background and press on toward the prize in the race of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul followed this with a conditional, "if...then," statement. There are always two parts to such a statement.

"IF – in anything you have a different attitude" – The Greek text is slightly different. One might translate it, "If in anything you think other or different..." Out of the 15 different words translated "think" in the New testament, Paul chose the word "Phroneo" (φρονέω). It means "to focus the mind in a certain way." The emphasis is not so much that this way of thinking is right and that one is wrong. It focuses on a difference in direction.

"(Then) God will reveal that also to you."

Paul could have been thinking in at least two different directions here.

- a. He could have been thinking that God would change their minds.
- b. He could have been thinking that God would guide them in their thinking.

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It appears to me, that the former is what the apostle was thinking. We must keep in mind, however, that this is a much milder approach than Paul had used when teachers differed with his teaching in other places in the epistles. In those instances, Paul anathematized them. This does not suggest that Paul viewed this situation as unimportant. It does suggest that Paul was not nearly as worried here as he was in the other situations.

In this statement, Paul was affirming that God guides the thinking of His people. He also affirmed that God is totally committed to the purity of understanding concerning Himself.

However, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained. Philippians 3:16

The word "however," in the Greek text is "plen" (πλήν) is often translated "moreover," "yet," or "besides." The idea, here, is the indication of an aside. It is as though Paul had said, "whatever you may think about this subject, this is how we ought to conduct ourselves."

We need to take a moment to indicate that the document, "Textus Receptus" on which the King James version was based, has some words which do not appear in the Nestles text or in the translation we use in this study. One must admit that there is one excellent ancient document that has the wording of Textus Receptus, but the other major documents contain the wording as reported in Nestle. It appears that better scholarship sides with Nestle. This would omit the words, "by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

Paul wants these Philippian Christians to think properly, but he is much more concerned that their actions follow their former teaching that he had provided.

Philippians 3:17-4:1 - Citizens of Heaven: Subject to Christ

Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. Philippians 3:17

Again, Paul referred to these Christians as "brethren." This expresses more than an identification of a Christian. It also indicates the relationship between these Christians. If a person is a "brother," then you are responsible for that person. If they have a need, you must meet that need. If they get into financial problems, then you must be there to assist in their relief. You are their defense in time of danger.

There is another side of the "brother" relationship. People in the same family have a host of similar characteristics. They will tend to look alike. They will have some of the same emotional responses. The boisterous and brutal will tend to come from families where this is a normal condition. Conversely, the quiet and patient tend to come from families where this is normal behavior. People who are part of the Christian family will tend to have similar characteristics that follow the example of Jesus. When Paul called them "brethren" he was saying that they were part of the family of God and their behavior was just that similar.

For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, Philippians 3:18

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This was not new information for the Philippian believers. Paul had tried to warn them repeatedly concerning these pretenders to the faith. Their beliefs were false in the past and have not changed. Because of this, they were a threat to the whole church of Jesus Christ.

Paul revealed just how emotionally involved he was in the progress of this church. He had warned them of these heretics previously. Now he warned them again, but as he warned, he wept. The word "weeping" is *klaiō* (κλαίω) which is a "loud expression of grief." It is the way they described the mourning for the dead. It is their most emotional and volatile emotional outburst. This was not just an academic procedure. Paul was personally and emotionally involved in the survival of these believers. He desperately wanted them to be aware of the danger and to survive such an attack on their faith and belief.

There is a serious contrast in this verse. Paul speaks of these enemies of God in two ways.

- a. **They are people who "walk."** – The term "walk" is "peripateo" (περιπατέω) and describes physical walking. It also was used in a figurative way to describe the whole range of activities that make up a life, in this instance, a Christian life. They give some evidence of belonging to the body of Christ. They identify with the church. They do things that Christians do.
- b. **They are "enemies of the cross of Christ"** – They are against the things for which the cross stands. They want to inhibit the things the cross accomplished. They want to devastate the hope the cross has brought to us.

Whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. Philippians 3:19

In this verse, Paul described the people who pretend to be a part of the body of Christ, but are really enemies. He described them in four scenarios:

- a. **"Whose end is destruction"** – The word "end" is "telos" (τέλος) which identifies a point at which present activities come to an end. In the broad sense, it describes their death. It also, however, identifies a time when their present deceptive activities are concluded or brought to the light.

The word "destruction" is "apoleia" (ἀπώλεια). Rather than devastation, this word emphasizes the "loss of well being," "their ruin." It identifies their "perdition."

This statement suggests that these people, though they currently seem to win and demoralize the church, will eventually come to ruin. That is their destiny.

The form of this part of the sentence suggests an ongoing condition, rather than a concluded event. The verb is understood. The "end" is synonymous with "destruction."

- b. **"Whose god is their appetite"** – The word "god" is "theos" (θεός). This word is exactly the same as our word to identify "Jehovah." It identifies the one they obey; the one to whom they give total allegiance.

The word "appetite" is "koilia" (κοιλία). This word really identifies the complete human cavity. It is sometimes translated the "womb." This is a symbolic statement. The intestinal area was considered the seat of human emotions and desires, as opposed to the mind, the seat of intellectual activity. It was Paul's way of saying these people were totally committed to doing whatever their desires dictated. They were the slaves of their own base desires.

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- c. **"Whose glory is in their shame"** – The word for "glory" is "doxa" (δόξα) which identifies "an opinion." It was their way of describing something held in high esteem. Therefore, they used it to describe something that was honored because it was held in high esteem or a good opinion.

The word "shame" is "aischune" (αἰσχύνη) which speaks of "shame" or "disgrace." This was Paul's way of saying that these people were seriously confused. They gave the place of highest honor to that which was in reality their source of shame and disgrace.

- d. **"Who set their minds on earthly things"** - These are people who focus their entire attention on earthly things. By "earthly things," Paul spoke of a narrow focus that did not take into consideration the hereafter. The word for "set their minds" is literally "thinking." It is a present active participle. This describes two forms of activity that begin and never cease. The emphasis is upon an ongoing activity rather than on the timing. These people are so preoccupied with what they seek for now that they never consider what lies beyond this life.

Paul attempted to indicate that such people were enemies of the cross even if they attempt to present themselves as followers of Christ.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Philippians 3:20

Paul used the word "for" to indicate that an explanation is forthcoming. The explanation draws a contrast between what these "enemies of the cross" considered their priority and what these true believers considered the priority of their lives. Paul said, "Our citizenship, our focus of attention, is in heaven, not the things we have here and now."

Having mentioned heaven, Paul went on to mention that it is from heaven that we eagerly await the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The words "eagerly wait" come from the Greek word "apekechomai" (ἀπεκδέχομαι) which means "to wait with such eagerness that it is almost beyond control." The use of this word highlights the difference between "patiently waiting" and "eagerly waiting." They are exact opposites. The intense waiting has to do with the fact that Jesus Christ is coming. Ultimately, Paul pointed struggling people to observe the fact that Jesus Christ is coming. The Second Coming is the foundation of their hope and encouragement when times are troubled and our defenses are weak.

There is a subtle implication in this joyous statement. The fact that we eagerly wait for a Savior from heaven implies that we have no hope of heaven without this Savior, Jesus Christ. Paul spoke very clearly concerning this subject. Jesus Christ is our only hope of heaven. He is our only hope of salvation, no matter how we have lived or what rights we have received. Only Jesus can be our Savior. Only Jesus can bring us to heaven at last.

Paul dealt with one of the basic contrasts between the believer and the non-believer. The focus of the non-believer is on the here and now. The focus of the believer is on our promised hereafter in the presence of Christ.

Who 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. Philippians 3:21

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Paul uses a very complicated, involved sentence structure. His clauses are like sentences within sentences. The word "who" in this sentence refers to "Christ." Paul pointed out that Christ "will transform the body of our humble state..." The word "transform" is "metaschematizo" (μετασχηματίζω) and means "to change in fashion," "to alter the appearance." It is to become something, someone you were not previously. This is what Jesus will do to the body of our humiliation.

There are two sets of contrasts in this verse. Look at them carefully:

1. The actions of Jesus

Paul contrasted the "transforming of our humble state" with the "conforming with the body of His glory."

- a. "**Transform**," as indicated earlier, means to change or alter the appearance.
- b. The word "**Conform**," on the other hand, is "summorphizo" (συμμορφίζω) and means "to shape," "to form after a pattern." You will remember that we encountered this word in 3:10, where Paul spoke of "being conformed to His death." Paul here referred to the tremendous change that Jesus will accomplish in our lives. He will change our weak, human frame into a heavenly body that reflects His glory.

2. Our situation – present and future.

- a. "**Our humble state**" – This is a graphic picture. Paul attempted to describe our present weak, flawed humanity. He spoke of this as a "body." The word "body" is "soma" (σώμα) and stands for our physical frame. It was sometimes used to identify the person. He spoke of it as "humble." The word is "tapeinos" (ταπεινός). This word is variously translated, "humiliation," "low lying," "vile." The emphasis would be on two of these words – "humiliation" and "vile." The idea of humiliation expresses the tragedy of what happened to our humanity at the fall. We became far less than the grand pinnacle of creation God intended us to be. Our present condition is an embarrassment when one considers what God created us to be. We are stripped of the grandeur that God intended for the rulers of His creation.
- b. "**The body of His glory**" – The word "conformity" is "summorphos" (σύμμορφος) which is a compound word which means "formed with." It is to have the same form as something/someone else. This is the same root word we encountered in 3:10 where the text reads, "being conformed to His (Jesus) death." In this instance, Paul used the word "conformity" to describe the molding and shaping of our lives to be in form as Jesus was, to be like Him.

Paul used the same word, "body" as in the previous phrase. He contrasted our body with the body of Jesus. He alluded to "the body of His glory." The word "glory" is "doxa" (δόξα) which means "an opinion." We have an opinion of Christ that is so high that we are caused to give Him praise and adulation. "Glory" is the adoration that results from our exceedingly high opinion of who Jesus is.

Paul then turned his attention to the way in which Jesus would accomplish this transformation. His use of the word "by" or "according to" suggests that the author will now describe the means by which action takes place. It is "by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." The word "exertion" is "energeo" (ἐνεργέω) which means "to work in," "to be active."

The word "power" is "dunamis" (δύναμις). This is "might," "the ability to cause something to happen." Paul went on to describe this power as Christ's ability to "subject all things to Himself." The word "subject" is "hupotasso" (ὑποτάσσω). It is a military

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term that literally means "to arrange or rank under authority." The power of Jesus is so great that He can command everything, He can arrange everything in the universe under His command. There is nothing, no power which is exempt from obedience to His command. Jesus can do this with every form of power concerning everything.

Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved. Philippians 4:1

One might wonder why we have included a discussion of 4:1 in the study of chapter three. The original manuscripts did not have the chapter divisions that we find in our bibles. The word translated "therefore" is "hoste" (ὅστε). The word usually translated "therefore" is "oun" (οὖν). There is a substantial difference between the two words.

- a. "Hoste" is a milder form that expresses some conclusion. The focus of this word is to demonstrate that the coming material is consecutive to that which preceded it.
- b. "Oun," on the other hand, represents a much stronger form and indicates a real conclusion.

In 4:1, the use of "hoste" indicates that Paul's instruction "stand firm in the Lord" grows out of the preceding material in the chapter. One stands firm as he/she observed the following:

- a. Beware of the dogs.
- b. Beware of evil doers.
- c. Beware of false circumcision
- d. Worship in the Spirit of God
- e. Glory in Christ Jesus
- f. Put no confidence in the flesh
- g. Count everything rubbish to gain Christ
- h. Realize my righteousness is in Christ.
- i. Increasingly come to know Christ
- j. Grow in knowing the power of Christ's resurrection.
- k. Grow in knowing the fellowship of His suffering.
- l. Be conformed to His death
- m. Press on to grasp what God set apart for my life.
- n. Press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
- o. Maintain the standard – way of life – to which we have attained.
- p. Follow Paul's example.
- q. Walk as servants of Christ.
- r. Do not allow appetites to be your god.
- s. Do not set your mind on earthly things.
- t. Keep your focus in heaven.
- u. Be transformed into conformity with the body of His glory.

This is Paul's prescription for standing in the Lord.

The word translated "stand" is "steko" (στήκω). In this instance, it was used figuratively to indicate the strong determination to place oneself under the authority and control of the Lord. It is a military picture of standing true to Christ by taking a firm stand against all forms of evil.

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Observe that Paul said, "stand firm in the Lord." This does not describe a physical location, but rather a relationship with Christ. In order to persevere in our relationship with Christ, we must give careful attention to the long list of commands Paul gave them.

Paul is approaching the end of his letter to this young church. To say the least, they were very special in his thinking. Look at the way he referred to them in this verse:

- a. Brothers
- b. Beloved
- c. Longed for
- d. Beloved.

We need to look carefully at each term.

1. **"Brothers"** – On eight occasions in these four chapters, Paul referred to these Christian people as "brothers." It implies family care and responsibility rather than blood ties.
2. **"Beloved"** – Twice in this verse and three times in the epistle, Paul referred to the Philippian believers as "beloved." The Greek word is "agape" (ἀγαπᾷ) and describes a relationship between believers that is active, not reactive; it is unconditional rather than facing the loved one with extra conditions for our affections.
3. **"Longed for"** – The word translated "longed for" is "epiptheo" (ἐπιποθέω). This is a compound word used for strong emphasis. It is made up in the following manner:
 - a. "Epi" is usually defined with the word "over" or "upon."
 - b. "potheo" means "to dote upon," "to intently crave possession of." It is the picture of the little boy with his face mashed against the candy store window.

Conclusion

Whatever else one may say about the apostle Paul, he learned to make God the first priority of his life. He was thankful for his heritage, but determined that it must take second place to Christ. He was aware of the fine way he had chosen to do good things. He was adamant, however, that nothing would be as important; nothing would have the priority that Christ had in his life.

People who have grown up in the church have often avoided the blatant pitfalls that destroy the lives of some in the pagan culture. Large numbers of people who have been lifelong attenders and members in the church are involved in doing a host of good things. None of these things save us. None of these things necessarily please God and extend His kingdom.

Like Paul, if Christ is Lord of our lives, the Holy Spirit will quietly work in our lives. He will gently move us closer and closer to that point where we can choose to make God the uncontested first priority of life. Are you aware of the Spirit's gentle persuasion? If so, how will you respond?

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 4
PAUL URGED HARMONY BETWEEN TWO WOMEN
PHILIPPIANS 4:2 – 23

1. There are five paragraphs in chapter four of Philippians. On the following table, write a summary of eight words or less for each paragraph.

4:2-7	
4:8, 9	
4:10-14	
4:15-20	
4:21-23	

2. In Philippians 4:2-9, Paul dealt with a rift between Euodia and Syntyche.
- a. Study Philippians 4:2.
 1. What is implied by this statement?
 2. Why would Paul have to say this?
 3. There is conflicting opinion about whether these women were church leaders or just members of the congregation. What answer is suggested by this verse?
 - b. In Philippians 4:3, Paul gave a command concerning these women.
 1. What is the command?
 2. What does it say concerning the problem?
 - c. In Philippians, Paul repeatedly dealt with the difficult persecution with which the church was confronted.
 1. In 4:5, what does Paul really command them?
 2. What does he mean by this?
 - d. In 4:6, Paul gave three commands.
 1. What are the commands?
 2. What are the implications of these commands?
 - e. In Philippians 4:7, Paul gave the promised results of obeying his commands.
 1. What did he promise?
 2. What are the implications of this promise?
 - f. In 4:8, Paul instructed them to study carefully eight qualities that they needed to emulate.
 1. Write each instruction on the following table.

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- a. Define what Paul meant by each quality he mentioned.
- b. Study the way each quality is presented. What did you observe?
2. What would happen if the people of a given fellowship took these instructions seriously?
- g. In 4:9, Paul instructed them to practice four tools of discipleship.
 1. What are they?
 2. What promise does he give concerning them?
3. In 4:10-14, Paul deals with his own financial and spiritual situation.
 - a. In 4:10, he described the actions and attitudes of the Philippian church.
 1. What did he say?
 2. How did he say it?
 3. What did he mean?
 - b. In 4:11, a very cautiously worded statement, Paul described his own experience.
 1. What did he say?
 2. What does this tell us about him?
 - c. In 4:12, Paul expands upon the previous statement.
 1. What did he say?
 2. What does this add to his statement in 4:11.
 - d. In 4:13, Paul made one of his most memorable and most often quoted statements.
 1. What did he say?
 2. What did he mean?
 - e. In 4:14, Paul states, again, his attitude toward their gift.
 1. What was his attitude?
 2. What did he mean by "affliction?"
4. In 4:15-20, Paul gives thanks for the gift he received.
 - a. In 4:15, 16, there is a note of praise Paul offered the Philippian church.
 1. What did he say?
 2. Why was this praiseworthy?

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- b. In 4:17, Paul made a very careful statement. What was he trying to say?
 - c. In 4:18, Paul described his own situation in three different ways:
 - 1. What did he say?
 - 2. Why wasn't any one of these sufficient?
 - d. Again, in 4:18, Paul described their gift in three different ways:
 - 1. What did he say?
 - 2. Why wasn't any one of these sufficient?
 - e. In 4:19, Paul gave them a promise. Why was this necessary?
 - f. In 4:20, Paul erupts in one of his well-known benedictions.
 - 1. How did Paul present this statement?
 - 2. What does this statement have to do with 4:15-19?
5. In Philippians 4:21-23, Paul presented the greetings with which he concluded the epistle.
- a. How does Paul identify the Philippian believers in 4:21?
 - b. Who are "the brethren who are with me" that Paul mentioned in 4:21?
 - c. Think carefully about 4:22
 - 1. What did you learn?
 - 2. Why did he say, "**especially** those of Caesar's household"?
 - d. In 4:23, Paul concluded the epistle.
 - 1. Read 1:2 and 4:23 together. What did you discover?
 - 2. What does 4:23 add to Paul's message?
 - e. In 4:23, the Greek text ends with the word, "amen." This word is omitted in our English text. What would be changed by the addition of this word?
6. Review what you have studied in this chapter.
- a. What has it highlighted in your thinking?
 - b. What difference will it make in your life? In your church?

LESSON 4: – PHILIPPIANS 4:2 – 23

PAUL URGED HARMONY BETWEEN TWO WOMEN

Introduction

There are five paragraphs in the fourth chapter of the Philippian epistle. A brief summary of each paragraph appears on the following table.

4:2-7	Paul urged Euodia and Syntyche to live in harmony
4:8, 9	Paul urged them to practice his teaching
4:10-14	Paul was content in want or prosperity
4:15-20	Paul expressed gratitude for their gift
4:21-23	Greetings to all the saints

4:2-9 – Paul Urged Euodia and Syntyche To Live In Harmony

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. Philippians 4:2

The word translated "I urge" is "paracaleo" (παράκαλέω). This word was compounded for purposes of strong emphasis. It was formed as follows:

- a. "Para" means "beside."
- b. "Kaleo" means "to call."

This word was used to identify the Holy Spirit as our paraclete. It is the name by which attorneys are identified in Israel today. The word comes from the court room. When someone was taking advantage of a widow, a Scribe would stand beside the widow in the court and claim the position as her defender, the one who stood beside her.

The form of this word is present indicative active. Simply put, this indicates that you might translate this word, "I urge and never stop urging..." This is a way of indicating a very intense desire on the part of Paul.

In this verse, Paul urged two women – Euodia and Syntyche – to end their disagreement and "live in harmony." We know a few details about these women, but not much. The names of both women are significant.

- a. Euodia means "fragrant."
- b. Syntyche means "fortunate."

It is appropriate to assume that both women came from wealthy, prominent families. Though the text does not tell us, it is highly possible they helped support Paul's ministry financially.

There are differences of opinion about their level of service. Some say they were deaconesses. Others, however, say they were ministers in the same way that Timothy and Titus were. We do know that Paul used the same word to describe their service that he used in describing that of Timothy and Titus.

In this particular congregation, where some say Paul did not have to deal with a problem, he found it necessary to plead with these two coworkers to end their feud. Interestingly, throughout most of this epistle Paul's commands were directed to the whole congrega-

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tion. Here, however, Paul singled out two specific people, by name, to plead for their harmony.

Observe that Paul pleaded with both women with the same words. This usually suggests one of two things, or both:

- a. Paul may have felt that they bore equal responsibility for the discord their differences had caused.
- b. He may not have known or preferred not to know who irritated whom.

Whatever Paul's thinking may have been, his exhortations reveal that he is convinced that they both can and must be a part of the solution.

The textual words, "live in harmony in the Lord," are a bit different in the Greek text. One might translate the Greek text, "think the same in the Lord." The word translated "think" is "phroneo" (φρονέω) and means "to think or be minded in a certain way." This sounds difficult because thinking is not determined by a "flip of the coin" or by mutual decision. Two people seldom think alike on everything. The NASB translators paraphrase, here, is fair. Two people will not always think alike unless one simply decides not to think for him/herself.

The form of this word is a present infinitive. The present tense identifies an ongoing lifestyle rather than a single action. The infinitive is a verb form describing action without thinking about the person or tense involved. This is an interesting choice Paul made. He was not talking about their thinking on a particular, single subject, but thinking in general.

This seems increasingly impossible. I would agree, except for the modifier Paul adds to the instruction – "in the Lord."

This phrase focuses a whole new light on the idea at hand. Being "in the Lord" is more than just being saved from sin. It defines a whole new pattern of conduct and our purposes in choosing that pattern of conduct. Every human being is born with a need to survive. Inevitably, this will result in choices that are self-serving. However, because we are "in Christ," this relationship enables us to be appropriately commanded to love our enemies, which would otherwise be absurd. In this relationship, we can all place the desires of God and His kingdom ahead of all self-serving concerns. This will enable people who are at odds with each other to think the same thing. This, of course, would put an end to their feud. To the extent that Christ and His kingdom are our first priority in life, to that extent feuding parties can think the same thing.

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. Philippians 4:3

"Indeed, true comrade, I ask you also"

The Greek text is slightly different. One might translate it in these terms, "And I ask you, also, true yoke fellow." This sentence begins with the word "and." Invariably, this word is used to tie together two equally important and related ideas. That is true in this instance as well. Whether you translate the words, "true comrade" or "true yoke fellow," it is interesting that Paul, for the first time addresses a single individual. Paul does not identify this person. One would assume that he has addressed the elder in charge of the congregation, but that is not stated.

PAUL URGED HARMONY BETWEEN TWO WOMEN

Whoever this person may be, Paul gives us an insight into his character. Paul spoke of him as "true comrade," or "true yoke fellow." Let us look at these qualities:

- a. **"True"** is a translation for the word "gnesios" (γνήσιος) which literally means "something, someone lawfully begotten." Out of this came the understanding of "a person who is legal," "one who is genuine," "one who is sincere," "one who is what he/she appears to be."
- b. **"Comrade"** or "yoke fellow" is a translation of the compound word "sunzugos" (σύνζυγος). The word identifies people or things that are yoked together. Paul could have used the word "sugos" to indicate what he meant. The addition of the second word "sun," which means "with," intensified his idea that this person was one who worked together with him under the authority of Christ. It is like two soldiers obeying their commander.

This individual was one whom Paul viewed as genuine; someone with whom Paul shared a mutual allegiance to God.

"Help these women"

The Greek text reads, "Help them." The word translated "help" is "sullambano" (συλλαμβάνω). This is a compound word that is composed in this way:

- a. "Sun" means "with."
- b. "Lambano" means "to take," "to get hold of."

There are other words Paul might have chosen. This word tends to be more graphic. This suggests that Paul had it in mind to strongly impress the idea on this person's mind. The word means "to take with." It is like pulling a rope with another person. Paul asked this person to join with the two women in the work of ministry. This may be a clue. When a person is "bogged down," or "burning out" in ministry, because no one is helping, they tend to become irritable and short-tempered.

The form of this word is present imperative. The present tense indicates that this is not a single act, like carrying in the groceries. It is a lifestyle. It is like saying, "partner with these women and never stop partnering with them." The imperative mood indicates this is a command, not a suggestion. Paul found it necessary to issue this command because no one in the church was willing to help these women in ministry.

"Who have shared my struggle in the cause of the Gospel"

Paul was writing to a person who was a fellow-worker in the Gospel with him. Here, he described the ministry in precisely the same terms. Were these women ministers? The text does not say. Whatever their function, they shared in the ministry along with Paul. We must keep in mind that this was, in part, the way Paul ministered. He surrounded himself with a number of people who shared the ministry with him. At the conclusion of several of his epistles, Paul brings greetings from a long list of "fellow-workers."

"With Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers"

The work of these women was properly described when Paul said, "who shared my struggle in the cause of the Gospel." Paul wanted to make it even more precise. He drew a parallel between the ministry of these women and that of Clement and the rest of his fellow-workers. This would include, Luke, Mark, Barnabas and a host of others.

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"Whose names are in the book of life."

This is clearly a Jewish reference. The Jewish people, on the Day of Atonement, would confess their sins before God. In so doing, they understood that their names were written in the book of life for the year. Using this reference, Paul indicated that these are people whose lives and service are transformed in Christ Jesus.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Philippians 4:4

"Rejoice in the Lord always"

The word translated "rejoice" is "chairo" (χαίρω). This word means "be cheerful," "be happy in a calm way." It was sometimes used as a salutation or a wish when saying farewell. It was a lot like the Hebrew word "shalom."

The form of this word is present indicative active. It does not suggest that they be happy for the moment. Paul urged them to make joy their constant attitude and expression.

Observe how Paul modified this request. He said, "Rejoice in the Lord." In the struggles of everyday life, he urged them to make rejoicing a lifestyle. Paul did not say rejoice in your struggles and pain. He said, "rejoice in the Lord." One can rejoice in the Lord no matter what the quality of their circumstances may be. This is a way of saying our attitude and outlook is based upon the greatness of our relationship with Christ and not on the pain level of our circumstances.

"Again I will say, 'rejoice.'"

As Paul did so often, he used repetition to forcefully emphasize a given idea. The word for "rejoice" and the form of it are exactly the same in both instances. This is, again, an obvious use of repetition to drive home the point. He really wanted them to make rejoicing the atmosphere with which they faced the trials of life.

Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Philippians 4:5

"Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men"

The word translated "forbearing spirit" is "epieikes" (ἐπιεικής). It is a compound word formulated in this manner:

- a. "Epi" means "upon."
- b. "Eikos" means "reasonable."

It is a very strong form that was used to describe something mild and appropriate. It is to be gentle and patient. It describes the outlook that enables one to deal with everything in life with moderation. Someone has described it as "sweet reasonableness."

Paul spoke carefully when he said, "let it be known." As you know, there are two basic words which are translated "know." The word "oida" (οἶδα) means "total knowledge." "Ginosko," on the other hand, means "to increase in knowledge." It is "to come to know," "an increasing discovery." Ginosko is used in this passage.

The form of this word is as descriptive as the word itself. It is first aorist passive imperative.

- a. First aorist – it focuses on the action itself rather than specifying the timing.
- b. The passive voice indicates the subject is the recipient of the action.

c. The imperative mood identifies this as a direct command. One might translate this as "let all men increasingly discover your gentle moderation."

"The Lord is near."

This is a simple sentence and translated very carefully. There are, however, two ways to view the meaning of the word "near."

- a. It can refer to a location.
- b. It can also be used to identify a specific time.

It appears that the latter was Paul's intent. The same words can be found in James 5:8, 9. In this passage, James identified this with the second-coming. A similar statement appears in Hebrews 10:37 which is a quotation from Habakkuk 2:3. In that passage the prophet spoke of end times.

There seems to be little doubt that Paul referred to end times by this statement. The location of this sentence seems to add another dimension to what the apostle said. The statement just prior to this sentence and the sentences immediately following it deal with the need to take action within the Christian family. It appears that Paul also was saying that it was time to take these seriously because time was short.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6

Verse six is a sentence all by itself. Look carefully at the verse. Here, Paul uses one of his favorite teaching tools – he told them what NOT to do and then told them what to do.

"Be anxious for nothing."

Because of our casual word usage, we have developed two very different meanings for the word "anxious." In a faculty meeting I attended, a department head said, "I am anxious to get this new program started." Whereupon an English teacher interrupted saying, "The Scriptures teach we should be anxious about nothing." After an awkward silence, the department-head smilingly explained that he used the word "anxious" to mean "eager," or "excited." The English teacher had used the word in its strictest definition – "troubled," "uneasy," "concerned."

The Greek word translated "anxious" is "merimna" (μερίμνα) which is quite graphic. It means "to pull in different directions," "to be torn apart to the point of distraction."

The form of this word is present imperative. The present tense describes an ongoing lifestyle. The imperative identifies a strong command. One might translate this, "do not continually be torn apart or distracted." Obviously, Paul needed to issue this command because the church was traumatized by opposition to the point they were totally distracted from depending upon the power of God and from their commission to reach out to their enemies in the pagan community.

"But"

This word inevitably indicates a serious contrast. The particular word translated "but" "alla" (ἀλλὰ) identifies a very strong contrast.

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"In everything"

This is a strong, all-inclusive statement. It is Paul's way of stressing that there are no exceptions to the command he is about to give.

By prayer and petition"

We tend to use the words "prayer" and "petition" synonymously. They are not the same.

- a. **"Prayer"** – The word translated "prayer" is "proseuche" (προσεύχη). This word describes prayer to God, in general. It expresses some need.
- b. **"Petition"** – The word translated "petition" is "deesis" (δέησις). This is a form of prayer, but strictly focuses upon a felt need, or intense desire. It, also, has to do with the intensity of one's presentation to God. It is an intense form of supplication.

In the life of every believer, there are both prayers and petitions. The fact that one petitions God is more a sign of obedience than a matter of fear or stress. The scriptures command us, "let your petitions be made known to God."

The Philippian church obviously was going through a difficult, wrenching time of opposition. Paul was saying they should handle this by intense prayer rather than hand-wringing.

"With thanksgiving"

The word translated "thanksgiving" is "eucharistia" (εὐχαριστία). It is a compound word made up as follows:

- a. "Eu" means "well."
- b. "Charizomai" means "to give freely."

It is the basis of our word "eucharist." It is an elaborate expression of thanksgiving.

This is one of the places where Paul said, "in everything give thanks." I cannot imagine rejoicing when I smash my thumb in a car door or back my car into a fire hydrant and create competition for "Old Faithful." That is not what Paul said. He didn't say I should be pleased when tragedy strikes or when pain stabs its way into my life. Paul said thanksgiving must be the atmosphere in which we make known our requests to God. When trauma destroys everything around us, we can give thanks as we cry out to God for help. The first century Christians understood this well when they sang hymns of praise in the Roman arena as the flames leapt up upon the stake to which they were bound. It is to give thanks not for the pain, but for the fact that we can share Christ's suffering; give thanks that He is present with us as we seek His help in the presence of death and trauma. Paul said this because the Philippian church was going through that kind of trauma at this time.

"Let your requests be made known to God"

Interestingly, the word translated "let...be made known" is "ginosko" (γινώσκω). As indicated earlier, there are two basic words translated "know" in the New Testament – "oida" and "ginosko." The interesting thing here is that the word Paul used was "ginosko," which represents an ongoing discovery information. At first, this may sound strange. It really isn't. The form of this word is present imperative. This identifies an ongoing life-

style; something you do and never stop doing. In this statement,, Paul said we should make a lifestyle of sharing with God each need as it unfolds. We ought to ask ourselves, just how many people learn about our need or trauma before we talk to God about it?

And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:7

Verse seven is a sentence by itself.

"And the peace of God"

Though this is a new sentence, Paul begins with the word "and." In so doing, the author strongly ties this sentence to the previous idea. In this manner, Paul has established a "cause and effect" relationship between the two sentences. Verse six is the cause – sharing ongoing needs with God. Verse seven is the effect – peace.

Having experienced many different kinds of war and a number of situations we have called "peace," more and more people tend to think of "peace" as "the absence of fighting." It is more than that. The Old Testament word for "peace" is "shalom" (שָׁלוֹם) and literally means "happy," "well," "friendly," "prosperity." It means "good health," "to be whole." This includes the absence of military conduct. The New Testament word is "eirene," (εἰρήνη). This word appears in every book of the New Testament. It means the absence of military action, but it is more. It includes harmonious relations between peoples. "Eirene" and "shalom" each defines a different set of results which follow the absence of hostilities.

Paul modified the word "peace" with the words "of God". This indicates that there is more than one kind of peace. There is one that is of God and has divine characteristics. There is another peace that follows victory in battle. This peace has decidedly human characteristics. Paul described a "God kind of peace."

"Which surpasses all comprehension"

The word translated "surpasses" is "huperecho" (ὑπερέχω). This is a compound word:

- a. "Huper" means "over or above."
- b. "Echo" means "to have."

It is sometimes translated "excellency." It is used three times in this epistle – 2:3; 3:8 and 4:7. Paul is groping for a word to adequately describe how great the peace of God really is.

The word translated "comprehension" is "nous" (νοῦς) which describes the human ability "to perceive," "to understand," "to reflect upon life and its conditions." The human mind is a marvelous reflective instrument, but it fails to be able to fully perceive the greatness of the peace of God that is ours when we present the problems of life to God in prayer.

"Shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"

Paul is still describing the magnitude of the peace of God. In this statement, Paul pictures what this peace will do on our behalf. The word translated "guard" is "phroureo"

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(φρουρέω). It comes from the military and identifies the safety provided by a military guard detail in times of combat.

Notice that Paul said, "YOUR hearts and YOUR minds." This is another example of Paul's use of repetition to place a strong emphasis on the message he presents. One wonders why Paul felt the need to say, "your hearts and your minds" when he could have simply have said "you"?

The word translated "hearts" is "kardia" (καρδία) from which we get our word "cardiac." Their understanding of the human heart was a bit different than ours.

Aside from the valentine day image of the heart as the arena of love, we tend to view the heart in at least a couple of ways:

- a. The heart is the main organ of the body. If the heart stops; everything stops.
- b. We talk and think a bit more casually about the heart as the arena of honest thought and commitment. We do not mean that the heart thinks, but we think of the heart as enabling that kind of honesty.

Paul could affirm these images, but there was more for him. He saw the heart as the symbol of all moral and mental function. He, also, thought of the heart as the center of all rational pursuit. Paul spoke of both the heart and the intestines as the seat of all emotional activity.

The word translated "minds" is "noema" (νόημα). This word is used particularly to identify "the ability to think through an issue," "to understand all the facets, influences and consequences of a given course of action. Again, we tend to see the mind in at least two ways:

- a. The mind is the control center for the body and all its functions.
- b. We view the mind as the locus of the ability to think, decide and evaluate.

As you can see, their view of the mind, and ours, are not that much different. Why, then, did Paul say, "your heart and your mind" instead of "you"? First, it is more specific. This lends itself to a statement that is more emphatic. Paul was always looking for ways to do this. This form of the statement also lends greater clarity of his intentions in the statement.

"In Christ Jesus"

This brief phrase modifies everything Paul said in this sentence. As we have repeatedly stated, "in Christ Jesus" describes more a relationship than a location. It represents a personal, intimate relationship of love based upon our obedience to His commands, according to John 14:15. The peace, of which Paul spoke, is a uniquely Christian experience. It is reserved for those who are "in Christ Jesus."

It is interesting to note how Paul refers to our Lord. Sometimes he refers to "our Lord." On other occasions, he spoke of "Jesus Christ," or of "Christ Jesus." The difference between them, as we shall see, is one of emphasis. On still other occasions, he spoke of "Christ." On a few occasions, he spoke of "Jesus." In most instances, his choice was very intentional, never casual. Look at the meaning of these names:

- a. "Lord" means "master," "owner." It is what a slave or bond servant would call his owner.
- b. "Jesus" means "savior." "Jesus Christ" was not the first and last name of the Son of God. You may remember that the angel told Mary that his name would be called Jesus, "Because he would save His people from their sins."

- c. The name "Christ." literally means "Anointed One." It is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word "Meshiac" and identifies "the Coming One."

In this particular instance, "Christ Jesus" speaks of "the Anointed One," and "the Savior," but the greater emphasis, in Paul's mind, was upon the fact that Jesus is our Messiah.

Philippians 4:8, 9 – Paul Urged Them To Practice His Teachings

Having dealt carefully with a host of issues, Paul senses a need to summarize quickly. The problem is, however, that he has a number of very important issues that he has not yet covered. He, therefore, simply mentions a number of considerations that either time or space or both have not allowed him to consider in depth.

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. Philippians 4:8

"Finally, brethren"

The Greek text deals with this text in these words "to loipon adelphoi" (τὸ λοιπὸν ἀδελφοί). One might translate these words in this manner:

- a. "To" means "the".
- b. "Loipon" means "moreover," "something remaining."
- c. "Adelphoi" means "brethren."

Whether we use "finally brethren," or "moreover brethren," it is clear that Paul will summarize. He will deal with major issues in very general terms.

Paul called them "brethren." In the modern church, we use the term "brother" to identify a fellow Christian. In the early church, it stood for that and much more. It indicated this person was considered family with the attendant privileges and responsibilities. If a family member was in danger, "brothers" were expected to protect. If a family member was in financial difficulty, "brothers" were required to come to their aid. When Paul called them "brothers," he identified them as family and authorized them to expect him to accept that responsibility. It also gave him the right to expect the same from them.

Verse eight is a sentence all by itself. Though we seldom write it this way, it was not uncommon for Paul to place the subject and verb at the end of a sentence. He did that in this case.

As is often the case in our speech, the subject of a sentence is understood, though not written. Here, the understood subject is "you." The central part of this sentence is "(You) think carefully on these things."

The word translated "think" is "logizomai" (λογίζομαι) and means "to think." It is a very intensive word and means "to take into account," "to add up all the implications and consequences of a given course of action before making the decision to act." It is "to give thoughtful consideration to an issue of grave importance."

In the following list of subjects, you will see serious repetition in the form he used to introduce each subject. Observe that he introduces each issue with the words "whatever..." or "if any..." This is Paul's way of saying, "I can't go into detail, but here are several issues which are extremely important for you to consider."

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"Whatever is true"

The word translated "true" is "aletheia" (ἀλήθεια). This is a compound word and the components give us an idea of what Paul had in mind.

- a. "A" means "not."
- b. "Letho" means "to forget."

Together, these two words identify "something one does not want to escape our notice." It is "not concealed." It is "to deal faithfully with someone." "True" identifies the reality that undergirds a given sphere of thought.

The question arises, "Why would Paul have to focus the attention of Christians on the issue of truth?" If they were dealing with "truth" in their lives, it would not have been necessary for him to mention it. We know that in their pagan backgrounds, like any pagan people, these Philippian Christians dealt so loosely with the truth that they often lost sight of what was really true. Obviously, some of their pagan background was creeping back into their lives again. In more modern times, we have seen atheistic cultures who have lost track of how to discern whether something was true or not and had to be trained in that skill. That is what Paul was trying to impress upon the minds of these young Christians.

"Whatever is honorable"

"Semnos" (σεμνός) is the word translated "honorable" in our text. The word means "honorable," but it involves more. It grows out of the word "sebomai" (σέβομαι) which means "to revere," "to adore," "to worship." It is to focus our primary attention on things that are worthy as opposed to that which is less honorable, frivolous, and unworthy of godly attention.

The ungodly lifestyle of the pagan was the former lifestyle of these people. It is not too surprising that these qualities and expressions might surface again to be a temptation to them following their transformation in Christ Jesus.

"Whatever (is) right"

The word "is" is in brackets because it does not appear in the Greek text, though it does appear in our English text.

The word "right" is a translation of the word "dikaios" (δίκαιος). Originally, this word was used to describe people who carefully followed the customs or rules pertaining to their duties toward the gods and other people. It essentially means "to treat rightly." By New Testament times, it took on the idea of being righteous or doing right either by divine or human standards.

In the pagan culture, the basis for action depended upon what met personal needs regardless of what it might mean to others. For the pagan, this was a way of life. The thought of the needs of others was never a consideration. Paul was trying to remind them of the difference between Christian and pagan conduct.

"Whatever (is) pure"

The word translated "whatever" is "hosos" (ὅσος). It literally means "great" or "long." It is an outgrowth of the word "hos" (ὅς) which means "what." From this begin-

ning, it later was used to express, in a broad way, the idea of a large number of things. Thus it was translated "whatever." It identifies an indeterminate number of things.

The word translated "pure" is "hagnos" (ἁγνός). It means "to be free from defilement." It comes from the same root word as the word "holy." There are several pertinent ideas that need to be differentiated:

- a. "holy" "hagios" (ἅγιος) means "to be free from admixture of evil." This is a smelter's term.
- b. "Hosios" (ὁσίως) means "to be free from defilement."
- c. "katharos" (καθαρός) means "cleansed from defilement that was present."
- d. "Hagnos" (ἁγνός) means "to be immaculate," "never defiled."

Any one of these would seem to be a totally new concept to them. Defilement was a way of life in Philippi. It was considered normal. They would not think of being cleansed from that or of being immaculate in the first place.

Paul urged them to do something new – think carefully about living a life that is pure and immaculate. That would be almost impossible for them to imagine.

"Whatever is lovely"

The word translated "lovely" is "prospheles" (προσφιλής). This is an adding together of two Greek words:

- a. "Pros" means "toward."
- b. "Phileo" means "to love in a kindly way." The word implies limits. It is not as all inclusive as "agape" (ἀγάπη).

The combined word suggests "something pleasing," "something quite agreeable."

It is quite interesting that Paul urges people facing severe persecution, division and personal defeat to focus their attention on things that are most pleasant. The natural tendency to survive would cause a person to focus their full attention on personal survival and spiritual victory. If strong faith enables one to realize that victory is secure and death is not a final tragedy, then in the midst of devastating crisis, they can focus on the pleasant and agreeable.

"Whatever is of good repute"

The word translated "good repute" is "euphemos" (εὐφημος). This is a compound word:

- a. "Eu" means "well."
- b. "Pheme" means "to speak" "to show."

From this beginning, it came to be an expression of a good reputation.

Again, when you are literally struggling for your life, it is difficult to take time to be concerned about one's reputation. Paul commands them to be concerned. This is possible only if strong faith enables one to look beyond possible pain and death to potential victory over evil. That is exactly what Paul had in mind.

"If there is any excellence"

Up to this point, Paul used the repetition of the words "whatever is" to lend strong emphasis to what he commanded. At this point, Paul changed the repetition to a slightly different level.

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The repeated use of the words, "If there is any" implies that there is and increases the emphasis and the level of his instruction and meaning.

"And if anything worthy of praise"

In the Greek text, this simply reads, "if the praise" or "if any praise." The word translated "praise" is "epaineo" (ἐπαινέω). This is a very strong, intensive form of the word. It may also be translated "to commend." This points to a positive evaluation. It suggests a lifestyle that is in most every way exemplary.

"Let your mind dwell on these things"

The Greek text simply says, "consider these things." This is a very simple, but profound statement. The word translated "dwell" is "logizomai" (λογίζομαι). The word means, "to reckon," "to calculate." It can also mean "to reason." In this particular verse, Paul instructed these Philippians to ponder the moral character of the eight qualities just mentioned.

The form of this word is a present imperative. In simple terms, Paul instructed them to ponder these moral qualities and never stop investigating them. He wanted them to make a lifestyle out of pondering them.

Review these statements again:

- a. "Whatever is true"
- b. "Whatever is honorable"
- c. "Whatever is right"
- d. "Whatever is pure"
- e. "Whatever is lovely"
- f. "Whatever is of good repute"
- g. "If there is any excellence"
- h. "If there is anything worthy of praise"

As you study the list, you will notice that the form of the first six instructions is all the same. This, of course, presents the instruction in most forceful terms.

The form of the last two instructions, however, is similar to each other, but different from the other six. Remember, this is Philippi – a decadent society in which almost nothing would shock them. To gain an idea of Paul's intent, one might add to both statements, "and there is, though it seems shocking."

Now look at the qualities themselves. Imagine what a fellowship would be like if every person focused his/her primary attention on making each of these qualities a vital part of the example they present before a decadent world.

The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you. Philippians 4:9

Verse nine is a sentence all by itself. The Greek text reads a bit differently from our English translation. You might translate it in these terms, "And practice those things what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you." I would like to focus our study of this verse from the Greek word order.

"And"

The use of the word "and" indicates that though this is a new sentence, it is a continuation from the previous sentence. If you look at the content, you will notice that this is so.

"Practice these things"

The word translated "practice" is "prasso" (πράσσω). It means "to practice the habit of doing something." The emphasis is on the "habit." It might be described as what is deemed in professional baseball as "batting practice." These players know they can hit the ball. It is the fine-tuning of what they already know they can do.

The form of the word "prasso" is present active imperative. This form gives a clear understanding of Paul's intent.

- a. **Present tense** – This describes ongoing action. It suggests a lifestyle rather than a single action.
- b. **Active voice** – This identifies something the subject does rather than something done to him/her.
- c. **Imperative mood** – This is a command.

It is as if Paul said, "practice these things and never stop practicing them. Make a lifestyle out of practicing these things."

"The things you have learned"

The word translated "learned" is "manthano" (μανθάνω) and means "to increase in knowledge." It is related to the word "mathete" (μαθητής) which means "disciple." It is to learn by listening to the words and following the example of a credible teacher. There are several ways to learn, but the emphasis here is to learn by asking questions and by observing how things happen and what results occur. It is to let your discoveries make an essential difference in the way you live.

In this word, Paul continues the use of the second aorist active indicative form that he has been using in this verse. The emphasis is on the action and not on the timing of it.

"And the things (you have) received"

Here the use of the word "and" indicates that Paul intends to speak of a list of things. Each item on the list is equally important.

The word translated "received" is "paralambano" (παραλαμβάνω). This is a compound word that is composed as follows:

- a. "Para" means "from beside."
- b. "Lambano" means "to take" or "to receive."

The use of a compound word usually adds emphasis. In this particular instance, it also adds a note of clarification. It says the "receiving" Paul described is from outside ourselves, not something we analyzed for ourselves. Paul hardly could have said this in a more emphatic way.

Again, the form of this word is second aorist active indicative. Essentially, Paul used the form to stress the action and not the timing.

"The things you have heard"

The word translated "heard" is "akouo" (ἀκούω) and means "to hear." The emphasis of the word, however, is on their perception. There are several words that are all translated "to hear." In most instances, this indicates the author's effort to express himself more precisely. In this instance, the word points to the basic idea of hearing as opposed to several ways of hearing. It points to the encouragement to really listen to what they have heard Paul say.

Again, the form of the word is aorist active indicative. Paul focused on the action as opposed to the timing.

"The things you have seen"

The word translated "seen" is "eido" (εἶδω) and means "to fashion an opinion based upon what you saw; the things you have observed." It is a very intense form which describes viewing an object so intently that you stare at it. It focuses more on understanding something you have carefully observed rather than giving a visual picture of it.

"In me"

There is a definite orderliness in Paul's instructions. This is not one of those "if it feels good, do it." Paul specifically instructs them to watch what he does and listen to his teaching and then do as he has directed them. This is a frightening instruction. Paul had to be totally convinced that what he had been doing was exactly what God wanted them to do.

"And"

The use of this word always suggests that the material that follows is tied to the preceding material and they would be equally important.

"The God of peace"

This phrase is an interesting study in emphasis. A literal translation of the Greek text would be "THE God of THE peace." Truth is, Paul could have said, "God shall be with you" and his basic idea would have been totally conveyed. Anything else he included becomes a means of adding profound emphasis. Let us look at the emphasis he added.

- a. Instead of saying "God" he said "**THE** God." The emphasis here is in the area of specificity. This was Philippi – a deeply religious metropolis where many different gods were worshipped. Speaking of "**THE** God," Paul indicated that Jehovah alone was God among the many idols worshipped in the city.
- b. "**The** God of **THE** peace" – As indicated previously, this is a city with a multitude of gods. Paul's choice of words specifically identifies God with the concept of peace., This would catch the attention of Philippian people, especially Christians. The Romans had a god of war, but no god of peace.
- c. Additionally, the pagan people of Philippi had a quite different concept of peace than Paul espoused. Paul spoke of "the God of the peace." For Philippian people, "peace" meant "the absence of war," "the absence of struggle." For the Christian, it was totally different. One could experience a "Godly peace" in the midst

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of life threatening trauma. "Godly peace" was an inner relationship with God rather than a response to favorable outward conditions.

In being so specific, Paul has accomplished two things:

1. He has added tremendous emphasis to his statement.
2. He has added vital precision to what he wished to say.

"Shall be with you"

The people of the Roman city of Philippi were intensely idolatrous. They were deeply involved in the worship of all the gods in the Roman pantheon. These Roman idols had a common characteristic – they were all stationary. To worship these idols, the people had to go to the shrine where the idol was kept. The addition of these words enabled Paul to stress that Jehovah was different from all other gods. He was wherever they were.

There is also a different reason for his addition of these words. Throughout the New Testament, stress upon the fact of God's abiding presence was a source of great comfort for His people in times of stress or great challenge. It also was true in this instance.

Philippians 4:10-14 – Paul Was Content In Want Or Prosperity

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. Philippians 4:10

"But"

Again, this word always indicates a contrast is in process and we are about to receive the second part of that contrast. The word translated "but" is "de" (δέ). This is not the strongest word that can be used for this idea. What follows, however, is being contrasted with what went before.

"I rejoice in the Lord greatly"

The word translated "rejoice" is "chairō" (χαίρω). This is the most frequently translated word for this idea. Unlike our common understanding of "rejoicing," this is not a response to pleasant circumstances. Paul told the Corinthian Christians to rejoice in persecution, trials and afflictions. We, therefore, must think of rejoicing with no relationship to the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

The form of this word is second aorist passive indicative. The form of this word is instructive.

- a. Second aorist tense focuses on the action (rejoicing) rather than on the timing.
- b. Passive voice suggests that this is something done to or for the subject – Paul – not something he initiates. God enabled Paul to rejoice. He did not do it on his own.

Paul's rejoicing is "in the Lord," not in pleasant circumstances. In the Philippian jail, Paul rejoiced and sang hymns at midnight despite some of the worst possible circumstances. It was a tragic thing to be placed in a Roman jail in a strange place. Your survival in a Roman prison, was contingent upon friends and family providing you with food and care. Paul could rejoice because of who God is and the greatness of His power, not the wonderful circumstances in which he found himself

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"That"

The word translated "that" is "hoti" (ὅτι). This word usually indicates a reason or statement of purpose. It identifies a statement of purpose in this instance.

"Now, at last"

The word translated "now" is "ede" (ἤδη). It sounds as though Paul meant "finally," but that is not the case. This is an emphatic way of identifying the immediate present.

"At last"

The word translated "at last" is "pote" (ποτέ) and literally stands for a general statement like, "at some time." In this instance, however, it is used for strong emphasis. Paul is suggesting that they had wanted to do this, but until now could not. Now they can.

"You have revived"

The word translated "revived" is "anathallo" (ἀναθάλλω). This is a compound and comes from this combination:

- a. "Ana" means "again."
- b. "Thallo" means "to flourish" or "to blossom."

The word means "to flourish again." It identifies something that was active, but after fading has now flourished as it once had.

The form of this word is second aorist active. As we indicated earlier, this places emphasis on the action, not the time. This, of course, supports the rest of what Paul said in this delicate sentence.

"Your concern for me"

The word translated "concern" is "phroneo" (φρονέω) and means "to think." It comes from the word "phren" (φρέν) which means "the mind." It was used to describe the act of thinking. The form of this word is present infinitive. This is significant.

- a. The present tense identifies action that begins and does not cease. It is a lifestyle, rather than a single action.
- b. The infinitive describes action that is in progress.

Paul used two forms that identify action in progress. This is a way of adding strong emphasis to his idea. It is like saying, "you are always thinking of me."

The words translated "for me" are "huper emou" (ὑπερ ἐμοῦ). These two words literally mean "upon me."

"Indeed"

The word translated "indeed" is "kai" (καὶ) which is usually translated "and." Our English translators, however, have conveyed Paul's emotion with the word "indeed." It is a much more intense word than "and."

The word "kai" is preceded by two words, "eph ho" (ἐφ' ᾧ). These words would usually be translated "as to which." The translator's use of "indeed" conveys the emotion of this statement.

"You were concerned before"

These words form a rather loose translation of the Greek text. The word so translated is "phroneo" (φρονέω). Again, it means, "to think in a certain way." We might say it, "You remembered me." The form of this word is imperfect indicative.

- a. Imperfect tense - this identifies action in progress, but in the past.
- b. Indicative mood – This identifies the kind of action – a simple statement of fact. This is significant because Paul wants to assure them that he is absolutely certain that they were concerned about him. It is as though he was saying, "it goes without saying that you were being concerned."

"But"

The word so translated is "de" (δέ). In almost every instance, it is translated "but." It almost always identifies a serious contrast. In this instance, it contrasts their remembering Paul's needs with their own lack of opportunity to minister to that need.

"You lacked opportunity."

The word translated in this way is "akaireomai" (ἀκαίρομαι) and means "to be inopportune," "to lack a proper occasion." Paul tried desperately and delicately to convince his Philippian brothers that he knew they would have ministered to his needs if humanly possible, but there was no way they could put their desires into action.

Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. Philippians 4:11

As one looks at the Greek text, it is very clear that Paul was being very deliberate and intense as he referred to their generosity. We will attempt to point out the various illustrations of this in this statement.

1. There are several different Greek words that are translated "not." These words differ in the degree of their intensity. Among this variety of words, "oux" (οὐχ) is one of the strongest and most intense. Paul's choice of this word identifies the level of emotion and intensity he was trying to convey to these Philippian Christians.
2. The word translated "that" is "hoti" (ὅτι) and it is usually translated this way. If, however, Paul had omitted the word, it may have been a bit awkward, but the meaning would not be changed in any way. This suggests that Paul did this, intentionally, in order to create a specific effect in the minds of his readers.
3. The Greek words translated "I say" are "lego ego" (λέγω ἐγώ) and present a third case in point. The word "lego" (λέγω) means "I speak." If Paul had omitted the additional word "I" "ego" (ἐγώ), the meaning would not be changed at all. The addition of the word "ego" (ἐγώ) adds the strongest possible emphasis to this statement. To translate it literally, one would say, "I-I say." The multiplication of exact or synonym words was their way to place strong emphasis on a statement.

"That I speak from want"

The word translated "want" is "husteresis" (ὕστερησις). It means "to lack something necessary." It is "to fail to have necessities."

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The word "for" is "gar" (γάρ) and indicates the author will now give a reason for what he has already reported.

"I have learned"

The word translated "learned" is "manthano" (μανθάνω). It is related to the word "mathetes" (μαθητής) which means "disciple." It is "to increase in knowledge by both observing what another does and inquiring about what they have said." Jesus called some of His followers "disciples" because they were learners after Him.

This is a dramatic statement. The form of this word is second aorist active indicative.

- a. Second aorist tense – This identifies the author's desire to stress the action rather than the time involved.
- b. Active voice – This stresses the fact that the learning was the result of Paul's activity, not something initiated by someone else.
- c. Indicative mood – This adds to the emphasis of the second aorist tense by making a statement of simple fact.

It might be stated, "I really have learned."

"To be content"

"Artarkes" (αὐτάρκης) is translated "content" in our English translations. This is a compound word.

- a. "Autos" means "self."
- b. "Arkeo" means "to be sufficient." It means "to be strong enough to care for yourself." This may mean providing for one's own needs. It may include the defense of self. It is "to provide self care without assistance." It is not an arrogant self-sufficiency.

It is more than being content with what you have. A lazy sinner can do that. It is a contentment that grows out of having cared for your own needs, in cooperation with God without being disturbed that you do not have more.

"To be"

The word is "einai" (εἶναι) and is the present infinitive form. Both the present and the infinitive suggest action in progress. It sounds awkward, but one might translate it, "to be being." It sounds like a future tense. It is really strong, ongoing action.

Paul is still dealing with the fact that these people would have wanted to do something to assist his ministry and lacked the opportunity. It is his way of saying to them, God has brought me to the place that though the help would have been welcomed and enabled me to do more, still I was able to do what needed to be done with God's help.

I 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. Philippians 4:12

The word translated "I know" is "oida" (οἶδα). As indicated earlier in this study, there are two basic words translated "know" from the Greek.

- a. "Ginosko" (γινώσκω) means "to increase in knowledge."
- b. "Oida" (οἶδα) describes "fullness of knowledge."

In this instance, Paul was saying he had full knowledge.

The form of this word leans in the same direction. It is perfect indicative.

- a. The perfect tense describes activity that is already completed.
- b. The indicative mood is a simple declaration of truth.

The form adds additional strength to the meaning of the word. Paul was asserting that he was an expert in this field.

"How to get along with humble means"

This is a bit of a free translation of our text. A more literal translation might read, "I know both to be humbled..." Paul's choice of words and forms are particularly incisive in this instance. The word translated "humble means" is *tapeinos* (ταπεινός). The word literally means "low lying". This is a word that is always used in a good sense. Elsewhere it is translated "humble in spirit." We might translate it "to be brought low in our own minds or the minds of others." In this instance, it means "to be humble." The word describes "being depressed," "being forced down," "to be humiliated," or "being brought low. It is more than living in lowly conditions. It is having these pressed upon us.

The form Paul used for this word adds significantly to what he said. It is a present passive infinitive.

- a. The present tense describes action that is a lifestyle rather than a single act.
- b. Passive voice – This describes the subject – Paul – receiving the actions of others rather than initiating them himself.
- c. The infinitive – This describes action that is in process. This adds emphasis to the use of the present tense in that both forms describe ongoing action.

Paul said, in no uncertain terms, that he was an expert; he knew everything there was to know about having other people force him into humiliating circumstances. This was not an arrogant statement. It was an accurate assessment of his experience. In modern terms, one might say, "been there; done that."

The use of "both...and," in this instance, is an emphatic way to state a strong emphasis.

"And I also know how to live in prosperity"

The word "and" ties the foregoing statements to this one on an equal footing. They are of equal importance.

The Greek text, from which this statement is translated, reads a bit differently. One might translate it, "and I know to abound."

Again, Paul speaks with total candor and conviction. He said, "I know." As before, he used the word "oida" (οἶδα) which speaks of absolutely total knowledge. Some see arrogance in the use of this word. I see serious difference in ill-considered arrogance and total conviction which grows out of vast experience. Paul had lived at peace both in abject poverty and in extreme wealth. He knew whereof he spoke.

The form of this word sustains the word Paul used to express his thought. It is perfect active indicative.

- a. **Perfect tense** – This represents a past event with ongoing implications. It is like saying, "I discovered and that remains with me even now.
- b. **Active voice** – This indicates Paul initiated the activity leading to this knowledge. It was not done for him.

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c. **Indicative mood** – This is a simple statement of fact.

The word translated "to live in prosperity" or as the Greek says, "to abound" is "perisseuo" (περισεύω). The word stands for "overabundance." It is "to have far more than is required." It was used to describe the leftovers when the 5,000 had been fed. This is a very strong word, but not the strongest word at Paul's disposal. He had lived in luxury, but there were many who had even more.

The form of this word adds strength to the meaning of it. The form is present active infinitive.

- a. **Present tense** – This describes an ongoing lifestyle rather than a single action.
- b. **Active voice** – This is something the subject – Paul – did, not something done to him.
- c. **Infinitive** – The infinitive identifies ongoing action and adds emphasis to the use of the present tense.

One might translate this word "to live a lifestyle of overabundance."

"In any and every circumstance"

Paul is groping for superlatives here. The word translated "any" is "panti" (παντί) which is a derivative of the word "pas" (πᾶς) and means "all." Paul attempted to describe something that he could not find adequate words to express.

The word translated "every" also is the same word "panti" (παντί) which was translated "any" earlier in this verse. Paul had an intense desire to describe every possible condition. Repetition, again, identifies emphasis.

The word translated "circumstance" does not appear in the Greek text. The word "all" suggests "things." The use of the word "circumstance" is an honest attempt to interpret Paul's intent rather than to simply translate the words.

"I have learned the secret"

The word "learned" is a translation of the word "muelo" (μύω). It is more than simply learning. It is to be entrusted with the initiation mysteries as in a secret organization. It is a learning process, but the difference is in the content of the material. In this instance, Paul does not describe secret information that no outsider is permitted to share. It is, rather, information that no outsider is able to comprehend. This is what the translator referred to with the use of the word "secret." The word "secret," however, does not appear in the text.

The form of the word "learned" is perfect passive.

- a. **Perfect tense** – Again, this represents a past event with ongoing implications.
- b. **Passive voice** – This represents actions upon the subject – Paul – or received by him. The emphasis is that he did not initiate this learning activity.

"Both to be filled"

The word translated "both" is "kai" (καί) which is almost always translated "and." Its use, in this instance, indicates a comparison of two equal parts. "Filled" is a translation of the Greek word "chortazo" (χορτάζω) which is a culinary word. It means "to eat until completely satisfied." It is like saying "I experienced having everything I want to eat and then some."

This is a present passive infinitive. This affects the intensity of what Paul said.

- a. **Present tense** – This is a lifestyle rather than a single action.
- b. **Passive voice** - This indicates that the subject, Paul, received the action rather than initiating it. Paul received a certain level of "abundance" from his home and parents. He also received an additional level from his position in the Sanhedrin.
- c. **Infinitive** – This form emphasizes the present tense because both forms stress the ongoing nature of this experience.

One might literally translate this, "to be being filled."

"And going hungry"

The word "and" represents the second half of the "both...and" form that Paul used in this sentence. Again, the importance of this is that it marks a comparison of two or more equal parts. The words "going hungry" are a translation of the word "peinao" (πεινᾶω). As in English, it stands for going without food for an extended period of time.

The form of the word is a present infinitive. This is an emphatic form. Both the present tense and the infinitive suggest action in progress; a lifestyle rather than a single experience.

"Both of having abundance"

This second use of "both... and" indicates that Paul is using a second comparison of equals. Actually, this second comparison is simply a synonym of the first for purposes of strong emphasis.

The word translated "abundance" is "perisseuo" (περισεύω). This is the second time Paul has used this word in this sentence. It is like thanksgiving dinner – more to eat than you could possibly consume.

"And suffering need"

The word translated "suffering need" is "hustereo" (ὕστερέω) and means "to be in want." It is "to have essential needs that continue to go unmet."

The form of this word is present passive infinitive. The use of the present tense and the infinitive are two forms that both speak of action in progress. The use of both adds emphasis. The passive voice suggests that this is something that was imposed on Paul, not something that he did to himself.

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

The Greek text for this verse is a bit more deliberate. One might translate it, "All I can do in Christ, the empowering me one."

"I can do all things"

This is a sweeping statement. The word translated "I can do" is "ischuo" (ἰσχύω). The word has to do with power and ability. It is the ability to prevail. Paul has used a picture of the struggle one experiences in combat. The word has as much to do with endurance as it does with raw strength. Paul said that everything was within the realm of possibility.

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The form of the word is present indicative active. The import of this is that Paul did not describe a single, strenuous action. Rather, he described a way of life that was without limits. At first glance, one might think Paul had made an arrogant claim. This might have been true had he not qualified his remark.

"Through Christ"

Literally, the Greek text says "IN Christ." One needs to differentiate the difference between saying "in Christ" and "through Christ." To speak of this ability "in Christ" is to say that one has such a relationship with Christ that He does His work in our lives. God is the one performing the action. On the other hand, to speak of this ability "through Christ" points to Paul as the one carrying out the action, but through Christ. It appears that "IN Christ" is a substantially more appropriate translation.

Paul did not claim to be invincible. He did claim that in his relationship with Christ there were no limits to what Christ could accomplish.

"Who strengthens me"

As previously indicated, the Greek text is much more intense – "the empowering me one." The word translated "strengthens" is "endunamoo" (ἐνδυναμώω). This is a compound word.

- a. "En" means "on" or "in."
- b. "Dunamoo" means "to enable."

Paul's desire to place strong emphasis is obvious here. He could have just used the word "dunamoo" (δυναμώω) and it would have conveyed the idea of enabling quite well. The use of a compound word almost always adds emphasis. That is particularly true in this instance. The compound word literally says, "empowering upon." Paul said, "Because of the empowering Christ placed upon his life, there were no limits to what God could accomplish in him. This is an affirmation of divine power. It is not an arrogant claim.

Again the form of the word is as strong as the word itself. This is a present participle.

- a. **Present tense** – This describes a lifestyle of ongoing action.
- b. **Participle** – On the other hand, a participle stresses action in process; i.e., walking, seeing. By using two forms – present tense and participle – Paul strongly emphasized that this was something God did and never stopped doing.

Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. Philippians 4:14

"Nevertheless"

This word is "Plen" (πλήν). It is probably best translated "moreover." It suggests the coming of additional information rather than a change in the direction of the thought.

"You have done well"

Paul is still speaking very carefully and delicately about their gift. The word translated "you have done" is "poieo" (ποιέω). It basically means "to make something," "to cause something to be." Hidden in the meaning of this word is the idea of doing or providing something on behalf of another.

PAUL URGED HARMONY BETWEEN TWO WOMEN

The form of this word is first aorist. Simply put, this identifies simple past action. Paul chose wisely in this instance.

The word for "well" is "kalos" (καλῶς). Paul's choice of words, here, is helpful. There are two basic words that are commonly translated "well."

- a. "Eu" speaks of things "noble" and "good."
- b. "Kalos" (καλῶς) identifies "that which is done rightly or properly."

In using the word "kalos," Paul identified the fact that his intent was to affirm what they had done and the way in which it was carried out.

"To share with me in my affliction"

Our translators have done a bit of interpreting in this verse, to clarify Paul's message. One might translate the Greek text, "In sharing the troubles of me." The word translated "share" is "sunkoenoneo" (συγκοινωνέω). This is an interesting compound word.

- a. "Sun" means "with."
- b. "Koinoneo" means to have fellowship."

The word means "to communicate," "to share together with." It involves sharing what one has with those who have need in order to express the fellowship we share. For many modern American Christians, fellowship/koinonia means a cup of coffee and a donut after the service. In fact, in this word we have a strong emphasis on the family bond that made Paul's needs a part of the family concern for these Philippian Christians.

The form of this word is a first aorist participle. Paul's intent is still clearer in these forms.

- a. First aorist – This form identifies simple past action.
- b. Participle – This form identifies action in progress – walking, talking.

Together, these two forms indicate past action that is ongoing. One might translate it "You shared and continued to share."

"The troubles of me"

The word for "troubles" is "thlipsis" (θλίψις) which literally means "pressure." It identifies all those things that become a burden for our spirit. It is an affliction that weighs heavily upon us. It causes us great anguish and distress. It may involve persecution. It is illustrated as being akin to the pangs a mother endures in the birth process. It is the tribulation we experience when being faithful to Christ in the presence of severe opposition.

Philippians 4:15-20 – Paul Expressed Gratitude For Their Gift

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; Philippians 4:15

"And you yourself also know"

Again, the Greek text reads a bit differently. It says, "and you Philippians also know." In this verse, Paul again shows himself to be the master of emphasis. The word "you" would have told the recipients that he was talking to them. The addition of the word "Philippians" strongly emphasized the fact. We must admit, however, that these letters

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were passed from one congregation to another. In such a case, the addition of the word "Philippians" is helpful. It appears, however, that Paul was simply adding emphasis.

The word translated "know" is again "oida" (οἶδα). As before, this word means "total knowledge."

The form of this word is perfect active. The perfect tense identifies a completed past action which has a continuing effect in the present. This is not new information for these people. Past experience has shown them and it is part of their present awareness.

"That at the first preaching of the Gospel"

The Greek statement is put more simply. It says, "that in the beginning of the Gospel." The English translation does no harm, but it is more interpretation than translation. Now, neither of these statements tell us exactly what Paul wants to say. He will clarify that in the next part of the sentence.

The word "that," in almost every instance, indicates that an explanation or statement of purpose is about to be given. When Paul said, "In the beginning of the Gospel," this needs clarification. The "beginning of the Gospel" was at least the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, if not before. Paul did not mean that. The next statement in this sentence will clarify what he had in mind.

"After I departed from Macedonia"

Paul did not go to Macedonia on his first missionary journey. He did visit the city, however, on both his second and third journeys. He does not identify which visit he refers to in this verse. We would assume that he meant the third journey because these people were new Christians on his second journey. Nevertheless, it is possible that he referred to the second journey.

"No church shared with me"

The word "no" is a translation of the word "ouden" (οὐδέν). It is a very strong word that means "not even one." Again, it is a delicate venture to assess motives, but it seems reasonable that Paul wanted to do two things with this choice:

1. He wanted to stress the fact that no other single church did this. It stresses the uniqueness of the actions of the Philippian congregation.
2. There must have been a level of intense pain in Paul which he could no longer disguise. Just to think that in view of what he had done for them, not one of them responded in a tangible way.

We cannot say Paul felt that, but we would not be surprised if that were the case.

Paul spoke of the "church." This is a translation of the word "ecclesia" (ἐκκλησία). We, too, often speak of the church as a building. We must keep in mind that in most instances the early church had no specified buildings. They met in homes or in caves.. Their reference was much more precise. This is a compound word:

- a. "Ek" means "out of."
- b. "Kaleo" means "to call."

This term was borrowed from the Greek culture. They used the term to identify a group of citizens gathered to discuss civil or political issues. It became a term used to describe a group of people called together for a specific purpose. Among believers, it is usually cho-

sen to identify a particular group who professed to be followers of Jesus. This term tended to identify the group and to describe their self-image – people called out of the pagan lifestyle of the world to live a holy life before God.

Paul's words hit hard. There were at least five different words Paul could have chosen to express the idea of support. He chose to use the word "koinoneo" (κοινωνέω). It expresses the careful way Paul thought of such giving. It was much more than giving up the ownership of something you possess. The word literally means "to have something in common." It is "to be in partnership." They were partners in Paul's ministry. It is "to take part in the venture with Paul." It would be as much their ministry and missionary journey as it was his.

"In the matter of giving and receiving"

The words "the matter" are a translation of the Greek word "logos" (λόγος). This word is usually translated "word." In John 1:1, the apostle wrote, "In the beginning was the word "logos" (λόγος)." It identifies the expression of thought rather than the name of an object. It can refer to a saying or statement, but more often identifies the embodiment of an idea or concept.

Paul spoke of "giving" with the use of the word "dosis" (δόσις). It came from the word "didomai" (δίδωμαι) which means "to give or to grant." It conveys the idea of an owner "bestowing" his possessions upon another person. It also was used to identify "the act of ministering." It is "to yield."

Paul also spoke of "receiving." The word is "lepsis" (λήψις). It finds its roots in the word "lambano" (λαμβάνω) which means "to take hold of," "to seize," "to obtain," or "to take away."

Observe, Paul did not speak of their giving and his receiving. He rather spoke of giving and receiving without mention of source or direction. In the previous statement, he spoke of "sharing." The addition of this statement hints that both he and the congregation were involved in giving and in receiving. Paul gave as much as they gave. They received as much as Paul received.

"But you alone"

The word translated "but" is really two Greek words – "ei me" (εἰ μή) which means "except." This is a compound situation:

- a. "ei" is a conditional word which is often translated "if" or "whether."
- b. "Me" literally means "not."

When used together, these words are best translated "except." It is a very strong word and reveals the forcefulness with which Paul wrote.

The word translated "alone" is "monon" (μόνον) and means "only" or "alone." This is another instance in which Paul's fervor becomes obvious. If he had omitted this word for "alone", the meaning would certainly not be lost. The inclusion of the word, however, adds great emphasis to his words.

For even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. Philippians 4:16

"For even in Thessalonica"

The word translated "for" is "hoti" (ὅτι) which is usually translated "that" or "so that." In most instances, it identifies a coming statement of purpose. In this instance, Paul was giving an explanation. The interpreters use of "for" or in some instances "because" is an attempt to be faithful to Paul's intent rather than giving a literal word-by-word translation.

The word translated "even" is "kai". It almost always is translated "and." In some instances, however, it is used to suggest strong emphasis or a climactic statement. That is true here. Paul had at least ten words from which to choose for this idea, but still, he chose the word "kai." Why would he do this? For one reason, this word involves the atmosphere of growing climax which some others do not possess. Again, some of these ten words suggest a parallel or comparative idea. That was not Paul's intent.

Paul made a specific reference to their near-neighbor – Thessalonica.



In Acts 17, Luke tells the story of Paul's visit to Thessalonica. Paul preached that Jesus is the Messiah as well as preaching the resurrection. Some of the Jews made it necessary for him to leave town. They, also, followed him to Berea to stir up trouble for him there. Paul was saying that in the heat of his ministry, there, the Philippian congregation maintained their contact with him and continued to support his mission.

"You sent a gift more than once."

Paul is still describing their faithful support of his ministry. Our English translations of this verse are a bit casual. This was done, certainly, in an attempt to phrase the sentence in good English form. One might translate the Greek text in this way, "both once and twice you sent to my need." Paul made a deliberate and dramatic statement. He wanted to say their concern was not a casual choice. His evidence is the fact that they sent a gift for his ministry at least twice and probably more often.

The word translated "sent" is "pempo" (πέμπω). Ten different Greek words are translated "send" in our English versions. Two of these are the ones most commonly used. Our word, "pempo" is the more general of the two.

"For my needs"

In this phrase, Paul returned to his very emphatic form of writing. He could have said, as our English version translates, "for my needs." To add emphasis, however, Paul

wrote with greater emphasis, "to the need of me." This writing tool is subtle, but quite effective.

Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. Philippians 4:17

"Not that I seek the gift itself"

The word "itself" does not appear in the Greek text, though it is implied. Paul has spent six verses talking about their gift. Less generous hearts might get the impression that Paul is preoccupied with their gift rather than the people in the congregation.

Earlier it was indicated that there are several Greek words that mean "no" or "not." Paul's choice here, "ouk" (οὐκ), is the strongest single word with that meaning. Only the use of two or more words, which all mean "no" are as emphatic or more so. An example of these double words would be "ou me" (οὐ μή). They are as emphatic or more so.

The words here are very deliberate and emphatic. The Greek reads just like the English. Paul could have given the same idea with fewer words and less emphasis. He made the opposite choice. This gives us an insight into his mind and attitude.

The word "gift" is a translation of the Greek word "dōma" (δῶμα). Out of the seven words usually translated "gift" in the New Testament, this particular one focuses most directly upon the gift itself rather than on the generosity of giving a gift. Paul is seriously disclaiming greed.

"But I seek for the profit"

The word translated "but" is "alla" (ἀλλὰ). There are several Greek words usually translated "but" in our English texts. This word, however, is the strongest. Paul was intent upon making a strong statement at this point. The word "but" almost always foretells the coming of a serious contrast. That is true here. He contrasts what he does not seek – "the gift" with what he does seek.

The word translated "seek" is "epizeteo" (ἐπιζητέω). Again, the compounding of this word lends unusual emphasis.

- a. "Epi" means "toward" or "upon,"
- b. "Zeteo" means "to search for a way to do something."

Paul said, in very strong terms, he was searching for a way to accomplish something he will now describe.

The form is as strong as the meaning of the word. It is in the present tense. He might have said, "I will diligently search for and never stop studying a way to do this." That is a powerful statement.

The word "profit" is not the best choice to translate the word "karpos" (καρπός). It is usually translated "fruit." Paul used it in a metaphoric sense to identify the inward evidence of character. It is the obvious result of Godly motive and action. Paul did not want to be richer because of their gift. He wanted their generosity and loving motivation to result in a greater Christlike love and grace in their character.

"Which increases to your account"

The Greek text is more dramatic to say the least. One might translate it, "the multiplying to the final account of you."

The word translated "increases" is "pleonazo" (πλεονάζω). It means not only to "increase," but to "multiply." It is not the most spectacular word. One could also translate it, "superabundance."

"To your account"

Paul did it again! The word translated "account" is really the word "logos" (λογός). This word is usually translated "word." More than any other New testament author, Paul invested this word with a variety of other meanings. This is a very important one. Here, Paul used the word to express the account one will give of his/her conduct and service standing before God on that final day.

Paul made a point we need to hear as well. He was saying that their generosity produced a Christlike quality of character that grows in their account. Frankly, we don't hear much about Christians being blessed and spiritually enriched. Could it be that "the world is too much with us?" Could it be that the "me first" attitude of our times has robbed us of the mounting blessing God has in store for us?

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. Philippians 4:18

The word "but," again, indicates a coming contrast. This word is "de" (δέ). It is not nearly as strong as the last word so translated. Paul will now turn his attention to his own situation.

"I have received everything in full"

The Greek text is a bit more all encompassing than the English translation. The Greek text simply says, "I have all." The word translated "I have" is "apecho" (ἄπέχω). This is a compound word which is broken down as follows:

- a. "Apo" means "from."
- b. "Echo" means "to have."

This is a financial term. It describes "the receiving in full of everything." It is like receiving a "paid in full receipt." Both Jesus and Paul use the term in this manner. In the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6:5, Jesus taught about the hypocrites who make long prayers on the street corners and in the synagogues. Jesus used this word, saying, "they have their reward in full."

The word translated "everything" is "panta" (πάντα) which is usually translated "all." Paul did not really mean that he had everything. There were many things, even by their standards, he did not have. Paul spoke in hyperbole. He lacked nothing necessary for his life of service, but his statement was an obvious overstatement, which everyone would fully understand. They would realize that he stated it this way to make a point and not to brag about his possessions.

"And (have) an abundance"

You will note that the word "have" is in parenthesis. This is to indicate that the word is understood in the sentence, but does not appear in the text. The word translated "abundance" is "perisseuo" (περισσεύω). This is not the first time we have encountered this term in Philippians. In 1:26, Paul used the term to describe the opulence of their joy and faith. It literally means "to have more than is necessary." In Luke 9:17, the writer used this term, in the feeding of the 5,000, to describe the abundance of food that remained when miraculously between 5,000 and 10,000 were fed.

"I am amply supplied"

The Greek text reads, "I have been filled." The word translated in this manner is "pleroo" (πληρόω). It means "to fill full," "to fill to overflowing." Of the eleven Greek words translated "fill" in our text, this is a strong word, but certainly not the strongest.

The form of this word is perfect passive indicative. In simple terms, this means:

- a. **Perfect tense** – This indicates past action that has some effect upon the present situation.
- b. **Passive voice** – This indicates something done to or for the subject Paul.
- c. **Indicative mood** – This is a simple statement of the action.

This form was carefully chosen. Paul did not provide these funds. They were provided for him. The simplicity of this statement emphasizes the fact that this has already been accomplished.

"Having received from Epaphroditus"

The word translated "having received" is "dechomai" (δέχομαι). This is the second word in this verse translated "received." The previous word was "apecho" (ἀπέχω) and this one is "dechomai" (δέχομαι). It is a little stronger than the previous word. It is a decisive word that means to receive deliberately what is offered. It would be used to describe taking someone by the hand to help them up off the floor. It is a word often used when one welcomes another to receive something.

The form of this word is first aorist participle.

- a. **First aorist tense** – This expresses simple past time.
- b. **Participle** – This form describes action that is in progress.

In the use of these two forms, Paul has emphasized the simple past form of action and emphasized its continuation by the use of the participle. This is a way to be very precise.

Paul mentioned that the carrier of their gift was a man called Epaphroditus. This man came from Philippi with a message and gift from the church there. He stayed on in Rome for a while, where Paul was under house arrest. He was very helpful in the work Paul was doing, even under house arrest.

While in Rome, Epaphroditus became very ill and they feared for his life. Somehow, word of this illness got back to Philippi and consequently the church there became very concerned. The Philippian letter would be carried back to Philippi by Epaphroditus.

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"What you have sent"

The Greek text simply says, "the from you." Paul referred to the gift of money they had sent to him courtesy of Epaphroditus. It is quite possible that there were other kinds of gifts as well, though the text does not say so.

"A fragrant aroma"

This is the first of three graphic descriptions Paul gave in reference to the gift they sent to him. The word translated "fragrant" is "euodia" (εὐωδία) which is a compound word.

- a. "Eu" means "well."
- b. "Ozo" means "scent" or "smell." It was usually identified with a foul odor, like a skunk. The addition of the word "eu" changes this completely. It also adds emphasis.

The word translated "odor" is "osme" (ὀσμή) and means "a smell" or "odor." It is interesting that this word is a form of the same word as "ozo" (ὄζω) which also means "smell." As always, repetition is an indication of unusual emphasis. One might translate this "a sweet or good smelling smell."

"An acceptable sacrifice"

This is the second of three descriptions Paul used to identify the gift the Philippians had sent to him.

"Acceptable" in the Greek text, is "dektos" (δεκτός). It identifies "a person or thing that is regarded favorably."

The word translated "sacrifice" is "thusia" (θυσία). This is the primary word to identify "an offering."

"Well pleasing to God"

This is the third description Paul used to describe the gift received from the Philippian church. The word for "well pleasing" is "euarestos" (εὐάρεστος). This description identifies the Philippian gift as "acceptable," "well pleasing" to God. In this statement, Paul has given information about one's gifts to God. The gift and its size are not determined by our personal choice or any other human factor, but simply by what pleases God.

The question naturally arises, "Why did Paul need to use three descriptions when one would have sufficed?" Look at the descriptions:

- a. A fragrant aroma.
- b. An acceptable sacrifice.
- c. Well pleasing to God.

Notice that all three convey essentially the same message. They mean the same thing. It also is clear that the existence of three instead of one cannot be explained by saying that one or two of these say the same thing, but add additional information. To the best of our knowledge, the only purpose served by the use of three descriptions is strong emphasis. It certainly accomplishes that goal in delicate fashion.

*And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ
Jesus. Philippians 4:19*

"And"

The use of this connective suggests that verse 19 is a continuation of the previous sentence, verse 18. This means that the two are tied together and are equally important.

The word translated "and" is "de" (δέ) which is not the strongest word Paul could have used. This suggests the two sentences are related, but Paul's greater emphasis was on verse 18.

"My God shall supply all your needs"

The Greek text reads, "The God of me." Paul was writing to Christians. They would have perfectly understood if Paul had just said, "God shall supply all your needs." The additional words add a very strong emphasis to his statement. It makes the statement much more personal.

The word translated "shall supply" is "pleroo" (πληροώ). Of the seven different Greek words translated "fill full" in English, "pleroo" is the most common. It is a term from the marketplace. They also had problems with false weights and measures. They deemed a grain measure "filled full" when it ran over on all sides. Paul's intent is to describe the way God provides for our needs. God will provide our needs to the point of running over. What a beautiful way to express this!

The form of this word is exciting. It is the future tense. It is something durative that is yet to be. It will happen and continue to happen. God is going to supply, to the point of overflowing, and never stop supplying. As we said about the present tense, "God is going to make a lifestyle for Himself out of overabundantly supplying our needs."

The word for "all" is "pasan" (πάσων). It identifies the provision for everything necessary. It is a very dramatic, all-inclusive statement.

The word translated "needs" is "chreia" (χρεία) and means "that which is lacking."

"According to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus"

The word translated "according to" is "kata" (κατά) and means "against" or "according to." Paul used the word "ploutos" (πλοῦτος) to speak of "riches." Interestingly, this word can be used to describe godly riches as in this instance. It can also be used to identify riches of an evil nature, such as Jesus used in Mark 4:19 to describe "the deceitfulness of riches." Because of this, Paul found it necessary to describe these riches in three different ways:

- a. **"The riches of Him"** - These are a God kind of riches. In this identification, Paul suggested that they have a holy, righteous character as God has.
- b. **"The (riches) in glory"** - The word for "glory" "doxa" (δόξα) literally means "an opinion" or "an estimate." This can be confusing. The primary use of this word is to describe the honor that comes about as a result of the good opinion we have of a person or situation. Speaking of "the riches of His glory," Paul referred to the majesty and omnipotence of God. These are riches that are in keeping with the honor due to God because of His unique majesty and power.
- c. **"The (riches) in Christ Jesus"** - Paul further identified these riches as being "in Christ Jesus." Though he used the word "in," Paul referred to a relationship rather than a location. These are riches characterized by the person and quality of the life of Jesus.

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Whenever Paul used both the name "Jesus" and "Christ" together, there is, invariably, a specific reason for it. This reason has to do with the order in which the two names appear – "Jesus Christ" or "Christ Jesus." When the name "Jesus" appears first, the emphasis is upon His work as Savior, which is what the name "Jesus" means. On the other hand, when the name "Christ" appears first, the emphasis is upon His position as "the Anointed One" or "Messiah." That is the case in this verse. Paul's reference was that the riches were identified by the character of Jesus as the Messiah, the Anointed One, whom God promised would come to deliver His people.

As you think about these three descriptions, you begin to get some idea of the vastness of Paul's understanding and appreciation of the riches that are ours in Christ. It is no wonder he could no longer control the urge to give God praise.

Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Philippians 4:20

"Now"

The use of the word "now" suggests a definite change in direction. Paul has been explaining the riches that are ours in Christ and affirming God's dependability to provide for every need. Having done that, he now bursts forth in praise for God because of this marvelous blessing.

"To our God and Father be glory"

In this outburst of praise, Paul identified the creator in two different ways:

- a. **"Our God"** - The word for "God," in Greek, is "theos" (θεός). The Jews borrowed this term from the Greeks. The Greeks used the word to describe any of their pantheon of gods. The Jews and Christians used it to identify "the only God." Interestingly, when Christians, including Paul, used the word, they intended it to include a reference to the person of the Creator as well as all the attributes ascribed to Him in the Scriptures. What a magnificent outburst of praise!
- b. **"And (our) Father"** – The word "our" is in parenthesis because it definitely implied, but not written. The Greek text literally reads, "The God and Father of us." Whatever else is implied here, Paul was forcefully claiming a personal relationship with God. The pantheon of Roman gods, that these Philippian people once worshipped were impersonal to the extreme. In referring to Him as "Our God," and "our Father," Paul highlighted one of the monumental contrasts between Jehovah and the Roman idols. God is not aloof, but rather seeks intensely to sustain an ongoing relationship with His people.

The word "father" or "pater" (πατήρ) literally means one who nourishes, protects and upholds. It further carries the connotation of source. For the Christians, it meant much more. A "father" was the one after whom an individual patterned their life. It meant that the one in whom we find our origin is the one to whom we belong and with whom we are in constant fellowship. "Father" implied teacher; one who gave direction to life and exemplified quality in character. In our culture, people tend to grow up and move away. That was not the case in that culture. When a son grew up, he became a colleague with his father and eventually took over control and responsibility for the entire family.

"Be the glory for ever and ever. Amen"

This is called a benediction, which Paul included in several of his epistles. The use of the word "amen" suggests to us that this is in the form of a prayer. For us, the word "amen" signals the end of a prayer. For them, "amen" meant "May it be so." It could be used following a prayer, in the midst of a sermon or conversation.

Paul having described how God had cared for him and asserting He would care for them, Paul exalted in the greatness of God. In this outburst of praise, Paul ascribed glory to God.

You may remember that we dealt with the word "glory" earlier in this verse. It is the same word. Again, this word ascribes honor to God because of His holy attributes He displays in thousands of unnoticed ways. It is to exalt because of the character He makes visible in the person of Christ. Thus, Paul ascribes glory to "our God and Father."

"Forever and ever"

The Greek text literally reads, "To the ages of the ages." Paul is groping for words of praise that adequately express his ecstasy in God. We know how to express time. Time is a term of measurement. We measure it minutely and ultimately. To express timelessness, however, we tend to use contradictory words. "Ages" is a concept of unmeasured time. To speak of "the ages of the ages" is to speak of an unmeasurable amount of unmeasurable time. This does not really make sense to us, but it creates an image for us that seems appropriate when speaking of God.

"Amen"

This is a translation of a powerful Hebrew word. It appears often in the Old Testament. The question arises, what could the word "amen" possibly add to Paul's outburst of praise? The outburst of praise speaks for itself. The addition of the word "amen" adds strong emphasis. It is like saying the statement twice.

Philippians 4:21-23 – Greetings To All The Saints

Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. Philippians 4:21

Their attitude toward greetings differs greatly from ours. We tend to deal with it quite casually if we take it seriously at all. Have you ever been asked to convey greetings that didn't quite make it? Most of us have. We must remember that their communications system was desperate at best. We get more "junk-mail" in a week than they would receive messages in a lifetime. In that day, it was a great event to receive a message from anyone. To illustrate this point, we know that the epistles, though written to a specific congregation, were passed around from one congregation to another.

Add to this the great desire, on the part of Christians, to communicate and fellowship with each other. In many instances, Christians were much closer than family. It is not surprising that 14 of the 22 epistles in the New Testament have some form of shared greeting in the closing verses. The only ones who do not are Galatians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, James, II Peter, I John, and Jude.

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Our idea of a "saint" is, also, quite different from theirs. Some of our hymns may speak of "ye saints of the Lord...", but we never use the term when speaking of fellow believers. They saw this differently. They spoke of every believer as a "saint," as well they should. The word so translated is "hagios" (ἅγιος). This word comes from the root "hagnos" (ἄγνος) which means "to venerate," or "to worship." The essence of the word is twofold:

1. To be separated – set apart for divine use and service.
2. To live a life of growing purity and holiness.

It does not suggest that these people have never sinned, but rather that their lives have been cleansed. They still have an eraser on their pencil, but they live an increasingly holy life.

"In Christ Jesus"

It is very obvious in Ephesians, John 14-17, and other New Testament passages, that "being in Christ Jesus" is not so much a location as it is a relationship. It is to love the Lord so much that nothing else, no one has greater claim upon our lives. Thus, Paul has identified the recipients of his greeting in two ways:

- a. **"Saints"** – These are believers set apart for God.
- b. **"In Christ Jesus"** – People whose intimate relationship with Christ reveals something of His presence and Character.

"The brethren who are with me greet you"

Paul probably was a Roman prisoner at this time. During his imprisonment, Paul seemed to increase his efforts to share the Gospel. We know that the Colossian epistle was also written from prison. Chapter four includes the names of men who were working with Paul witnessing for Christ in the midst of a prison situation: Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, John Mark, Jesus called Justus, Epaphras, and Luke. Though the text is silent, it appears that these are the people to whom Paul referred in this statement.

All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. Philippians 4:22

"All the saints greet you"

The importance of this statement is not clear to us. While teaching in the Ukraine and in Moscow, I often preach in local churches. Before beginning the sermon, I say to them, "I bring you greetings from my pastor and the congregation with whom I worship." The first time I did that, I was shocked. The entire congregation bolted to their feet in almost military style and almost in unison shouted something back to me in Russian. I turned to my translator to find out what was happening. He said, "they are thanking you for bringing greetings and request that you greet your congregation on their behalf." After that I learned that in every service, opportunity is given to bring greetings from other congregations.

In our text, this is not something that Paul had to say before he closed the letter. It was a vitally important expression of their love and concern for each other.

"Especially those of Caesar's household"

This is an astounding statement. We tend to read it too casually. We know that a number of the castle guards, who were posted at the prison, had become Christians. We also know that several of the slaves in Caesar's household had accepted Christ. It was surprising to discover that even members of Caesar's family had become believers. Imagine the risk they took. A member of their family, the Caesar, was the chief Roman deity whom every citizen was required to worship on pain of treason. Still they dared to take their stand for Christ.

While visiting Rome, I toured the catacombs. As we inched our way along the passageways, our guide pointed to a door high on the wall. He told us this door led into the imperial residence. Members of Caesar's household used it to come to take part in worship. The courage of these people gives one pause.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Philippians 4:23

Paul began and ended the epistle with a petition for grace for these believers.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ"

Paul wrote to Christians, people who experienced the forgiving grace of God. One must wonder why Paul wished them grace. Why would he not wish them the peace of God? Why would Paul choose grace rather than love? What would have been different if he had wished them the grace of God rather than the grace of the Lord?

First, grace has been described as "unmerited favor." It is that, but more. It also includes sharing the good will of the giver of grace. Paul talked about this extensively in Ephesians when he talked about "being in Christ." Grace is what is meant when Jesus described our relationship with Him and the Father. He said:

*"In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you."
John 14:20*

Paul wished for them that intimate relationship with God that defies both definition and description.

Observe that Paul identified this grace with God's Son in three different ways:

- a. **Grace of the Lord** – The word "Lord" is a term of authority. It is what a slave called his owner. You may remember that Jesus spoke of this saying,

"And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" Luke 6:46

The "Lord" is the one who totally commands our lives and can expect us to follow those orders.

- b. **(Grace of) Jesus** – The name "Jesus" means "savior." Paul wishes for them, prays for them not only the grace that cancels their guilt, but keeps them in His love.
- c. **(Grace of) Christ** – The name "Christ" means "Anointed One," "the Messiah." It is the one chosen of the Father to restore creation to the beauty and wonder in which it was created.

"Be with your spirit"

Again, the Greek text reads a bit differently. "(be) with all of you." Though the wording is different, the intent is not. Perhaps in this case our translator has done a bit more interpreting than translating. Paul wants the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to be the abiding presence of every person in the Philippian church. He also wants this to be such an intimate relationship that they see Him as their Master, their Savior, their coming Messiah.

"Amen"

The word "Amen" does not appear in our English text, but it does appear in the Greek text. We must ask ourselves what this means to our understanding of what Paul says as he concluded the epistle.

Again, as we indicated in verse 20, our understanding of the word "amen" differs slightly from theirs. It is a word we do not define. We often think of it as the word that indicates that the prayer is over. Only then can we open our eyes. We sometimes use it as an explosion of praise.

They defined the word. It was an intense petition and meant, "May it be so."

Paul's use of the word "amen" to conclude this epistle was carefully chosen. Looking back over every request and command he had given, Paul pleaded with God, "Let it be so."

THE CONCLUSION

Though infrequently mentioned, directly, suffering and persecution are intrinsic to every part of Philippians. The presence of words like "joy," – (seven times) rejoice – (nine times) thanksgiving – (twice), in the four short chapters of this epistle, can mislead one to think that this is a happy letter where there are no problems. A brief look at the 58 exhortations in the epistle will quickly convince one otherwise.

As indicated in the introductory material, this epistle has a unique style. There are more exhortations in the first part of the book than in the last. (Ephesians has three exhortations in the first part and 86 in the last part.) The import of this is that the Philippian writing style is more intense and direct than Paul's other epistles. In this epistle, he stated a problem and immediately gave his exhortation for dealing with that problem. In Philippians there is much greater concern, on the part of Paul, about the recipients spiritual welfare, than in other epistles.

Unity

When threatened by an enemy, natural survival thinking tends to focus on the enemy and how to eliminate the threat. Paul's advice is just the reverse. Repeatedly, he acknowledged the threat and then exhorted them to unity, rather than all out aggression.

He urged them to give careful attention to a way of conducting themselves that is increasingly worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Paul said,

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; Philippians 1:27

In this statement, Paul suggested that "standing firm in one spirit," unity, is a prescription for surviving the onslaught of evil. He said that a singleness of mind would enable them to successfully struggle together in defense of the faith of the Gospel. Too often, we in the present day church, tend to fight fire with fire. It does not work. Jesus' command to "love your enemies" still prevails for the body of Christ.

In 2:1, Paul listed five issues that are some of our strongest defenses against evil attack:

- a. Encouragement in Christ
- b. Consolation of love
- c. Fellowship of the Spirit
- d. Affection
- e. Compassion

Look at this list again. It focuses totally within the Christian community. It says nothing about the enemy. One of our best defenses against evil attack is to increase our care for one another in Christ. The defense is not in strategy, but increased sharing in worship energized and guided by the Holy Spirit. The more we care for each other, the less effective evil opposition will be.

In 2:2, Paul urged them to make a lifestyle out of "being of the same mind." It is doubtful if there has been a time in history when the sense of oneness received less attention than now. Paul urged them to make a lifestyle out of their common love for each oth-

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er. He suggested that being bound to each other in spirit is an effective weapon against evil attack. Selfishness and conceit are useless qualities in our battle with evil. Every motive and action of the Christian community must be continually stimulated by mutual community concern if we are to survive. We must learn that our best options are in cooperation with each other rather than competing with one another.

The "Kenosis passage," 2:5-11, our best picture of the mind of Christ, is a picture of our best defense against evil attack.

Value System

Writing to a group of severely persecuted Christians, Paul gave several exhortations that reflect a very different value system than that practiced by people around them.

Paul reported, in 2:17, that if his life was being sacrificed in regard to their service and faith, he could rejoice and share his joy with them. This reflects a value system that places greater value upon the common service of God they share than upon personal survival. A person with such an outlook has nothing to lose and can neither be controlled nor defeated by evil forces.

In 2:21, Paul talked about people who "seek their own interests, not those of Christ." It was his way of saying the Christian value system is more concerned about the interests of Christ and His kingdom than for one's own benefit or survival. There is nothing that evil forces can do to harm or control such a person.

Paul described the Christian's outlook in 3:7. We are confronted continuously with choices between personal benefit and that which results in benefit on behalf of Christ. Our unique value system will choose the benefit of Christ in each decision. When selfish interest is rejected, our service is acceptable before God and our unity with one another is assured.

For suffering Christians, survival would be the natural concern. Paul exhorts in a different direction by his own example. He demonstrated his burning desire to increasingly know God; to experience the power of His resurrection, to share the growing fellowship of His sufferings and at the last being molded into His death. This is not the way of the world. Nevertheless, what can evil do to harm a person with such values?

Neither long life nor lavish conditions are significant to the believer. The believer's citizenship is in heaven. If the Christian's life is taken because of faithfulness to Christ, the disciple of Jesus will simply be going home.

The believer eagerly awaits the coming of the Lord Jesus. This is so important, he can hardly wait. Again, this being the case, no danger could possibly daunt his stand for Christ.

When vicious enemies of the Gospel would attack, Paul urged not strong defense, but a forbearing spirit. This does not make sense to the world. It is perfectly reasonable when Christ is our priority and He is with us.

There is a saying that goes, "If you can keep your head when everyone is losing theirs, you just don't understand the problem." I understand the message of this saying, but there is another possibility. In the midst of total devastation, Christians can maintain their composure because the peace of God is with them. This is what enabled the Christians in the Roman coliseum to sing hymns of joy as the wild animals approached them or the fires were lit round their feet. It is the peace of God that guards us, not our strong defenses. In life or death confrontation, the non-Christian world seeks strong defenses or swift escape.

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In such situations, Paul urged these Christians to spend some priority time thinking – thinking about things like "true," "honorable," "right," "pure," "lovely," "good repute," "excellence," and "praiseworthy." These are not the things that would occupy the attention of the average person in a time of crisis. They are precisely the things Paul wants committed Christians to dwell on in every instance.

Humility

Basically, Paul claimed that humility is an essential quality of character for those who would be overcomers in this struggle. In 2:7, 8, Paul pointed out how humble Jesus was in His struggle against evil. Jesus lay aside His majesty in order to obey the Father and meet our need. He humbled Himself and took on all the limitations, save sin, that characterize our humanity, even death. We tend to think of courage and bravery as the essentials in the struggle. Paul taught that in this fight, humility is the essential. If you look at 2:8-14, you will see Paul's description of his own spiritual journey. Though the word is never used, humility permeates every verse.

More Essentials

In 2:1, 2, Paul mentioned several qualities and conditions that are essential in the struggle against the forces of evil.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Encouragement in Christ | f. Being of the same mind |
| b. Consolation of love | g. Maintain the same love |
| c. Fellowship of the Spirit | h. United in spirit |
| d. Affection | i. Intent on one purpose |
| e. Compassion | |

Again, Paul identified eight things we should focus our minds upon in our struggle.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| a. The true | e. The lovely |
| b. The honorable | f. Things of good repute |
| c. The right | g. Things of excellence |
| d. The pure | h. Things praiseworthy |

The crucial thing about all of these is that we never think or talk about these things in regard to our struggle with evil. Paul, on the other hand, speaks of them as top priority essentials. This suggests we need either to think about our struggle for the first time or re-think our attitude toward this struggle in more biblical terms.

Covenant People

In 3:3, Paul spoke of these Christians as "the circumcision." Our English text speaks of "the true circumcision." In Paul's background, circumcision was the means by which a person was brought into the covenant. He was saying we are a covenant people. For most Christians, this does not hold much significance. We are covenant people. We are bound in a changeless agreement with God. No matter what conditions may prevail, He chooses to be irrevocably bound to us as "our God." The other side of that covenant is that we choose to be changelessly bound to God as "His people," no matter what conditions may prevail. That is the rhetoric. The practice is just like that. God chooses to be the steadfast, omnipotent sustainer of the universe on our behalf, no matter what may happen around us. He may allow an enemy to take our lives, but they cannot remove us from His care.

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Again, we covenant to be "His people." We rejoice in the salvation He has graciously given us. In our weakness, we abide under His powerful provision and protection. Whatever may come, we are "His people." We are covenant people.

View Of The Future

The Philippian Christians lived in the midst of pagan people. The Christians were people of hope. Their neighbors were, to a great extent, fatalistic. Whatever happened would happen and they could not change that situation. It is easy to understand why these people had so little in common. The pagan neighbors tended to live by two views:

- a. Their gods were selfish and judgmental. The most they could hope for would be to attempt to placate the anger of their deities.
- b. Their fatalistic view of the future dictated that there would be no ultimate brilliance in their future. What joy and meaning they could hope for could only be what they could grab in the here and now.

These Christians on the other hand, knew there would be present struggles, but the blessing of His hallowed presence both now and beyond the funeral were guaranteed. Thus, Paul could say with great confidence:

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, Philippians 3:13

He spoke joyfully as he described the way God works in our lives:

Who 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. Philippians 3:21

We do not spend much time thinking about our struggle with the forces of evil. Perhaps we should. There are two distinct forms of opposition that confront every believer.

- a. **The personal confrontation** – This is that situation where our enemy attacks each believer at the point of his/her greatest weakness. This being the case, his attack will be different for each of us according to our weakness.
- b. **The cultural confrontation** – In varying degrees and manners, Christians in different cultures will suffer because of their commitment to Jesus Christ. During the communist regimes in China, Russia and other areas, thousands of Christians were imprisoned, abused and killed for their faith. Today in parts of Africa and the East, Christians are killed, abused in humiliating shame and even sold as slaves. We face it, also, but in a more subtle manner. Christianity, here, is not politically correct, so Christians are held up to scorn in movies, theater and music. Enemy forces subject all of Christianity to blame and scorn because of the actions of fringe groups whose conduct is not Christian. In the last decade of the twentieth century, pastors have been sent to American prisons because they started a Christian school and refused to disband it. We have every reason to expect these instances to escalate and become more blatant and destructive.

The Philippian epistle has a message for us as we face our personal and cultural confrontation with the forces of evil. As we take Paul's message more seriously, we too will learn to "rejoice in the Lord" in the midst of our struggle.

THE CONCLUSION