Life For Today
Bible Commentary

The Book Of Philippians

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THE BOOK

OF

PHILIPPIANS

LIFE FOR TODAY

BIBLE COMMENTARY

A N D R E W W O M M A C K

SPECIAL NOTE

These commentary ebooks are just the footnotes from Andrew's Life for Today Study Bible And Commentary. Because these footnotes appear without change from the printed books, there are certain things that may not make sense. For example, the footnotes are numbered in a way that seems confusing in the ebooks; there are references to page numbers and marginal references, *etc*. These all serve a purpose in the **printed books**, but not in the ebook. Understanding that the footnotes originated in a printed book will help avoid confusion.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE

OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS

OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

The letter to the Philippians is one of four written by Paul while he was in prison. The other three are Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon. Philippians was written to the first church established by Paul in Europe, then known as the province of Macedonia (see note 1 at Ac 16:9). Paul visited Philippi on his second missionary journey (see note 1 at Ac 18:22) after receiving a night vision where he saw a man from Macedonia standing before him, earnestly asking him to "come over into Macedonia, and help us" (Ac 16:9).

After receiving this vision, Paul and his companion, Silas (see note 4 at Ac 15:22), immediately endeavored to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called them to preach the Gospel to the people there (Ac 16:10). Paul crossed over into Europe, stopping first at Philippi (see note 6 at Ac 16:12). The Scripture records the meeting and conversion of several people at Philippi. Among them was Lydia (see note 1 at Ac 16:14), a woman of the city of Thyatira (see note 2 at Ac 16:14) whose heart was open to the Lord. She was baptized along with her whole household and was faithful to the Lord (Ac 16:13-15).

Paul cast a demon out of a girl who was possessed with a spirit of divination, and this led to both he and Silas being cast into prison (Ac 16:16-23). This is the incident where Paul and Silas praised God at midnight while their feet were fastened in stocks. The Lord sent an earthquake, opened all the prison cells, and loosed all the prisoners' bands, but not a single prisoner tried to escape. This led to the conversion of the jailer along with his whole family (Ac 16:30-34). There were many other members of the Philippian church who knew Paul but whose stories and conversions we do not know.

Paul's primary reason for writing this letter was to thank the Philippian church for the gift they had sent him in his time of need (Php 4:10-19). He also used this opportunity to encourage them to look confidently to Christ for their joy and unity, and to continue to persevere in their Christian life and faith.

Even though Paul wrote this letter from prison, it contains a constant theme of rejoicing. The words "joy" and "rejoice" were used sixteen times in this short epistle. Paul made it very clear in Php 3 that his personal relationship with the Lord was the key factor in his joy.

Paul had a special affection for the Philippians. They were not only the first fruits of his ministry in Europe but also the only church that contributed to his ministry after he had departed from their city (Php 4:15-16).

It is supposed that Paul wrote what we call the second letter to the Corinthians while he was in Philippi (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to 2 Corinthians, Date and Place of Writing).

RECIPIENTS OF THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS

The Roman colony of Philippi was located in northern Greece (called Macedonia in Paul's day). It was a thriving commercial center at the crossroads between Europe and Asia. The Philippian church displayed a strong missionary zeal. It consisted mostly of Gentile believers; therefore, Paul did not specifically quote any Old Testament passages in this letter.

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

Philippians was probably written to the church at Philippi from Rome sometime in early A.D. 63. This can be deduced from the fact that Paul was imprisoned in Rome during A.D. 62-63. In this letter to the Philippians, Paul mentioned that they had sent offerings to him by Epaphroditus (Php 4:18). While in Rome, Epaphroditus fell sick, and enough time elapsed for word of that to filter back to Philippi (Php 2:26-27). More time elapsed as Paul learned of their concern for Epaphroditus' health. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that this letter to the Philippians, which Paul sent by the hand of Epaphroditus, happened at least one year after Paul arrived in Rome.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul is clearly the author of this epistle, as stated in Php 1:1. Numerous footnotes about Paul are found in Acts (some of the predominant notes are note 4 at Ac 7:58, note 1 at Ac 9:1, note 1 at Ac 9:26, and note 1 at Ac 28:30).

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER 1

PHILIPPIANS 1:1

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

Note 1 at Php 1:1: Although Timothy's name was used with the Apostle Paul's as a fellow sender of this letter, Timothy was probably not a co-author. Throughout this letter, when Timothy is mentioned, he is spoken of in the third person (Php 2:19-24). Paul was the author, and he simply included Timothy in the greeting because Timothy had ministered with him in Philippi and knew these people (see note 1 at Ac 16:1).

Note 2 at Php 1:1: Paul opened this letter not with a list of all his accomplishments and virtues but by identifying himself as a slave of Jesus Christ (Greek: "DOULOS" - see note 1 at Ro 1:1). Carnal people use their past accomplishments to impress others and open doors. Godly people are not out to impress others with themselves, but with who their Master is. Paul was prouder of his Master than he was of his service to his Master.

Paul was quick to note that Jesus had elevated the Philippians to the position of "saints." As believers, all of us have been made saints through what Jesus did for us (see note 5 at Ac 9:13), but not all of us have become slaves. Slavery to Christ is our "reasonable service" (Ro 12:1), but it is voluntary. Faith in Christ as Savior is essential for salvation, and submission to Christ as Lord is essential for victory and true joy in this life.

Note 3 at Php 1:1: Paul mentioned two special groups of people in this verse: bishops and deacons. The word "bishop" is derived from the Greek word "EPISKOPOS." This Greek word was translated "overseers" in Ac 20:28. The word "deacon" (Greek: "DIAKONOS") is probably derived from the Greek word "DIAKO." DIAKO means "to run on errands" (Strong's Concordance). The King James Version translated "deacon" elsewhere as "servant" or "servants" (Mt 22:13, 23:11; Mr 9:35; Joh 2:5, 9, 12:26; Ro 16:1, and 27), and "minister" or "ministers" (Mt 20:26; Mr 10:43; Ro 13:4, 15:8; 1Co 3:5; 2Co 3:6, 6:4, 11:15, 23; Ga 2:17; Eph 3:7, 6:21; Col 1:7, 23, 25, 4:7; 1Th 3:2; and 1Ti 4:6).

The early New Testament church was organized. The "bishop" and the "deacon"

were leadership positions.

Note 4 at Php 1:1: The bishops and deacons were the leadership of the church at Philippi. Notice that those outside of leadership were called saints. This clearly identifies every believer as a saint. There is no scriptural basis for elevating just a few Christians to an elite status of sainthood.

PHILIPPIANS 1:2

Grace [be] unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and [from] the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note 5 at Php 1:2: As explained in note 2 at Ro 5:1, the only way we can experience true peace is through being reconciled to God by grace. Grace and peace always go together.

PHILIPPIANS 1:3

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

Note 1 at Php 1:3: The proper motivation for all ministry is love for God. If ministers only shared the Word because of the friendships they could make and other positive benefits, they wouldn't be ministering long. Be that as it may, it is wonderful when the Gospel is received and relationships are made. Paul expressed some of that joy here.

The Philippians were some of Paul's closest friends, and it shows in this statement. He rejoiced every time he thought of them. That's quite a testimony. I'm sure there were other groups he ministered to that didn't bring a smile to his face when he thought of them. The Philippians had supported Paul more than any other church (Php 4:15-16).

Note 2 at Php 1:3: The Greek word "MNEIA," which was translated "remembrance" here, was also translated "mention" in Ro 1:9, Eph 1:16, and Phm 4. In each of those instances, it is clear that Paul was speaking of praying for those people. In this instance, Paul went on to mention his prayers for the Philippians (Php 1:4), so the remembrances he was referring to here were times of prayer. As he prayed and the Philippians came to his mind, he always rejoiced for the fellowship he had with them in the Gospel (Php 1:5).

PHILIPPIANS 1:4

Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

Note 3 at Php 1:4: Certainly, Paul was a man who was in communion with God. Therefore, for Paul to remember the Philippians "always in every prayer" was very often. This attests to the love that Paul had for the Philippians (see note 1 at Php 1:3).

PHILIPPIANS 1:5

For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

Note 4 at Php 1:5: Why is it that Paul had such joy and thanksgiving every time he thought of the Philippians? He gave the answer here. It was because of their "fellowship in the gospel." The word "fellowship" was translated from the Greek word "KOINONIA," and this Greek word means "partnership, *i.e.* (literally) participation" (Strong's Concordance). This word was translated "contribution" in Ro 15:26 and "distribution" in 2Co 9:13. Both of these words were dealing with finances.

Paul very clearly stated, later in this same letter (Php 4:15-16), that the Philippians were the only church that supported him in the beginning of his ministry. One of the reasons Paul had such fond thoughts about the Philippians was that they had sacrificially supported him with their finances. Certainly, there were other things involved, but finances were one of the important ways the Philippians showed their love and support for Paul.

Note 5 at Php 1:5: As explained in note 4 at this verse, Paul was referring to the Philippians' support for him, including financial contributions. Here, he said that this support was "from the first day until now." Certainly, one of the things that caused Paul to rejoice every time he thought of the Philippians was their faithfulness over a period of time.

It is a blessing to have people express their love to any degree, but, sad to say, this type of fellowship doesn't typically last very long. Partnerships are hard to maintain. Many things work against partnerships, and most don't last long. It is a real joy to ministers to have people who were ministered to many years ago remember them and still support the work they are doing.

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

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

Note 6 at Php 1:6: Paul had confidence in the Lord that what He had started in the Philippians, He would also continue and complete. That is not to say that the Philippians' success was automatic; believers have to cooperate with what God is wanting to do in their lives (see note 10 at Ac 27:22). Man's faithfulness may always be suspect, but God's faithfulness is never in question. It is always God's will to continue and complete the good work that He begins in His children.

Note 7 at Php 1:6: "The day of Jesus Christ" that Paul was speaking of here is the second coming of Christ (see note 4 at Ac 1:7). Paul was confident that the salvation given to them through faith in Christ would be secure until Christ returned and their physical bodies were changed into His image (Php 3:21).

PHILIPPIANS 1:7

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

Note 8 at Php 1:7: It was right for the Apostle Paul to be confident that the good work begun in the Philippian believers would continue, because they had become partakers of the same grace that Paul had. Paul knew firsthand just how strong the grace of God was, and he knew it would sustain the Philippians. It had worked for him, and it would work for them as well.

PHILIPPIANS 1:8

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

Note 9 at Php 1:8: "For God is my record" is an expression that Paul used to convey the fact that God was the one who really knew and could testify to the truthfulness of what was in Paul's heart. This strengthens the truthfulness of Paul's statement. Similar expressions used by Paul are found in Ro 1:9; 2Co 1:23; 1Th 2:5, and 10.

Note 10 at Php 1:8: The Greek word "SPLAGCHNON," translated "bowels" here, was also translated "tender mercy" in Lu 1:78. The New International Version rendered this word as "affection" in this verse. The belief of Paul's day was that the seat of the affections was located in the bowels of a person. Today we speak of the heart as being the seat of our emotions. Neither one of these words are to be taken literally. It is speaking of our emotions.

PHILIPPIANS 1:9

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and [in] all judgment;

Note 11 at Php 1:9: As Peter so aptly put it in 2Pe 1:3, "his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him." Even love is based on knowledge. Our love can be increased with the correct knowledge and diminished with the wrong knowledge.

We have all experienced an increased love for someone as we learn of some special thing that person has done for us. Likewise, we have all experienced a loss of love when we have discovered things that someone we love has done to hurt us. Our knowledge influences our emotions. The more we know of God and His ways, the more our love for God and others will abound.

Note 12 at Php 1:9: The knowledge that is being spoken of here is spiritual understanding of God's love. Judgment is the ability to use or apply that knowledge correctly. Paul was saying that as we gain spiritual understanding of God's love and learn to apply it correctly in our relationships, then the manifestation of God's love in our lives will increase dramatically.

PHILIPPIANS 1:10

That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

Note 13 at Php 1:10: The New International Version translates this phrase as "you may be able to discern what is best." Paul was saying that increasing our understanding (see note 11 at Php 1:9) and application (see note 12 at Php 1:9) of God's love will cause us to have better discernment about right and wrong (see note 10 at Eph 3:18).

Note 14 at Php 1:10: All of the things listed in Php 1:10-11 are the results of having our love abound through knowledge and judgment (Php 1:9). We receive the love of God through faith at salvation. We then increase our experience of God's love through knowledge and judgment. This leads to better discernment of what's right and wrong (see note 13 at this verse), and produces sincerity (pureness) that results in us walking without offense. If these things are working in us, then the fruits of righteousness follow, causing glory and praise to God (Php 1:11).

PHILIPPIANS 1:12

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

Note 1 at Php 1:12: Paul, the prisoner, was trying to comfort those who were not in prison. He didn't want them to feel badly about his situation, so he tried to get them to look at things the way he did. His imprisonment was worth it because it advanced the kingdom of God. Most people would find this of little comfort, because most people are more concerned with advancing themselves than they are with advancing the kingdom of God. Paul's heart and focus were so fixed on God that any price he had to pay, even imprisonment or death, was justified if it brought glory to God. What an attitude!

PHILIPPIANS 1:13

So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other [places];

Note 2 at Php 1:13: As a result of Paul's imprisonment, all the soldiers of the emperor's house were exposed to the Gospel of Christ. The phrase "all other places" reveals that the general public was also aware of Paul's situation and had come into contact with the claims of Christianity through it.

PHILIPPIANS 1:14

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

Note 3 at Php 1:14: Paul's uncompromising stand and the way that it was furthering the Gospel had encouraged others to be bolder in their presentation of the Gospel. Anytime we show strength in the face of adversity, the Lord uses that to motivate others to achieve the same level of commitment. Courage inspires courage.

PHILIPPIANS 1:15

Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

Note 4 at Php 1:15: Two totally different motives were spoken of here. Some people ministered out of envy and strife--that is, from a jealous and quarrelsome spirit (see note 5 at Php 1:16)--while others ministered from pure motives, right intentions, and good will. Today, as in Paul's day, the preaching of Christ is done both out of love for the Lord and also out of contention and insincerity. Whether the Word is preached from good motivation or bad, the Word is what "works"--not the messenger. Therefore, we can rejoice that Christ is being preached even when wrong motives are behind it.

PHILIPPIANS 1:16

The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

Note 5 at Php 1:16: What was Paul referring to? How can a person motivated by contention and insincerity preach Christ? How could that have added affliction to the imprisonment that Paul was already suffering?

This is probably referring to people who had heard the claims Paul made about Jesus being raised from the dead but didn't believe him. As they repeated these details to others in mockery, the Gospel of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection was spreading, and the Holy Spirit could use that. Regardless of the motives, the Truth was spreading. Paul was rejoicing that people were being exposed to the claims of Christianity.

PHILIPPIANS 1:17

But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

Note 6 at Php 1:17: Many true believers were inspired by Paul's faithfulness in the face of persecution, and they had become even bolder in their presentation of the Gospel. Paul's obvious love for the Lord had caused them to love God more and to love the Apostle Paul also for his selfless example. All this advanced the Gospel.

PHILIPPIANS 1:18

What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

Note 7 at Php 1:18: If Christ was being talked about to people who had never heard of Him before, Paul found reason to rejoice. Paul didn't care about himself. He was single in his focus of the advancement of the kingdom. People couldn't believe on Jesus if they hadn't heard of Him and what He had accomplished (Ro 10:17). So, regardless of the motive, Paul rejoiced that the details of Christ's death and resurrection were being proclaimed.

PHILIPPIANS 1:19

For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Note 8 at Php 1:19: The word "salvation" was translated from the Greek word "SOTERIA," and this Greek word means "rescue or safety" (Strong's Concordance). It can be referring to either physical or spiritual salvation. Therefore, some people have interpreted Paul's statements here to mean that he was predicting his release from jail. Yet, in the very next verse (which is still the same sentence), Paul stated that he didn't know if the outcome of his imprisonment would be life or death. That would lead us to believe that Paul was speaking of his eternal salvation in this verse and not a temporal deliverance from prison.

The Scriptures teach that rewards are given to those who endure persecution for the Gospel's sake (see note 6 at Mt 10:42). Paul was saying that he would be rewarded for his stand for the Gospel and the impact he was making whether the listeners mocked him or emulated him.

PHILIPPIANS 1:20

According to my earnest expectation and [my] hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but [that] with all boldness, as always, [so] now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether [it be] by life, or by death.

Note 9 at Php 1:20: Paul didn't just hope that he would glorify the Lord with his actions; he had an earnest expectation and hope. The difference between excellence and mediocrity is often not what is believed but the degree to which something is believed. Paul was fully persuaded (see note 13 at Ro 4:21).

Note 10 at Php 1:20: This wasn't the first time Paul had been bold. He was expressing his earnest expectation and hope that he would again be bold in the face of death, like he always had been. One of the reasons people fold under pressure is because they wait until the "big" situations to believe God. If they have not learned to trust God in the small things, they will not be able to trust Him in the big things.

When David fought Goliath (1Sa 17), everyone mocked him because of his belief that he could win. Goliath was a giant, and David was only a small boy. But David said something very important in his defense. In 1Sa 17:34-37, David revealed that this was not the first time he had depended on God for a victory against something bigger than himself. Before facing Goliath, he had killed a lion and a bear with his bare hands. He knew he could defeat Goliath with God's help.

Paul could be confident of the outcome of his actions, regardless of the cost, because he had put his faith to the test many times before. Paul had lived a life of boldness for many years. Faith must be developed, much like a muscle. Those who wait until the day of the contest to start training are going to lose. That's not the way it works in the natural or in the spiritual.

Note 11 at Php 1:20: Many people are committed to the Lord and the furtherance of His kingdom, because they trust they will come out on top with Him. However, very few people are committed to the Lord when it begins to cost them personally. Paul's commitment was the same whether the personal results were

life or death. Paul had died to himself. You can't kill a dead man (see note 11 at 2Co 1:9).

PHILIPPIANS 1:21

For to me to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain.

Note 12 at Php 1:21: What is life all about? What is the purpose of one's existence? What is to be gained in life? What do people live for? Paul answered these questions by saying that the process of life and continuous living is only to be found in Christ. Paul indicated that true life is only to be found in Christ. It is not to be found in prestige, fortune, fame, or things, but only in the one who is life--Jesus Christ (Joh 14:6; 1Jo 1:1-2, 5:12, and 20). This life is a quality of life, not a quantity of time. God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son (1Jo 5:11).

When we say so-and-so is "my life," we mean that all of our attention is given to, our focus is directed toward, and our purpose in living revolves around that person. In a similar way, Paul's sole purpose was to be totally consumed with Christ and His life. To Paul, life was Christ. We should have the same attitude.

Note 13 at Php 1:21: The word "gain" means to advance or progress. Many people do not have this perspective that death is better than life. Those who are not born again go directly into eternal torment (see note 4 at Mr 3:29 and note 13 at Mt 5:22), but for those who are born again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3), death is the doorway that brings them into the very presence of God. Death is promotion for the saint.

Fear of death causes people to compromise their convictions and brings them into bondage (Heb 2:15). Understanding that death ushers the believer into an existence that is infinitely better than life here on earth breaks all fear and allows believers to act as instructed by the Lord, regardless of the consequences. Death is not the end; it is just the beginning for those who put their faith in Christ.

PHILIPPIANS 1:22

But if I live in the flesh, this [is] the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not.

Note 14 at Php 1:22: The New International Version translates this verse as "If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me." Other translations follow the same thought. However, it seems clearer and more in line with the context to interpret it differently.

Paul had been speaking of his imprisonment throughout this chapter. He was saying, "My present circumstances (imprisonment) are the result of my life in the flesh, yet I am torn between two choices. I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is best for me, but it is more beneficial for you for me to stay here with you."

Despite the fact that Paul suffered more than most (1Co 4:9 and 2Co 12:7), he was willing to bear that pain for the sake of others.

Note 15 at Php 1:22: "I wot not" is an old English phrase for "I don't know." Paul was having trouble deciding between life and death. Not many people struggle with that choice. Many of those who long for death are not doing so because of a desire to be with Christ but because of a desire to escape some hardship in this life. Paul was different. He had such a vibrant relationship with Christ that he had to use his faith to stay in his physical body.

This was one reason Paul was so bold and effective. No one could intimidate or scare him. Paul had already resolved the issue of death. He wasn't afraid to die; he was looking forward to it. This made him fearless and focused. We should be like him.

PHILIPPIANS 1:23

For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

Note 16 at Php 1:23: Paul was pulled in two directions: desiring to leave this life and be with Christ, and desiring to remain alive for the sake of the saints. In Php 1:25, he revealed his choice. He chose to stay in this life so that others might progress in the furtherance and joy of their faith. Paul's staying caused many to glorify Christ for Paul's safety and his visit to them again.

Note 17 at Php 1:23: Paul's way of thinking here is not the most common way of viewing things, even among Christians, but this really is impeccable logic. If we seriously thought about what the Scriptures teach us about our life with Christ after this physical life, we would all think like Paul. The things prepared for us (Joh 14:2-3) are so wonderful that we can't totally comprehend them with our finite minds (1Jo 3:1). We need to value our eternal lives more and our temporal lives less. This would solve many problems and remove a lot of grief.

PHILIPPIANS 1:24

Nevertheless to abide in the flesh [is] more needful for you.

Note 18 at Php 1:24: Paul had a vision of heaven that made him long to go there, yet he was remaining in his physical body for the sake of others. Most people are clinging to this physical life for selfish reasons. Paul was clinging to it for totally unselfish reasons. Only when people lose their lives (die to self and live for Christ and others) do they truly find out what life is all about (Mt 10:39).

PHILIPPIANS 1:25

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

Note 19 at Php 1:25: The way Paul spoke in these verses indicates that he had the power to choose whether he lived or died. This has to be understood in light of the scripture that says, "It is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb 9:27). No one lives forever unless he or she is among those who remain at the second coming of the Lord. However, through faith, believers can prolong their days on the earth or shorten them through unbelief.

PHILIPPIANS 1:26

That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

Note 20 at Php 1:26: Paul knew that his return to Philippi would bring joy and rejoicing to the saints there. That's awesome! Paul didn't have some false humility that made him see himself as a worm. He knew that he was nothing in himself, but he also knew who he was in the Lord and that God's power in him made him someone that these Philippians loved and longed to see again. Contrast note 9 at Eph 3:8 and note 2 at 2 Co 12:11.

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

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

Note 21 at Php 1:27: The New King James Version translates this phrase as "let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ." The word "conversation," as used in the King James Version, always refers to behavior, conduct, or a manner of life. In the Greek text, "conversation" is conveyed as a present imperative. That means Paul was giving a command concerning habit and lifestyle. Paul was promoting godly living that will glorify the Gospel of Christ. Grace is the only proper motivation for living a truly godly life.

Note 22 at Php 1:27: As Paul discussed holy living (see note 21 at this verse), he turned to one of his favorite themes--unity among the believers (see note 1 at 1Co 1:10). Jesus said this is the greatest witness we can give the world (see note 3 at Joh 13:35). Other acts of holiness are minor compared to loving the brethren. Those of us who focus on moral acts of holiness more than loving our brethren are missing the mark. If we can't love our brother whom we have seen, how can we expect to love God whom we cannot see (1Jo 4:20)?

PHILIPPIANS 1:28

And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

Note 23 at Php 1:28: The word "terrified" in the Greek is a strong term referring to the shying away of a horse that has been startled. The "adversaries" who caused this fear were unbelievers who showed hatred and hostility to the Philippian believers. So, Paul was speaking of persecution against the Philippian believers. The persecution these adversaries brought against the Philippians was a token that the persecutors were headed for perdition. If they were true believers, they would not be fighting their own.

On the other hand, to those who are the persecuted, persecution is a token that they are truly born again. Jesus taught that godly people would be persecuted (Mt 5:10-12), and so did Paul (2Ti 3:12). The fact that these believers were being persecuted confirmed their salvation and, at the same time, revealed their persecutors as being enemies of Christ with the result of eternal perdition.

The suffering of persecution is not an indication of divine disapproval but rather a sign of true adoption into the family of God. We are called not only to believe in Christ but also to suffer for His sake (Php 1:29). The Philippians were experiencing the same type of persecution that Paul was going through (Php 1:30). Paul was stating to the Philippian believers that they were in this fight together and should therefore receive encouragement and strength from each other.

PHILIPPIANS 1:29

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

Note 24 at Php 1:29: Suffering persecution is not just for missionaries in foreign lands. 2Ti 3:12 says, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." All Christians who live godly lives will be persecuted. The only Christians who are not persecuted are those who are not living godly lives.

True Christianity is exactly opposite of the whole world system. We are headed in a selfless direction, while the world is consumed with self. Jesus teaches us to love, while the world is full of hate. We are supposed to turn the other cheek, while the world takes this as another opportunity to hurt us. The world and Christianity are in conflict. The only reason any of us would not suffer persecution is if we were headed in the same direction as the unbelievers. When we go God's way, we will bump into the devil.

Persecution isn't always life threatening or physically abusive. Some of the most subtle persecution is just rejection or mockery.

PHILIPPIANS 1:30

Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear [to be] in me.

Note 25 at Php 1:30: The Philippians had come under persecution just like Paul. They had seen Paul and Silas thrown in jail (Ac 16:23) on their first visit to Philippi, and they had heard how Paul had been imprisoned in Jerusalem (Ac 21:33) and then sent to Rome (Ac 25:11). Here they were, experiencing persecution as well.

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER 2

PHILIPPIANS 2:1

If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

Note 1 at Php 2:1: The word "if" is used four times in this verse, but these are not really four questions. In the Greek, these clauses do not covey doubt but are used for emphasis. The "ifs" could have been translated "since." Since there is consolation in Christ, since His love comforts us, since we have fellowship with Him through the Spirit, and since our hearts are full of His mercy. Since the Lord has done all these things for us, we should love our fellow believers (Php 2:2). If God could love us, then we should love each other.

Note 2 at Php 2:1: The word "consolation" means "a comfort" (American Heritage Dictionary). The New International Version translates this word as "encouragement." It is a major understatement to say that we are comforted and encouraged through Christ.

PHILIPPIANS 2:2

Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, [being] of one accord, of one mind.

Note 3 at Php 2:2: Of course the answer to all the "ifs" in this verse is a resounding yes! There is consolation and comfort of love in Christ, there is an awesome fellowship with the Holy Spirit, and tremendous mercies have been bestowed on us through Christ. Therefore, Paul was using the marvelous blessings given unto us as motivation for us giving back to God. What Paul encouraged us to give to the Lord is a humble heart in our dealings with other believers, resulting in unity.

Note 4 at Php 2:2: Paul's joy was the unity of the body of Christ. Many Christians don't find any joy in seeing the members of Christ's body in unity. In fact, many people don't believe this is possible. However, it is possible, and the goal of every Christian should be to walk in love with the brethren.

Note 5 at Php 2:2: As pointed out in my note at 1Co 1:10, the unity Paul was speaking of is much deeper than what most of us today can believe or comprehend. He was speaking of being of one accord and one mind. This means we are to think the same way. How can that happen? Paul went on to explain that it happens through humility. Pride is at the root of all division (Pr 13:10). Until pride is dealt with, there will be no true unity. As long as pride is prevalent, division will be too.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3

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

Note 6 at Php 2:3: Humility can be defined in many ways, one of which is the absence of pride. Typically, pride is described as arrogance, but that is just one dimension of pride. Timidness is also pride, because, in its simplest terms, pride is self-centeredness, and a timid or shy person is very self-centered. Paul gave the antidote to self-centeredness here: esteeming others better than oneself.

Note 7 at Php 2:3: How can we esteem others better than ourselves when, in truth, we really think we are better than others? Some people are better athletes than others, some are better businesspeople than others, some are better speakers than others, and so forth.

First, we need to recognize that our accomplishments don't make us better than others. There is a difference between what we do and who we are. Better performance does not make better people. People's character can be severely wanting even though their performance is good. A classic example of this is found in the Pharisees of Jesus' day. They did the right things for all the wrong reasons. Inside they were corrupt (see note 4 at Lu 6:7 and note 21 at Mt 23:26). Our evaluation of others needs to change. God judges by looking on the inside, not the outside (1Sa 16:7). We need to esteem others on this same basis.

Second, to esteem others better than ourselves simply means to value them more than we value ourselves. To some, that may seem impossible, but it isn't. That is exactly what Jesus did, and Paul used Jesus as the model for what he was preaching here in the next few verses (Php 2:5-11). If Jesus, who was God in the flesh (1Ti 3:16), could humble Himself and value the good of others above His own welfare, then we should certainly be able to do the same. It can happen when we die to self and live to God (see note 3 at Ro 6:2).

PHILIPPIANS 2:4

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

Note 8 at Php 2:4: The way we implement the instruction of the previous verse to esteem others better than ourselves is to look at their side of things instead of seeing everything through selfish eyes. If we think only about ourselves, we will be selfish. If we get out of self and think more about the benefit of others than the benefit of self, then we will be selfless. It's a matter of focus. Whichever side of things we focus on is the side we will take. Therefore, "look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

PHILIPPIANS 2:5

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Note 1 at Php 2:5: The understood subject of this sentence is the word "you." Paul was saying, "You let this mind be in you." Through the new birth, the Lord has given us the mind of Christ (see note 6 at 1Co 2:16), but it is still our choice to let this mind function in us.

Note 2 at Php 2:5: The phrase "let this mind" (King James Version) or "have this attitude" (New American Standard Version) is in the present imperative; that means it carries the idea of a commitment or a way of doing something as a lifestyle or a general habit. It primarily denotes a state of mind and an inward attitude rather than an act of thinking. Paul was speaking here about an attitude of heart expressed as a lifestyle.

Note 3 at Php 2:5: We are seeing an insight into the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself described in Php 2:5-8. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh, and He certainly would have been justified in being arrogant. Yet, He was just the opposite. Paul was drawing on the attitude that Jesus displayed toward us, in order to encourage us to treat others with the same selfless love. The New International Version says, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus."

PHILIPPIANS 2:6

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

Note 4 at Php 2:6: Jesus in His preexistent state was in the form of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Joh 1:1). The Greek word "MORPHE" was translated "form" here. This Greek word means "the nature or essence" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). Jesus was God manifest in the flesh (1Ti 3:16).

However, Jesus did not demand or cling to His rights as God. He laid aside His divine rights and privileges in order to take the form of a servant and be made in the likeness of man. He further humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the Father, even to the point of death.

This was the supreme sacrifice that identified Jesus totally with humanity and enabled God to redeem mankind. By dying a criminal's death upon the cross, Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy in De 21:23 and bore our curse in His own body. This redeemed us from that curse and opened wide God's blessing of justification through faith in Christ and the promise of His Holy Spirit (Ga 3:13-14).

Note 5 at Php 2:6: Paul was saying that Jesus did not think it was unjust to be equal with God. The reason He thought that way was because, in truth, He was equal with God. Jesus is God. This is a very clear reference to the deity of Jesus.

It is unfortunate that the New International Version translates this verse as "Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped." This leaves the impression that Jesus wasn't divine, and the NIV Study Bible presents that as one interpretation of this verse. Yet the first part of the verse, even in the NIV, says Jesus was "in very nature God."

The Message translates this verse as "He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what." The whole point of Paul's statements is to show how much Jesus humbled Himself for our sake. The example is seriously weakened if it is presumed that Jesus wasn't God, and it would violate many scriptures that present the deity of Christ.

PHILIPPIANS 2:7

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

Note 6 at Php 2:7: The decision for Jesus to become flesh was not forced upon Him. He chose that path of His own volition.

Note 7 at Php 2:7: The phrase "made himself of no reputation" is simply describing how Jesus humbled Himself. The American Heritage Dictionary defines "reputation" as "1. The general estimation in which a person is held by the public. 2. The state or situation of being held in high esteem." Jesus came from being recognized and worshiped by all the hosts of heaven as the Supreme God, to being a man, despised and rejected.

Note 8 at Php 2:7: The Creator became the creation. The Lord became the servant. The Highest became the lowest. All of this was done because of God's great love for us.

PHILIPPIANS 2:8

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Note 9 at Php 2:8: It is very significant that Jesus was "found" in fashion as a man. Jesus was the preexistent God who chose to become a man so that He could redeem us by His own blood sacrifice. When He became a man, He was still 100 percent God in His spirit, but His physical body was 100 percent human. His body was sinless, but it was still flesh and subject to the natural things everyone experiences. The physical Jesus had to grow in wisdom and in stature (Lu 2:52).

When Jesus was born, His physical mind did not know all things. He had to be taught how to talk, walk, eat, and so forth. He had to learn that He was God in the flesh and accept that by faith. That's why the word "found" is used in this verse. He found Himself in the form of a man. His physical mind grew in awareness of who He was. He had the witness in His spirit, but His physical mind had to "take it by faith"--the same way that we do when we believe who we are in the spiritual realm.

When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he began by saying, "If thou be the Son of God" (Mt 4:3, 6; Lu 4:3, and 9). Satan was not just expressing his own doubts; he was trying to get Jesus to doubt who He was (see note 2 at Mt 4:3). Jesus' mental comprehension of His deity was something He learned and took by faith. Jesus had to become aware of His true identity through revelation knowledge (see note 1 at Lu 2:26).

Note 10 at Php 2:8: Remember that Paul was using Jesus as an example of how we should "let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Php 2:3-4). Jesus is the supreme example of selflessness and putting others ahead of Himself.

We see clearly from Jesus' example that the way to exaltation in God's kingdom comes through humility and servanthood to others. Paul's example of Christ's humiliation is not only a lesson in Christology but also an example to all believers of what greatness in God's kingdom entails. Let this attitude of heart, Paul declared, taken from the example of Jesus Christ, continue to motivate all true believers in Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:9

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

Note 11 at Php 2:9: The exaltation cited in this verse is in reference to Christ's ascension and glorification at the right hand of the Father. Because of Christ's humility and obedience, God has given Him a name that is above every name in heaven, in earth, and under the earth (Php 2:10). There is no exemption for anyone or anything from coming under the Lordship of Jesus. He is Lord of all.

Note 12 at Php 2:9: Jesus has not only been exalted above every "being" that has a name, but He is also highly exalted above anything else that can be named. If you can put a name on it, Jesus is above it. Sickness, poverty, depression, anger--everything has to bow its knee to the Lordship of Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 2:10

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;

Note 13 at Php 2:10: Every knee of man, angels, and demons will bow and confess that Jesus is Lord. Those who have denied His existence will bow in worship. Those who have spent their lives rebelling at His authority will finally bow in submission. Every being from all ages will ultimately bow and worship Jesus.

If we bow our knees to His Lordship now, we will enjoy wonderful lives here, and an eternity in His blessings hereafter. Those who deny His rightful claim to the Lordship of their lives will suffer for it in this life as well as the next and will still have to bow their knees to His authority anyway. There is nothing to gain and everything to lose if people refuse to make Jesus their Lord.

Note 14 at Php 2:10: The King James Version has inserted the word "things" three times in this verse. This word is in italics, indicating that it is not included in the original Greek text. Most likely, the word "things" refers to the angels in heaven, mankind on earth, and demons, or residents of the underworld. The Today's English Version translates Php 2:10-11 as "And so, in honor of the name of Jesus all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below will fall on their knees, and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

PHILIPPIANS 2:11

And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Note 15 at Php 2:11: Jesus Christ is referred to as "Savior" twice in the book of Acts, while He is referred to as "Lord" over one hundred times. This emphasizes the importance the early church put on complete submission to the authority of Jesus in their lives. In the epistles as well, He is called "Lord" hundreds of times.

Ro 10:9 is probably one of the most important focal points of the confession of Jesus' Lordship. It states, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." The New English Bible, Revised Standard Version, Today's English Version, The New International Version, and Williams New Testament all translate Ro 10:9 as confessing "Jesus is Lord."

PHILIPPIANS 2:12

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Note 1 at Php 2:12: Here, the Philippians were encouraged by Paul to be faithful in his absence as they had been in his presence. Notice that he did not tell them to work for their salvation; rather, he told them to work out their salvation (see note 2 at this verse).

Note 2 at Php 2:12: Salvation is what God did for us through Jesus Christ. It is the gift of God (see note 4 at Ro 6:23) that can only be received by faith. When we put our faith in Jesus as our Lord, God puts salvation and all its blessings in us (Php 2:13), but we have to work it out.

The phrase "work out" was translated from the Greek verb "KATERGAZOMAI," and according to Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, it means "'to carry out to the goal, to carry to its ultimate conclusion.' We say, 'The student worked out a problem in arithmetic.' That is, he carried the problem to its ultimate conclusion. This is the way it is used here. The Philippians are exhorted to carry their salvation to its ultimate conclusion, namely, Christlikeness."

Php 2:13 reveals there is a divine enablement that wills and is able to perform God's bidding in our lives, but there is an effort on our part too. We have to work it out. This work needs to be understood in the light of the labor spoken of in Heb 4. We are to cease from trust in ourselves and rest in the Lord. That takes effort.

Note 3 at Php 2:12: The Amplified Bible translates the last part of this verse as "work out (cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete) your own salvation with reverence and awe and trembling (self-distrust, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ)."

PHILIPPIANS 2:13

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.

Note 4 at Php 2:13: God is always leading our born-again spirits, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in the direction of His will. That's what pleases Him. Yet, we have a say in what takes place in our lives. God puts it in, but we have to work it out (see note 2 at Php 2:12).

PHILIPPIANS 2:14

Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

Note 5 at Php 2:14: When we let God work in our lives, to will and to do His good pleasure, we become free from murmurings and disputings.

The word "murmurings" is the Greek word "GONGYSMOS," and it was translated in the New Testament twice as "murmuring" (Joh 7:12 and Ac 6:1), once as "murmurings" (this verse), and once as "grudging" (1Pe 4:9). Its Greek meaning carries the idea of "a murmuring, muttering" (Vine's Expository Dictionary) and a displeasure and complaining that is more private in nature than public; i.e., a "secret displeasure, not openly avowed" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon).

The word "disputings" was translated from the Greek word "DIALOGISMOS." This word was also translated "doubtful" in Ro 14:1 and "doubting" in 1Ti 2:8. It carries the idea of arguing and quarreling that does not bring about the righteous life that God desires (Jas 1:20).

PHILIPPIANS 2:15

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

Note 6 at Php 2:15: There are two areas of our lives where we need to be blameless and harmless--in our spirits and in our flesh. Our spirits were made blameless and harmless at salvation, and this condition doesn't fluctuate according to our performance. Col 1:21-22 says, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight."

The way we become blameless and harmless in our flesh is to cease from murmurings and disputings (Php 2:14). As long as we are murmuring or disputing (see note 5 at Php 2:14), we are not blameless and we certainly aren't harmless.

Note 7 at Php 2:15: The New International Version translates "without rebuke" as "without fault." The Greek word used here literally means "that cannot be censured, blameless" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon).

Note 8 at Php 2:15: Some of us are intimidated by the "lights" (witness) of other Christians. We feel our testimony is not as dramatic as others and, therefore, are fearful of witnessing. We need to remember how dark our world is. Instead of comparing our light to that of other believers, compare it to the darkness.

We live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation that is so dark, flickering candlelight can be blinding. Any of us who feel that our light isn't bright enough just need to find a darker place to take it, and our light will become a beacon. We are the only light some people will ever see. We need to let it shine!

PHILIPPIANS 2:16

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

Note 9 at Php 2:16: It is not enough just to let our lights shine through our actions. That is an important part of it, but just being good without giving the credit for our goodness to God is not enough. We have to speak God's Word too.

1Pe 1:23 says, "Being born again...by the word of God." Holy living doesn't result in people being born again; the Word of God does. Our actions and attitudes are important to open people up to the Word of God. It's like plowing the ground to receive the seed. But it's the seed that produces fruit, not the plow. Likewise, it's God's Word that saves people, not our actions.

Paul coupled righteous living (Php 2:14-15) and speaking God's Word (this verse) together in these verses.

Note 10 at Php 2:16: If the Philippians had let their light shine (Php 2:15) by speaking God's Word (this verse), then Paul will rejoice on the Day of Judgment when he sees that his fruit (the Philippians) remained (Joh 15:16). He will know that his efforts were not in vain.

On the other hand, if the Philippians didn't persevere until the end, Paul's labor could have been in vain (see note 1 at Mt 12:31 and note 4 at Ga 4:11).

PHILIPPIANS 2:17

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

Note 11 at Php 2:17: The Greek word used here for "offered" is "SPENDO," and it means "to pour out as a drink-offering" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). The figurative meaning of this word is "one whose blood is poured out in a violent death for the cause of God" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon).

Paul was thinking of his possible martyrdom. Shortly before his death, Paul wrote a letter to Timothy in which he stated, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2Ti 4:6). The word "offered" used in that verse was also SPENDO. These are the only two passages in the New Testament containing this word.

The sacrificial drink offerings of the Jews were usually poured out around the altar. The drink offerings offered in heathen sacrifices were usually poured upon the sacrifice. Paul was using a metaphor that was more understandable to the Philippian believers, who had been converted from paganism.

Note 12 at Php 2:17: Paul was saying that if he was martyred because of his efforts to preach the Gospel, he would have joy and rejoice. What an attitude! This reiterates what he said earlier in this letter about only wanting God to be glorified. It didn't matter if he lived or died as long as Christ was exalted (see note 11 at Php 1:20).

PHILIPPIANS 2:18

For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

Note 13 at Php 2:18: It is amazing that Paul would joy and rejoice even if he was martyred, but he was saying that the Philippians should joy and rejoice with him if that happened. It's an honor to be martyred. There are great rewards and a better resurrection to be gained for martyrs of the faith (Heb 11:35). This is not the attitude of most saints, but it was the attitude of the Apostle Paul. It will also be the attitude of all of those who share Paul's belief that "to die is gain" (Php 1:21).

PHILIPPIANS 2:19

But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

Note 1 at Php 2:19: We can learn a good example from Paul here. Not only did Paul lead the Philippians to saving faith in Christ, but also his genuine interest in their spiritual welfare led him to send his most trusted companion--Timothy--to them. If ever Paul needed Timothy at his side, it was then during his imprisonment. Even in the worst trial of Paul's life, he was putting the needs of others ahead of his own.

Paul was willing to send Timothy to minister to the Philippians in his place. Paul's letter and Timothy's ministry would certainly have encouraged the Philippian church, and Paul was looking forward to the good news that he would hear from them.

PHILIPPIANS 2:20

For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

Note 2 at Php 2:20: Paul had some wonderful companions who were mightily used of God, but there was only one who had the same way of thinking as Paul. Paul had just expressed one of his radical attitudes; he rejoiced even at the thought of death. We can suppose that Timothy had that attitude too.

Out of all the relationships we make in a lifetime, there are only a few that are "Timothy" relationships. These are special and "low maintenance" compared to others. They just happen "naturally" (actually supernaturally).

Note 3 at Php 2:20: Paul stated of Timothy, "There is no one else here who sees things as I do" (New English Bible). The Greek word for "likeminded" is "ISOPSUCHOS," and it is derived from two Greek words: "ISOS," meaning "similar" (Strong's Concordance), and "PSUCHE," the Greek word for "soul" in the New Testament. Thus ISOPSUCHOS means "equal [or similar] in soul" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, brackets mine), one who sees things the same. Timothy had similar interests and concerns as Paul.

PHILIPPIANS 2:21

For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

Note 4 at Php 2:21: There may have been many things that made Timothy "likeminded" with Paul, but the thing that Paul mentioned was that Timothy was not self-seeking. That was one of Paul's dominant traits and the main trait that made Timothy a faithful messenger whom Paul could totally trust.

PHILIPPIANS 2:22

But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

Note 5 at Php 2:22: Timothy had proven himself. Many people desire to have others trust them as Paul trusted Timothy, but few are willing to earn that trust. Some even get upset if that trust is not extended toward them, and they try to demand it. Faithful people, however, are so busy being faithful, they never demand anything. If trust isn't given, they just work harder. Trust can not be demanded. It has to be earned.

PHILIPPIANS 2:23

Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

Note 6 at Php 2:23: Paul was speaking about his sentencing. He was in prison in Rome and awaiting the sentence handed down from Caesar. Before he sent Timothy back to Philippi, he wanted to know the verdict so that Timothy could inform his friends at Philippi.

PHILIPPIANS 2:24

But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.

Note 7 at Php 2:24: There are different opinions on whether or not Paul ever got out of prison, but this verse reveals that Paul was expecting to be released from prison. See note 1 at Ac 28:30 for other possible scripture references to Paul's release.

PHILIPPIANS 2:25

Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

Note 1 at Php 2:25: Paul had just stated that he planned on sending Timothy to the Philippians just as soon as he learned what his verdict was (Php 2:23). He was believing that he himself was going to be released and that he would come to them in person (Php 2:24). Despite all this, Paul thought it was necessary to send Epaphroditus to them immediately with the latest news.

Note 2 at Php 2:25: Epaphroditus' name means lovely. He is traditionally thought to have carried this letter to the Philippians (see the subscript at the end of Philippians [found in some Bibles]). He is only mentioned by name twice in the New Testament: here and in Php 4:18.

Epaphroditus was the Philippians' messenger (this verse) and bearer of things (probably finances) sent to the Apostle Paul from the Philippians (Php 4:18). He was also a brother, companion in labor, and fellow soldier with Paul in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. He personally ministered to Paul's needs.

Epaphroditus became sick, nigh unto death (Php 2:27), because of the service he was rendering to Paul (Php 2:30). News of his illness had gotten back to his friends in Philippi, and Epaphroditus longed for his Philippian friends to hear the good news that he had been healed. This provided Paul with an added incentive for sending Epaphroditus back to Philippi. He could not only share news with them about Paul's situation, but he could comfort the Philippians' hearts when they saw he was well.

Paul showed the affection he had for Epaphroditus when he said that if Epaphroditus had died, Paul would have had "sorrow upon sorrow" (Php 2:27). Epaphroditus must have been a very lovely Christian, as his name implies.

Note 3 at Php 2:25: What labor did Paul do? It is true that at times, Paul had supported himself and his companions through making tents (Ac 18:3 with Ac 20:34). But Paul was in prison and had been for years. He was not doing physical labor.

Paul was speaking of the work of the ministry as labor. In 1Ti 5:17, Paul spoke of elders laboring in the Word and in doctrine. It takes effort for people to minister to others and keep themselves in tune with the Lord so that we can be effective ministers. Those who are looking for an easy job should not consider

the ministry.

Note 4 at Php 2:25: Part of Epaphroditus' ministry to Paul was financial. In Php 4:10, Paul said the Philippians' care for him had flourished again. Then in Php 4:15, Paul commended the Philippians for their financial contributions to his ministry. In Php 4:18, Paul spoke of receiving through Epaphroditus their financial aid once again.

PHILIPPIANS 2:26

For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

Note 5 at Php 2:26: Paul's statements about Epaphroditus give us clues as to how long Paul had been imprisoned in Rome at the time of the writing of this letter.

The Philippians had to hear that Paul had finally reached Rome. In those days, news of Paul's whereabouts was not sent to them by means of telecommunications. An individual had to physically travel from Rome to Philippi and deliver the message. This would have taken a minimum of weeks and possibly a month or more. Then the Philippians had to send Epaphroditus with aid for Paul from Philippi to Rome, and that would again have entailed lengthy travel.

Once Epaphroditus reached Rome, a period of at least two months would have elapsed since Paul had reached Rome. It could easily have been longer. Then Epaphroditus became ill. News of his illness had to travel back to Philippi, and the Philippians' response had to travel back to Rome, for Epaphroditus to know that the Philippians had heard of his sickness.

The shortest time in which these events could have taken place would have been a minimum of three to four months, and it could easily have taken place over a year's time. Paul was imprisoned in Rome for two whole years (Ac 28:30). This letter was written at least months after Paul arrived in Rome and possibly toward the latter part of his Roman imprisonment (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Philippians, Date and Place of Writing).

PHILIPPIANS 2:27

For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

Note 6 at Php 2:27: Some people have interpreted Paul's statements here to say that healing is not a "right" for the people of God, but a gift that is sometimes given and sometimes withheld at God's discretion. That is not what Paul was saying. Healing has been purchased for believers as part of the atonement of Christ (see note 2 at Mt 8:17). The Lord would no more refuse to heal believers than He would refuse to forgive them.

That does not mean that we deserve healing; we don't. It is a gift of God, just as salvation is a gift of God (Ro 6:23 and Eph 2:8). We don't deserve to have our sins forgiven. We cannot demand salvation from the Lord, but we can expect it. Likewise, healing has been purchased for us through the atonement of Christ. Healing belongs to us (see note 4 at Mr 7:27). But it is still the mercy of God that has provided healing, and every act of healing is an act of mercy.

Note 7 at Php 2:27: Paul's statement reveals that the Lord healed Epaphroditus not only for his sake but also for Paul's sake. This illustrates the power of intercession. We can make a difference in the way God deals with another individual. There are many examples of God showing mercy toward someone because of the intercession of another (Ge 19:29, 2Sa 9:1, 1Ki 11:11-13, and 2Ki 8:19).

PHILIPPIANS 2:28

I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

Note 8 at Php 2:28: Paul was not living a life of depression. He had already stated that he was rejoicing through all his persecutions (Php 1:18 and 2:17-18). He continued in this letter to admonish the Philippians to live lives of joy (Php 3:1 and 4:4-8). Paul certainly lived what he preached.

Paul's joy was not in physical things; his joy was totally in the Lord (Php 1:21). In the natural, there were depressing things in his life, and there was, no doubt, the temptation to be sorrowful. Bad things do happen to good people, and we Christians are not exempt from problems and hardships. Sorrow comes into all of our lives. Sorrow exists, even for us as believers, but we don't have to let it dominate us.

Paul had emotions, including the feeling of sorrow, especially for others (see note 2 at Ro 9:2). Paul rose above these natural things by thinking on the purer things of God. He lived a full life of joy but not because sorrow didn't exist. Rather it was because he cast his sorrow over on the Lord (1Pe 5:7), and kept his mind stayed on things above (Col 3:1-2).

Therefore, it was not inconsistent with Paul's faith to speak of being less sorrowful. He was saying that this would just remove one more situation that he would have had to deal with. This would be one less thing to be sorrowful about. Regardless, Paul was walking in the joy of the Lord despite all his circumstances, and we can too.

PHILIPPIANS 2:30

Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

Note 9 at Php 2:30: Paul stated that Epaphroditus' sickness was a direct result of the way he had neglected himself in his effort to serve Paul. Apparently, Epaphroditus had depleted his own strength in his service to Paul to the point that he succumbed to some type of sickness.

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER 3

PHILIPPIANS 3:1

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed [is] not grievous, but for you [it is] safe.

Note 1 at Php 3:1: "Finally" is the Greek word "LOIPON," and it literally means "the remaining, the rest" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). It is a Greek expression that carries the idea of something left over (Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament). It is translated into English as "besides," "it remaineth," "furthermore," and "from henceforth." This did not mean Paul was finished with the letter.

Note 2 at Php 3:1: The words "joy" and "rejoice" were used sixteen times in this short letter. This letter is one of Paul's most joyous epistles, even though it was written while he was in prison. The Bible clearly teaches that our joy is found in the person of Christ and not in circumstances.

The word "joy" is a noun, denoting a person, place, thing, idea, or quality. The word "rejoice" is a verb, describing the action of a person, place, or thing. When Paul told the Philippians to rejoice, he was telling them something that they were to do.

We can rejoice in the Lord always (Php 4:4), because rejoicing is an action, not a reaction to our environment. Joy is a gift from God that was given to us at salvation. It was placed within our born-again spirits, and it doesn't fluctuate or diminish; it is constant (see note 18 at Ga 5:22). The Lord has put joy inside us, and now we are to "work it out" by choosing to obey this command of Scripture (see notes 2-3 at Php 3:12 and note 4 at Php 3:13).

In the Greek, Paul's exhortation to "rejoice in the Lord" is in the present imperative. This essentially means that Paul was giving a command that is to have a long-term application--a command to keep on "rejoicing" as one's general habit and lifestyle.

Note 3 at Php 3:1: Notice that we are commanded to rejoice "in the Lord." Many people are not experiencing true joy, because their joy is in their circumstances; that is, they are waiting to rejoice when things in their lives are going good, and that doesn't happen very often. We are supposed to "rejoice in the Lord." That means we are supposed to rejoice in who the Lord is and what He has done for us. He never changes (Heb 13:8), and His mercies and compassions are new

every morning (La 3:22-23).

Note 4 at Php 3:1: The phrase "to write the same things to you" refers to previous instruction given earlier to the Philippian believers. Paul was saying that repetition is part of the learning process. Peter spoke three times in his second epistle (see note 5 at 1Co 15:2) about the importance of remembering. Paul was bringing back to the Philippians' minds previous instruction for their own benefit.

PHILIPPIANS 3:2

Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

Note 5 at Php 3:2: The New Testament uses the word "dog" in both a natural and metaphorical sense. The Jews used this term when describing Gentiles, with the idea of them being ceremonially impure and sinful. In the Old Testament, the Lord used this term to refer to a male prostitute (De 23:18, compare with New International Version).

Note 6 at Php 3:2: Circumcision was the dominant action and sign of the Old Covenant that God made with Abraham (Ge 17:10-11). The legalistic Jews had lost the significance of the sign and were blindly observing the action, believing that circumcision itself produced salvation. Therefore, the issue of circumcision symbolized the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament means of salvation (see note 2 at Ac 15:1).

Here, Paul used a play on the word "circumcision" by using the word "concision," which means "mutilation" (Strong's Concordance). Circumcision, done the way the legalistic Jews did it (i.e., in order to obtain salvation), was nothing more than mutilation. It had no saving power whatsoever. In fact, it had a similar effect as castration. It stopped the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost in an individual's life. These Jews were mutilating men spiritually by adding legalistic rules to Christ's Gospel.

PHILIPPIANS 3:3

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

Note 7 at Php 3:3: Who were the "we" Paul spoke of? He was not just speaking of the Jews who had been physically circumcised; Paul was saying that Christians are the true circumcised people of God.

In Ro 2:28-29, Paul revealed that true circumcision was a matter of the heart, not the flesh, and that true Judaism was through new birth, not physical birth (see note 2 at Ro 2:29). In Col 2:11, Paul said that spiritual circumcision was done by God without the hands of man.

The physical nation of Israel still has a very important part to play in God's plan. It figures prominently in end-time prophecy. The physical nation of Israel has been displaced in importance by the spiritual seed of Abraham; that is, the church of Jesus Christ.

Note 8 at Php 3:3: The condition of a person's flesh is not the important thing. It doesn't matter if that flesh is circumcised or holy; it is the condition of the spirit that matters to God (see note 9 at 2Co 5:17). "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (Joh 4:24). "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1Sa 16:7).

Note 9 at Php 3:3: In context, Paul was saying that those who put faith in their circumcision to save themselves are putting confidence in the flesh and not in God. Today the act of circumcision is not the issue, but acts of holiness are still deemed by many as essential for receiving salvation (see note 6 at Ga 5:2 and note 12 at Ga 5:6). That is just as wrong as those in Paul's day who believed that being circumcised granted them salvation.

PHILIPPIANS 3:4

Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

Note 10 at Php 3:4: Paul was saying that if anyone could trust in his or her own goodness, he would be the one. He was holier than all of them, yet as stated in Php 3:9, the righteousness that justifies people before a holy God must be a righteousness that is equal to God's. In order to receive this righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ, people must quit relying upon their own righteousness (which is of the Law, Php 3:9) and must trust in Christ alone for the righteousness that is of God by faith.

PHILIPPIANS 3:6

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

Note 11 at Php 3:6: Paul's list of human attainments is impressive. He was a circumcised, full-blooded Jew of an outstanding tribe of Israel. As a Pharisee, he once guarded the Law with zeal. As for legalistic righteousness, he had been blameless. But in comparison to God's own righteousness, he had failed. The truth is that we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Ro 3:23). It doesn't matter how good we are, we still need a Savior. Who wants to be the best sinner who ever went to hell?

PHILIPPIANS 3:7

But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

Note 12 at Php 3:7: Before Paul met Christ, he was proud of his many attainments within the Jewish religion (Ga 1:14). He was circumcised and had obeyed the Law of Moses. Concerning the outward observance of the Law, he was blameless (Php 3:6). His natural descent from Abraham gave him favor, so he thought. All that was necessary for his salvation, he had accomplished. He had done all the "dos" and avoided the "don'ts," but then he saw how wrong he was.

Natural circumcision was nothing. True circumcision is of the heart (see note 6 at Php 3:2). Natural descent means nothing, only the new creation (Ga 6:15). Legalistic righteousness is to no avail and is as filthy rags (Isa 64:6). Paul gladly renounced his faith in himself and his own accomplishments so that he might receive Christ by faith along with all His accomplishments. The Living Bible renders this verse as "But all these things that I once thought very worthwhile--now I've thrown them all away so that I can put my trust and hope in Christ alone."

PHILIPPIANS 3:8

Yea doubtless, and I count all things [but] loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them [but] dung, that I may win Christ,

Note 13 at Php 3:8: The phrase "I count" was translated from the Greek word "HEGEOMAI," and this Greek word means "to lead, *i.e.* command (with official authority); figuratively, to deem, *i.e.* consider" (Strong's Concordance). This means Paul didn't come to a place of failure where through some sin or error on his part, he had become a "loser." He was the most promising student of Gamaliel (Ac 22:3). Paul chose to value his own effort as dung (see note 16 at this verse).

Many people come to the Lord in the midst of failure or personal tragedy. It is easy to see their own efforts as worthless in a situation like that. Those who are at the top of their game often fail to see their need for the Lord. They think they are doing quite well and therefore trust in themselves. That's why relatively few "successful" people come to the Lord.

The present-tense verb "I count" shows a habitual attitude and commitment to a long-term way of doing something. In other words, Paul continually counted as loss everything that would keep him from knowing Jesus Christ intimately.

Paul is an example to us all. He was the holiest, the best, yet he was nothing. If that was true of Paul, it is certainly true of us. Like Paul, we need to "count" all of our personal achievements as refuse so that we might totally rely on Christ.

Note 14 at Php 3:8: At one time, Paul had trusted the works of his own flesh as a means of acceptance with God. His faith had been in circumcision, ancestry, religion, zeal, and legalistic righteousness (Php 3:5-6). But here, he counted (see note 13 at this verse) them all loss that he might gain Christ. In fact, Paul used the term "dung" (see note 16 at this verse) to describe how little he valued anything that would separate him from the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ as Lord.

Note 15 at Php 3:8: Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament states, "Not only did he (Paul) forfeit all this when he was saved, but his parents would have nothing to do with a son who had, in their estimation, dishonored them by becoming one of those hated, despised Christians. They had reared him in the lap of luxury, sent him to the Jewish school of theology in Jerusalem to sit at the feet of the great Gamaliel, and given him an excellent training in Greek culture

at the University of Tarsus, a Greek school of learning. But they had now cast him off. He was still forfeiting all that he had held dear, but for what? He tells us, 'that I may win Christ'" (p. 91).

Only eternity will reveal just how much Paul gave up in the natural to follow Christ. One thing is certain--he gained much more than he ever gave up. That's true of us as well. The reproaches of Christ are infinitely greater in wealth than all the riches of the world or the acclaim of man (Heb 11:26).

Note 16 at Php 3:8: The English word "dung" was translated from the Greek word "SKUBALON," and this Greek word means "what is thrown to the dogs, *i.e.* refuse" (Strong's Concordance).

Note 17 at Php 3:8: This word "win" was translated from the Greek word "KERDAINO," and this Greek word means "to gain" (Strong's Concordance). It was translated "gain" nine times (Mt 16:26 [once]; Mr 8:36 [once]; Lu 9:25 [once]; 1Co 9:19-22 [five times]; and Jas 4:13 [once]) and "gained" five times (Mt 18:15, 25:17, 20, 22; and Ac 27:21). This is the only time in the New Testament that this word was translated "win."

PHILIPPIANS 3:9

And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Note 18 at Php 3:9: There are two types of righteousness (see note 2 at Ro 10:3): ours and God's. Our righteousness is compliance with the requirements of the Law. God's righteousness only comes as a gift (see note 3 at Ro 5:15) and is received by faith (see note 17 at Eph 2:8). God's righteousness is perfect. Our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isa 64:6).

Note 19 at Php 3:9: One of the key words of this passage is "DIKAIOSUNE," translated "righteousness." It is hard for one English word to portray all that this means. A paraphrase of Paul's thinking may be "a right relationship or right standing before a holy God." Paul sought to establish his own righteousness--that is, a righteousness based on his own actions--in order to be pleasing unto God. He found that it was no more acceptable before God than the refuse thrown upon the garbage heap (see note 16 at Php 3:8).

Right standing before a holy God is not to be achieved in the keeping of the Law but in humble trust in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Those who are trusting in their own righteousness cannot have the benefit of Christ's righteousness. The righteousness that gives mankind relationship with God is the righteousness of God, and it comes freely through faith in Jesus Christ (Ro 3:22).

Note 20 at Php 3:9: Notice that Paul said he wanted the righteousness that comes through the faith of Christ, not faith in Christ. It is true that we obtained this righteousness by putting faith in what Christ had done for us. When we place our faith in Christ, the righteousness that Jesus obtained by His faith becomes ours. We are possessors of Christ's righteousness, which His faith produced (see note 15 at Ga 2:20).

PHILIPPIANS 3:10

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Note 21 at Php 3:10: Paul had given up everything that he might "know" Christ (Php 3:8). The Greek word used here for "know" is "GINOSKO," and it was a Jewish idiom for the sexual union between a husband and wife (Ge 4:1, see note 13 at Eph 3:19). It was not Paul's aim to know about Christ but to know Him and experience Him on the most intimate, personal level.

This involved knowing Jesus' resurrection power in the new birth (Ro 6:4-5). It also involved sharing His sufferings. This does not mean the sufferings He experienced for our redemption but rather the sufferings brought on by one's allegiance to Christ. Furthermore, Paul's desire was conformity to Christ's death. While not denying that this may involve allegiance to Christ to the point of physical death, it appears that Paul meant the death to the flesh--life that is experienced through a vital faith union with Christ (Ro 6:11 and 17-18).

Note 22 at Php 3:10: Paul said in Ro 12:2 that we are not to be conformed to this world but transformed through the renewing of our minds. Then he stated what we are supposed to be conformed to; we are to be conformed to the death of Christ. This is speaking of reckoning ourselves dead to sin and all its effects upon us in the same way that Christ is dead to sin and all its effects upon Him (see note 1 at Ro 6:11).

PHILIPPIANS 3:11

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

Note 23 at Php 3:11: Here, Paul was stating that he was looking forward to the resurrection that will bring him into complete conformity to the likeness of Jesus Christ. Vincent's Word Studies states that this expression "if by any means" was "not an expression of doubt" on Paul's part, but rather a statement "of humility" (Volume 3). Paul was not speaking of the general resurrection of both the just and the unjust; rather, he was emphasizing the resurrection of the believer out from among the dead.

Note 24 at Php 3:11: What did Paul mean? Was he saying that he hadn't received salvation yet? Was he insecure in his place in Christ to where he couldn't know until the resurrection day whether he would be accepted or not? Certainly not! That's the way some people view salvation, but that was not Paul's perspective (see note 25 at Eph 1:14).

The word "attain" was translated from the Greek word "KATANTAO," and this Greek word means "arrive at" (Strong's Concordance). Paul was saying that he had not yet arrived at the resurrection of the just, but that didn't mean he hadn't begun going in that direction. Salvation is the present-tense possession of all born-again believers, but there is a future-tense fulfillment that will be consummated at the resurrection of the just. As long as believers hold fast to their profession of faith (Heb 10:23, see note 4 at 1Co 15:2), their place in the resurrection is secure.

Note 25 at Php 3:11: The word "resurrection" here was translated from the Greek word "EXANASTASIS," which is only used here in the New Testament. It is very similar to the Greek word "ANASTASIS," and that word was translated "resurrection" thirty-nine times in the N.T. However, this word has the preposition "EK" added to it, which gives it the meaning of "out of" or "from" among the dead.

Paul was not speaking of the general resurrection in which even the unbelievers will participate. He was speaking of the "out resurrection" from the dead that only those who have saving faith in Christ will experience.

PHILIPPIANS 3:12

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Note 1 at Php 3:12: Our salvation is a continuing experience. We don't just put our faith in Christ one time when we are born again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) and then forget it. It has to be a continual trust and dependence on Jesus for our right relationship with the Father. Until we are resurrected with our glorified bodies, we have to hold fast the profession of our faith in Christ (Heb 4:14 and 10:23). Paul was saying, "I haven't arrived, but I've left."

Note 2 at Php 3:12: The word "perfect" was used in Scripture to describe spiritual maturity as well as "being without defect or blemish" (American Heritage Dictionary). However, in this case, Paul certainly was spiritually mature, so that is not the meaning here. He was saying that he wasn't without defect yet. That wouldn't happen until the resurrection.

Note 3 at Php 3:12: Was Paul saying that his salvation wasn't secure and that he wasn't sure he would be among the saints? Definitely not! It is true that saving faith isn't just a one-time experience but rather a continual trust and reliance on Jesus for our right standing with God (see note 1 at this verse). There is a perseverance that is necessary in the Christian life. Paul was committed to Christ, and he expressed confidence on a number of occasions that he knew he would continue to walk in righteousness with God (Ro 15:29).

Paul did not just want to attain to the resurrection of the just. Although he hadn't experienced that resurrection yet, it was purchased for him by our Lord Jesus, and Paul was in possession of that salvation. There are varying degrees of resurrection, however, even for the just. Paul was pursuing the highest resurrection, and that was not "in the bag."

Heb 11:35 says, "Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection." This "better resurrection" apparently is referring to the varying rewards that will be given to believers. Martyrs will certainly be rewarded in a special way, making theirs a "better resurrection." All saints will be in the resurrection of the just, but some will have greater rewards than others.

In Php 3:13-14, Paul spoke of pursuing the "prize of the high calling of God." Paul wasn't trying to just finish the race--he was planning on winning first place.

He wanted this better resurrection; that is, he wanted to bring more honor and glory to God than anyone else. He had not attained that yet and he wouldn't know until the resurrection morning if he had made it. But that's the goal that the Lord had placed in his heart, and that was the one thing he pursued.

PHILIPPIANS 3:13

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but [this] one thing [I do], forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

Note 4 at Php 3:13: By just about anyone's judgment, Paul was one of the most successful Christians who ever lived. Here, he gave us one of his secrets of spiritual success: singleness of vision. Paul had one, and only one, goal in life. His heart was not divided.

The strength of the laser lies in the concentration of light onto one point. Likewise, singleness of purpose and vision is a necessity to victorious Christian living (see note 39 at Mt 6:22). James said that if we try to master many things, we will fail (Jas 3:1). We have to set priorities and focus on those things. Paul had only one goal that he described in these verses.

Note 5 at Php 3:13: Some people have misunderstood this verse and taught that we are to forget everything in the past. That is not what Paul was saying. The Scriptures teach us that memory can be a very powerful force for good in our lives (see note 5 at 1Co 15:2 and note 1 at Eph 2:11). In context, Paul was speaking about forgetting all the things that he used to trust in prior to his salvation experience (Php 3:4-8). Paul forgot his own attainments and focused only on what Christ had done for him.

The word "forgetting" in the Greek is "EPILANTHANOMAI," and it means "to forget...given over to oblivion" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). The Greek verb for "reaching forth unto" is "EPEKTEINOMAI," and it means "'to stretch out to'...'to stretch' (oneself) 'forward to'" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon), as a runner that is running in the Greek games for the prize.

PHILIPPIANS 3:14

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

Note 6 at Php 3:14: Paul used a metaphor of a runner running in a race. The Greek verb Paul used for "I press" is "DIOKO," and it was used figuratively of one running swiftly in a race to reach the goal. It also carries the idea of one who pursues, seeks eagerly after, or earnestly endeavors to acquire the prize (Heb 12:1-2). Since the "prize" of eternal life cannot be acquired by works of righteousness that we have done (Tit 3:5), Paul must have been thinking of the rewards that come from service to the Lord (see note 3 at Php 3:12).

PHILIPPIANS 3:15

Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

Note 7 at Php 3:15: Paul had just said in Php 3:12 that he wasn't already perfect. Here, he spoke of those who are perfect and put himself in that number. The answer to this apparent paradox lies in the meaning of the word "perfect." As stated in note 2 at Php 3:12, "perfect" can mean spiritually mature, or it can mean "without defect or blemish" (American Heritage Dictionary). In Php 3:12, Paul used the word "perfect" to say that he wasn't flawless or without defect. In this verse, Paul was speaking of being spiritually mature, which he was. The New King James Version and the New International Version translate this verse by substituting the word "mature" for the King James Version's "perfect." The Amplified Bible says "spiritually mature and full-grown."

Note 8 at Php 3:15: The "mind" that Paul admonished us to have was the single-mindedness he described in Php 3:13 (see note 4 at that verse).

Note 9 at Php 3:15: This is a great promise! One of the concerns of many of us Christians is "How can I know I'm thinking and acting properly?" This promise gives the answer. If we seek the Lord with pure hearts and singleness of purpose as Paul described in these verses, then the Lord has obligated Himself to show us anything that needs to change. In other words, all we have to do is keep focused on the Lord with pure hearts, and the Lord promised that He will show us any error. The only people who need to fear that they might be deceived are those who are not seeking the Lord with pure and single-minded hearts.

PHILIPPIANS 3:16

Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

Note 10 at Php 3:16: Paul had been stressing growth and winning, not just surviving. He wanted the Philippians to stretch themselves more for the glory of God. He didn't want them to stop what they had been doing. He wanted them to do more. In this verse, Paul reminded them to keep walking in the light that they had.

PHILIPPIANS 3:17

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

Note 1 at Php 3:17: The Greek word that was translated "mark" in this verse is "SKOPEO," and it literally means "to take aim at (spy)" (Strong's Concordance). Paul was telling the Philippians to separate themselves from the people who were not living according to the example Paul had set.

Note 2 at Php 3:17: Paul called upon the Philippians to imitate his own example and not that of the Judaizers or self-indulgent Christians (Php 3:18-19). An "ensample" is one who serves as a pattern, model, illustration, or sample.

Paul had suffered the loss of all things for Christ (Php 3:7), accounted all things dung in comparison to knowing Christ (Php 3:8), shared in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings (Php 3:10), forsaken his own righteousness and accepted Christ's alone (Php 3:9), forgotten those things that were behind and reached toward the prize that was heavenward in Christ Jesus (Php 3:13-14), and was walking according to the light and understanding of God's Word that he had (Php 3:15-16). Here, he was admonishing other Christians to follow that example (1Co 11:1, 1Ti 4:12, and 1Pe 5:1-3).

PHILIPPIANS 3:18

(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ:

Note 3 at Php 3:18: It is not clear to us who Paul was speaking of in these verses. Paul didn't give any explanation, because it was probably obvious to the Philippians to whom he was writing. They could have been professed Christians who were either legalistic or, on the other extreme, indulging in sinful pleasures. They are described as "enemies of the cross," which implies "error" in doctrine or lifestyle. Vine's Expository Dictionary describes "error" as "a wandering, a forsaking of the right path...whether in doctrine (2Pe 3:17 and 1Jo 4:6), or in morals (Ro 1:27, 2Pe 2:18, and Jude 11), though, in Scripture, doctrine and morals are never divided by any sharp line."

Further descriptions revealed their bellies as their god; this means they were led by their own fleshly desires and appetites. They gloried in that which they should have been ashamed of, and their hearts and minds were set on the things of this world. Paul wept as he declared their end being destruction. Paul often warned God's people of such deception (1Co 6:9-10, Ga 5:21, and Eph 5:5-6).

Note 4 at Php 3:18: The people that Paul was speaking about were the "enemies of the cross of Christ," yet he wept when he spoke of their destruction. That says a lot about the Apostle Paul. Paul was ruthless at times in defense of the Gospel, but his anger was not really against the people; rather, it was against the error they promoted and the damage it caused. Paul himself loved those who opposed him, even to the point that he said in Ro 9:3, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (see note 3 at that verse).

PHILIPPIANS 3:19

Whose end [is] destruction, whose God [is their] belly, and [whose] glory [is] in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

Note 5 at Php 3:19: As explained in note 1 at 1Co 1:18, "the cross" is speaking of everything Jesus provided for us through His death and, specifically, the grace by which everything was provided. Therefore, those who are enemies of the cross are trusting in themselves and their own goodness. They are their own savior, and they live to satisfy themselves, not God. So, saying their god is their bellies really is a very descriptive way of characterizing people who are enemies of the cross (see note 2 at Ro 16:18).

Note 6 at Php 3:19: This last characterization of these enemies of the cross of Christ (Php 3:18) is amazing. He said they "mind earthly things." That sounds descriptive of most Christians! No doubt there are natural things that we all have to tend to, but there is a danger of being too earthly minded. As Ro 8:6 says, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." We must put a priority on spiritual things and constantly be aware that a preoccupation with earthly things is not good.

Note 7 at Php 3:19: Notice that Php 3:18-19 is a parenthetical phrase. This means that Php 3:20 is a continuation of the thought Paul began expressing in Php 3:17. In Php 3:17, Paul told the Philippians to follow his example, and then in Php 3:20, he explained that his lifestyle was consistent with his heavenly citizenship. The parenthetical phrase contrasted the conduct of Paul's critics with his exemplary actions.

PHILIPPIANS 3:20

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

Note 8 at Php 3:20: This is the only time the Greek word "POLITEUMA," which was translated "conversation" here, appears in the New Testament. It was translated as "citizenship," "homeland," and "commonwealth" in the New International Version, Jerusalem Bible, and Revised Standard Version, respectively. Paul used it to describe his citizenship as belonging to heaven.

Note 9 at Php 3:20: The Greek word for "Saviour" is "SOTER," and it was used a total of twenty-four times in the New Testament.

Sometimes men, such as judges in the Old Testament, were referred to as "saviours" - "And in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies" (Ne 9:27, emphasis mine). Most often, God Himself was referred to as the Savior of Israel (1Ch 16:35; Ps 24:5, 25:5, 27:1, 62:2, 65:5, 79:9, 95:1; Pr 29:25; Isa 62:11; Mic 7:7; and Hab 3:18).

In the New Testament, the word "Saviour" is never used of just ordinary people. It refers to God the Father eight times (Lu 1:47; 1Ti 1:1, 2:3, 4:10; Tit 1:3, 2:10, 3:4; and Jude 25) and Jesus Christ sixteen times (Lu 2:11; Joh 4:42; Ac 5:31, 13:23; Eph 5:23; Php 3:20; 2Ti 1:10; Tit 1:4, 2:13, 3:6; 2Pe 1:1, 11, 2:20, 3:2, 18; and 1Jo 4:14) (see note 1 at Lu 2:11).

Note 10 at Php 3:20: The word "Lord" is a very significant word that appears in eight forms in the Old Testament ("'ADOWN," "'ADONAY," "G@BIYR," "YAHH," "Y@HOVAH," "MARE'," "RAB," and "SHALIYSH") and in four forms in the New Testament ("DESPOTES," "KURIEUO," "KURIOS," and "RHABBONI").

Some of the predominant words in the O.T. are 'ADOWN, used 335 times, and its corresponding noun 'ADONAY, appearing 432 times. 'ADOWN means superior, master, or owner. When 'ADOWN or 'ADONAY refers to God, it is translated in the King James Version as "Lord," with the first letter always capitalized.

The most predominant word translated "LORD" in the O.T. is Y@HOVAH. It occurs 6,519 times and almost 50 times in its poetic form of YAHH. Y@HOVAH carries the idea of God as being the existing One, who is always

present. The King James Version translates Y@HOVAH in the O.T. as "LORD," using all capital letters in our English Bible. The true pronunciation of this Hebrew word is not certain, because it was believed that God's name was too holy to pronounce.

The word most often translated "Lord" in the N.T. is KURIOS, and it means one who is supreme in authority, the Master, Ruler, the one who has the right to control. It is sometimes translated "Sir" as a title of respect. The Greek Septuagint sometimes used KURIOS for the divine name "YAHWEH." Some uses of the word "Lord" denote Christ's deity, as in Joh 20:28 when Thomas confessed Jesus as "My Lord and my God" (emphasis mine). One of the reasons for Jesus' death and resurrection was that He might be "Lord" of each individual who would personally trust in Him - "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Ro 14:9) (see note 3 at Lu 1:43).

Note 11 at Php 3:20: The name "Jesus" is used 983 times in the New Testament, and it means "Jehovah is salvation" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). This name was chosen by God and implies God's saving work through His Son (Lu 1:30-31). He was named Jesus for He would "save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). Jesus as Savior implies "a person who rescues another" (American Heritage Dictionary). It is very much like someone who rescues a person from drowning so that person might live. Jesus rescues people from perishing so that they might have eternal life and live with Him (Joh 17:3 and 14:3).

Note 12 at Php 3:20: The word "Christ" is used 571 times in the New Testament, and it means "the Messiah," the one "anointed" to rule (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon) (see note 5 at Joh 1:41). God's Son, Jesus, is the Christ (Lu 23:2, see note 2 at Mt 16:16).

PHILIPPIANS 3:21

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Note 13 at Php 3:21: The human body is certainly one of God's greatest creations, yet Paul spoke of it as vile. This has to be understood in a comparative sense, and it speaks volumes about how wonderful our glorified bodies will be (see note 5 at 1Co 15:37).

The Greek word translated "vile" is "TAPEINOSIS," and the King James Version translates it as "low estate" (Lu 1:48), "humiliation" (Ac 8:33), "vile" (this verse), and "made low" (Jas 1:10). See note 2 at 1Co 15:12, note 6 at 1Co 15:15, note 7 at 1Co 15:17, note 18 at 1Co 15:50, and notes 22-23 at 1Co 15:53.

Note 14 at Php 3:21: The transformation from this physical state to having a glorified body will be a huge difference, but the power of God is easily able to accomplish it. If the Lord can work that miracle, surely the healing of our bodies or the freedom from other bondages is no problem to the Lord.

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER 4

PHILIPPIANS 4:1

Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, [my] dearly beloved.

Note 1 at Php 4:1: As stated in note 2 at Ga 5:1, the word "therefore" is tying what Paul was saying here to what he had said previously. Paul had just spoken of the Lord giving us glorified bodies. Because of this wonderful reward to the faithful, we should therefore stand fast in the Lord. All that we have to gain in the "sweet by-and-by" should provide us with plenty of motivation to stand fast in the "rough here-and-now."

Note 2 at Php 4:1: Paul addressed the Philippians twice in this verse as "dearly beloved." In this same verse, he also called them "my joy and crown." These terms expressed Paul's love for these saints and showed that they were very special to him.

This also revealed what Paul valued most. He wasn't after the recognition of mankind or their awards. What gave Paul joy was to see others experience the abundant life that only God could give. All the lives that had been changed by the power of God were like a crown that he wore proudly.

One reason Paul had the impact that he did was because he didn't see things as other people did. Others sought for earthly titles; Paul was after just one thing (Php 3:13-14).

Note 3 at Php 4:1: "Stand fast" is translated from one Greek word, "STEKO," which described a military soldier who stood fast in the midst of a battle. It is only the strength and power of the Lord that are able to make us stand and to keep us from falling (Jude 24). That is why Paul told the Philippians to "stand fast in the Lord."

Although this power is always available in Christians' lives, it will not work automatically. It must be personally appropriated by faith. Day by day, moment by moment, Christians must trust the power of the Lord, rather than their own power, for the victory over sin, the flesh, and the devil.

PHILIPPIANS 4:2

I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

Note 4 at Php 4:2: Euodias and Syntyche were women in the Philippian church who Paul said had labored with him in the Gospel (Php 4:3). This is the only time they are mentioned by name in Scripture. Euodias means "fragrance" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon), and Syntyche means "with fate" (Smith's Bible Dictionary). From this context, we can see that there had been a disagreement between them, and Paul was beseeching them to reconcile.

It is noticeable that Paul told them to be of the same mind (see note 2 at 1Co 1:10) "in the Lord." The only way we can ever come into true unity is to find our common ground in the Lord and fellowship in those areas. There will never be, nor was there ever intended to be, unity in every area of our lives. We have different customs, personalities, and so forth. Our unity has to be "in the Lord."

The more our lives center on the Lord, the more unity we will have with others who center on the Lord. For those of us who hold our own lives dear and have not found the joy that Paul expressed when he said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Php 1:21), we will walk in very little unity. Our unity has to be "in the Lord."

PHILIPPIANS 4:3

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

Note 5 at Php 4:3: The word "yokefellow" paints a picture of someone pulling together with Paul in the work of the Gospel, like yoked oxen. The strength of the oxen is increased by virtue of their being yoked together. The Today's English Version translates this word as "faithful partner." It is not clear whether Paul was speaking of an individual here or if he was referring to the Philippian believers as a whole. It is also unclear whether he was requesting them to help Euodias and Syntyche reconcile their differences, or if he was speaking of other help.

Note 6 at Php 4:3: Euodias, Syntyche, and Clement were obviously fellow workers who had labored with Paul in the Gospel. The Greek word for "laboured" in this verse is "SUNATHLEO," and it was used two times in the New Testament (Php 1:27 and this verse). SUNATHLEO was translated as "strive together for" and "labour with" (Strong's Concordance). "It is a word normally used of fighting a war or of a contest in an athletic arena" (A Translator's Handbook on Philippians, p. 126). It is also translated as "worked side by side" (The Living Bible), "worked hard with me" (Today's English Version), "a help to me when I was fighting" (Jerusalem Bible), and "who shared my struggles" (New English Bible).

Note 7 at Php 4:3: This is the only mention of Clement in Scripture. His name means "mild, merciful" (Smith's Bible Dictionary). Some people think this is the same Clement who became the bishop of Rome around the end of the first century.

Note 8 at Php 4:3: This is the only mention of the "book of life" by that name in Scripture outside of Revelation. It is probable that the book spoken of in Da 12:1 is referring to this Book of Life. Jesus told us to rejoice because our names are written in heaven, implying the Book of Life. The Book of Life is referred to seven times in Revelation (Re 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; and 22:19), for a

total of eight definite times in Scripture.

We cannot enter God's presence without our names being written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Re 21:27). Anyone whose name is not written in the Book of Life will spend eternity in the lake of fire (Re 20:15). It is possible to have our names blotted out of the Book of Life (Re 3:5). There will be books that contain records of our deeds by which we will be judged. Apparently, having our names written in the Book of Life will supersede anything else written about us (Re 20:12).

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord alway: [and] again I say, Rejoice.

Note 9 at Php 4:4: Joy is something we have; rejoicing is something we do (see note 2 at Php 3:1). The reason most people don't rejoice always, as instructed here, is because they don't know that they already have joy (see note 18 at Ga 5:22).

Note 10 at Php 4:4: Notice that Paul instructed us to "rejoice in the Lord" (emphasis mine). Our joy is in the Lord. That means that our joy is in our born-again spirits (see note 18 at Ga 5:22). Joy doesn't come from the outside in response to circumstances; it comes from the inside and is a fruit of the Spirit (Ga 5:22). We always have joy, but we must choose to rejoice.

Note 11 at Php 4:4: Everyone wants to rejoice, and most people do rejoice at times; but Paul commanded us to rejoice in the Lord always. That seems unreasonable and impossible to most people. They think, "You can't always be rejoicing even through bad times!" But the Lord would be unjust to command us to do something that is unobtainable. Rejoicing at all times is not only possible; it is preferable!

It's true that we can't rejoice at all times if we are waiting for our circumstances to be good. Even in the few times when everything seems to be just right, we will have some sorrow because of past tragedies or future fears. Our rejoicing has to be in the Lord (see note 9 at this verse).

Note 12 at Php 4:4: This command (see note 11 at this verse) differs from the thinking of most people to such an extent that they would think they were surely misunderstanding Paul. So, to leave no doubt that he meant just what he said, he repeated himself. This emphasizes this truth and leaves no room for explaining this away--we are to rejoice in the Lord always.

Note 13 at Php 4:4: This is not a suggestion or a request from Paul. It is a command from their apostle, and it was inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is a command for us too. Those who don't follow this command are breaking the

Word of God just as much as those who don't follow some of the moral laws, such as not stealing, not committing adultery, and so forth. This is a law of the Lord.

That removes any doubt we may have about not having authority over our emotions. If emotions were only uncontrollable chemical reactions to circumstances, then the Lord would be unjust to give us an impossible command and then hold us accountable (De 28:47-48). But God is not unjust, and we are commanded to rejoice always. Therefore, we can and should control our emotions.

Note 14 at Php 4:4: The word "rejoice" is used, in some form, a total of 192 times in Scripture. Many reasons and occasions to rejoice are recorded in the Scriptures. The following are just a few:

- We are to rejoice before the Lord our God (Le 23:40; De 12:12, and 18)

- We are to rejoice in God's salvation (1Sa 2:1)

- We are to rejoice because we are those who seek the Lord (1Ch 16:10)

- We are to rejoice in goodness (2Ch 6:41)

- We are to rejoice in God's mercy (Ps 31:7)

- We are to rejoice when we sing to God (Ps 71:23)

- We are to rejoice because our names are written in heaven (Lu 10:20)

- We are to rejoice in the light (Joh 5:35)

- We are to rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Ro 5:2)

- We are to rejoice in the day of Christ (Php 2:16)

- We are to rejoice in Christ Jesus Himself (Php 3:3)

- We are to rejoice in sufferings (Col 1:24)

Twice in this verse, Paul encouraged the Philippians to rejoice. This is even more unusual when we realize that Paul was in prison at the time of this writing.

Outward circumstances may sometimes be against us, but inward joy can always be ours because we are "in the Lord" (see note 18 at Ro 16:11, note 14 at 1Co 1:30, and note 7 at 2Co 5:17). We may be content in all situations, for God's Word says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb 13:5) and "in thy presence is fulness of joy" (Ps 16:11). No matter what our circumstances, we can always be glad, and take great pleasure in and enjoy the Lord.

PHILIPPIANS 4:5

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord [is] at hand.

Note 15 at Php 4:5: The Greek word for "moderation" here is "EPIEIKES," and it was translated "gentle" three times, "patient" one time, and "moderation" one time in the King James Version. The New International Version translated "EPIEIKES" as "gentleness." The New American Standard says, "Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men." The Amplified Bible says, "Let all men know and perceive and recognize your unselfishness (your considerateness, your forbearing spirit)."

This word "originally indicated a thoughtful, considerate and decent outlook. Rather than hotly demanding his or her rights, whatever the cost to others, a person with this trait seeks peace in a calm way.... [This word is] opposite of an angry harshness that grows out of personal pride and a dominating selfishness" (Expository Dictionary of Bible Words, pp. 303-304; brackets mine).

Note 16 at Php 4:5: Notice that our moderation (see note 15 at this verse) is to be known unto all. In other words, we are to let our light shine all the time (Mt 5:14-16). Those who are only holy at church are Pharisees (see notes 7-8 at Mt 23:13). If we can't be godly toward our customers or bosses, then we are not fulfilling this command. Our light is not to be put under a bushel but on a candlestick where it can give light to all who are in the house (Mt 5:15).

Note 17 at Php 4:5: Paul gave a reason for letting this godly trait of "moderation" (see note 15 at this verse) be displayed before mankind: It is because "the Lord is at hand." Jesus is coming soon, and that means we will soon be facing our Maker. All of mankind needs to be ready, and we are God's witnesses to get them ready. Therefore, we need to be about our Father's business of leading people to the Light. The way we do this is to let our lights shine, or let our "moderation be known unto all men."

Note 18 at Php 4:5: Paul expressed his belief on other occasions that the second coming of the Lord was imminent. In 1Co 7:29-31, Paul told husbands the time was so short that they needed to act like they weren't married. James made

similar statements (Jas 5:8-9), and so did the Apostle Peter (1Pe 4:7). If this was their perspective nearly 2,000 years ago, how much more should we expect the coming of the Lord to be near. One thing is for sure--whether Christ comes in our lifetime or not, this is our last generation to work for the Lord. We need to take it seriously. This is not a rehearsal.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Note 19 at Php 4:6: Today we think of "careful" as meaning to be cautious, but nearly 400 years ago, when the King James Version was translated, it meant to be full of cares or anxiety. Paul was admonishing these Philippian believers, who had been worried about his imprisonment (Php 1:12) and Epaphroditus being sick (Php 2:25-26), to cast all their cares upon the Lord. There is no better way to do this than to rejoice in the Lord all the time. Rejoicing makes us focus our attention on the Lord and His promises instead of on our negative circumstances.

Note 20 at Php 4:6: Most believers realize that anxiety and worry are not good and try to avoid them, but most believers do not believe that it is possible to live a life totally free of care (see note 19 at this verse). Paul commanded us to be careful for nothing. That means there is nothing that we should be worried about. There are no limits to the peace of God.

Note 21 at Php 4:6: The way we keep from being careful (see note 19 at this verse) is to take our needs to the Lord in prayer and give thanks by faith that God has answered. Those who are still burdened have not totally cast their care over on to the Lord. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1Pe 5:7, emphasis mine).

PHILIPPIANS 4:7

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Note 22 at Php 4:7: Notice that peace is the result of casting our care upon the Lord through prayer and thanksgiving (Php 4:6). However, many people are asking God to give them peace so that their cares will leave. It doesn't work that way. Through faith, we cast our cares on the Lord, and then God's peace comes.

Christians who are lacking God's peace have not taken their cares to the Lord and left them there. All Christians have peace; it is a fruit of the Spirit that is always present in our born-again spirits (see note 18 at Ga 5:22). Care will blind us to God's peace. When we eliminate the care, the peace flows.

Note 23 at Php 4:7: Paul was speaking of God's peace, not human peace. Human peace is only experienced in the absence of problems. Therefore, those who only know human peace don't experience it very often, and to a lesser degree. God's peace is independent of circumstances and infinitely greater in supply than any problem we could ever have. God has given us His supernatural peace to enjoy. What a blessing!

Note 24 at Php 4:7: We all have things happen that we don't understand. Those who are relying on themselves can't have any peace in a situation like that. They feel things are out of control, and fear takes over. We believers have God's supernatural peace (see note 23 at this verse) because we don't have to understand; we trust that God is in control. This is a wonderful difference between true Christians and unbelievers. Faith in God allows us to experience peace that goes beyond our understanding. Praise God!

Note 25 at Php 4:7: The peace of God is what keeps our hearts and minds sound. Those who lack peace will be tormented in those areas. Peace is like a fortress against the devil. Before Satan can get to our hearts, he has to get us to step out of God's peace. Therefore, we must let God's peace protect our hearts and minds. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Col 3:15, see note 18 at that verse).

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just, whatsoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are] lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; if [there be] any virtue, and if [there be] any praise, think on these things.

Note 26 at Php 4:8: In closing, Paul admonished the Philippian believers to reflect and meditate upon eight positive principles of thinking that would lead to victorious Christian living (Ro 8:6). In the Greek, this sentence is constructed in the present imperative, which is a command to do something in the future that involves a continuous and repeated action.

The eight principles of thought to reflect and ponder upon are the following:

1) things that are "true," or honorable, truthful, and upright

2) things that are "honest," or honorable, truthful, genuine, and not characterized by deception or fraud

3) things that are "just," or in accordance with what is right, or right conduct; any circumstance, fact, or deed that is right

4) things that are "pure," or free from defilement or impurity

5) things that are "lovely," or pleasing, agreeable, and inspiring love or affection

6) a "good report," or a saying or report that is positive and constructive, rather than negative and destructive

7) "virtue," or moral excellence, righteousness, and goodness

8) "praise," or what is praiseworthy; expressing one's esteem of others and their virtues

Note 27 at Php 4:8: Notice Paul's use of the word "whatsoever." Some Christians think this verse can only be fulfilled by thinking on "church" things or

"religious" things, but Paul said "whatsoever" falls into these eight categories should be the focus of our attention. Therefore, it is not only thinking about spiritual truths that is important; we also need to be able to discern natural truths from lies and think on those things too.

Our lives should not be compartmentalized into "spiritual" and "secular." Truth is truth whether we are at church or at home. We should think and deal justly whether with our Christian brothers and sisters or with the public on our jobs. We should keep our minds stayed on the good things God has given us in the natural, such as family, health, and work, just as we should think about righteousness, justification, forgiveness, and so forth.

Focusing on the good in every area of our lives is what Paul was advocating. Failure to recognize God's blessings in everyday living will cause us care and anxiety. Recognizing God's hand in even the smallest things will cause peace and will keep our hearts and minds following hard after the Lord.

PHILIPPIANS 4:9

Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Note 28 at Php 4:9: Paul listed these four things in reverse order. First of all, the Philippians saw Paul's life. They saw God living through Paul and Silas when the pair came to Philippi and were miraculously delivered from prison through an earthquake (Ac 16:22-31). Next, they heard Paul's message. He used the miraculous events to preach the Gospel and give the glory to Jesus. Third, they received what Paul said and were born again. Then, and only then, they learned Paul's secret of relationship with God by faith in God's grace.

This is a normal progression of events in a person's receiving Christ. If we fail to walk in the supernatural power of God so that unbelievers can see that power in our lives, then few of them will ever stop to hear what we have to say. If they do hear but don't receive, the process stops there. If they receive, then they will learn of Christ personally in an experiential way.

Note 29 at Php 4:9: It is not the hearers of God's Word but the doers of God's Word who are blessed. Paul admonished the Philippians to do what they had seen him do. That was no small task. Read what the Lord did through Paul in Philippi (Ac 16).

Note 30 at Php 4:9: Not only were the Philippian believers to think upon whatsoever was true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Php 4:8), but they were also to "put into practice" the things they had learned. The Living Bible renders this verse as "Keep putting into practice all you learned from me and saw me doing, and the God of peace will be with you."

In this verse, the Greek word "PRASSO" was translated "do," and means "to 'practise'" (Strong's Concordance). It is a present imperative (see note 26 at Php 4:8), meaning this is "a command to keep on doing an action as one's general habit or lifestyle" (The Discovery Bible, Moody Press).

PHILIPPIANS 4:10

But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

Note 1 at Php 4:10: Paul's conduct with the Corinthian church, where he refused to receive personal offerings, has been misinterpreted (1Co 9:11-18). Some have said that he would not receive offerings from anyone he ministered to; however, that is not true. This verse makes it very clear that he received offerings from the Philippians, and in Php 4:16, Paul stated that the Philippians had given to him on at least two other occasions.

Paul's practice of not receiving personal offerings from the Corinthians was the exception and not the rule (see note 5 at 1Co 9:6 and note 5 at 1Co 9:18).

Note 2 at Php 4:10: What Paul meant by saying that the Philippians had been careful was that they had desired to send him another offering. However, because he had been in transit from Caesarea to Rome for a year and communications were much different then than they are now, the Philippians had been unable to locate him. Therefore, they had not had an opportunity to give as they desired.

PHILIPPIANS 4:11

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, [therewith] to be content.

Note 3 at Php 4:11: Paul did not want the Philippians to draw a wrong conclusion from what he had just said. Although he appreciated the gifts from the saints at Philippi, his needs being supplied was not the source of his joy. Paul knew the secret of contentment: It was finding all of his life in Christ (Heb 13:5).

Note 4 at Php 4:11: Paul had to learn to be content. Contentment doesn't come naturally or as a result of circumstances.

Solomon said in Ec 2:24, "There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God" (emphasis mine). Solomon went on to say in the next verse, "For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto, more than I?"

What Solomon was saying was that no one on the earth could indulge his or her desires the way he had. He was the richest man who has ever or will ever live (2Ch 1:12), yet he had come to the conclusion that people have to make themselves enjoy life. Things and circumstances didn't satisfy Solomon, and they won't do it for us either. It is a choice on our part.

Paul had learned to be content. Every one of us has that capacity, just like we have the intellect to read and write, but reading and writing don't come naturally. We have to learn, and some learn better than others. Likewise, we have to learn to be content, and some learn that lesson better than others.

The secret to Paul's contentment was that he had died to himself and was living totally for God (Php 1:21 and Ga 2:20). Paul was dead to himself. It isn't hard to please dead people; they don't have any needs. All depression and discontentment center around selfishness. If we eliminate selfishness, we can be content.

Note 5 at Php 4:11: Paul made special mention that his contentment worked in whatever state he found himself. This means that godly contentment isn't dependent upon circumstances. That is totally opposite of the way most people think today.

No one really desires depression, but very few feel any responsibility or authority to maintain positive emotions in the face of negative circumstances. They think emotions follow circumstances. That's not true. Emotions follow the way we think, and we can choose to think on things that are lovely, true, of good report, and so forth (Php 4:8), regardless of our circumstances. As our thinking goes, so go our emotions (Pr 23:7, Isa 26:3, and Ro 8:6).

Note 6 at Php 4:11: Paul's priorities were correct. Even though God desires to prosper His people (3Jo 2, see note 5 at 2Co 8:9), Paul's focus was not on possessions but upon Christ (2Co 3:18). Likewise, we should believe that it is the Lord's will to prosper us financially and receive that, but not complain when we find ourselves in difficult situations.

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Note 7 at Php 4:13: It is not a correct use of this verse to express that we can do anything. This is not a "self-motivational" verse. Paul was saying that he could do anything through Christ. That is radically different than the way many people use this verse.

All of our ability in the Christian life is found in Christ. It is not our ability that makes us strong but our availability through Christ that enables us. Paul said, "For when I am weak, then am I strong" (2Co 12:10). He was saying that when he recognized his inability and therefore relied on the Lord, then the Lord's strength flowed through him.

We can do all things through Christ.

PHILIPPIANS 4:14

Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

Note 8 at Php 4:14: Paul had just said that whatever his circumstances were, he was content. He hastened to add that the Philippians had done the right thing in giving toward his needs. The Apostle John said, "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1Jo 3:17).

It is godly to give to those in need and especially to ministers who have been a blessing to you (see note 8 at Ga 6:6). Paul certainly would have given to someone in his situation. It wasn't necessary for Paul to have everything going according to God's perfect plan for him to be content.

Note 9 at Php 4:14: Notice that Paul called his lack of having physical necessities an "affliction." Poverty because of the Gospel is an affliction (Ps 22:24, Isa 63:9, Mr 4:17, 2Co 8:2, and Jas 1:27).

PHILIPPIANS 4:15

Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

Note 10 at Php 4:15: The Today's English Version translates this verse as "You Philippians know very well that when I left Macedonia in the early days of preaching the Good News, you were the only church to help me; you were the only ones who shared my profits and losses."

Note 11 at Php 4:15: The word "communicated" in this verse was translated from the Greek word "KOINONEO," and this Greek word means "to share with others" (Strong's Concordance). It is akin to the word "KOINONIA" that was translated "fellowship" in Php 1:5, and KOINONIA means "partnership" (Strong's Concordance) (see note 4 at Php 1:5). Paul was speaking of money.

Paul was saying that the Philippians were the only group who gave to him after he left that area. They sent offerings to him twice when he was in Thessalonica. Their thoughtfulness of him and the Gospel he was preaching endeared these Philippians to him and occasioned the writing of this letter (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Philippians).

PHILIPPIANS 4:16

For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

Note 12 at Php 4:16: The Philippians sent offerings to Paul twice while he was in Thessalonica. Thessalonica was approximately ninety miles from Philippi.

PHILIPPIANS 4:17

Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.

Note 13 at Php 4:17: It is evident from Paul's statements that he was pleased the Philippians had sent him money. Here, lest he be misunderstood, he gave the real reason that he was so blessed. It was not because he was full (Php 4:18). He was content before he received their gifts (Php 4:11). It was because he knew how the Philippians' giving would produce "fruit that may abound to your account."

This implies that a spiritual account is being kept of our deeds. This would correspond with being judged out of the books that the Lord is keeping (see note 8 at Php 4:3). Godly giving, which is giving with the proper motive (see note 6 at 1Co 13:3), makes deposits into that account. It is important to see our giving not as money leaving our lives but as money being deposited into our spiritual accounts. Those deposits go into our future, where they grow and multiply.

This is not to say that there is a one-to-one ratio between the money we have given and what we can expect to receive. The Lord gives a hundredfold interest on gifts that are given in faith (see note 8 at Mr 10:30).

PHILIPPIANS 4:18

But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things [which were sent] from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

Note 14 at Php 4:18: Paul was praising God and thanking the Philippians for everything he had received from them. He said he had everything and was full. By his own admission, he was abounding, but we have to remember that he was still in prison and facing possible execution at the hands of the Romans. Most of us wouldn't consider that to be abounding and having everything. This shows that it didn't take much for Paul to be content. Paul's contentment was found in the Lord and not in things (see note 4 at Php 4:11).

Note 15 at Php 4:18: The Philippians' gifts were not only a blessing to Paul but had also blessed God. The Lord loves a cheerful giver (2Co 9:7).

PHILIPPIANS 4:19

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Note 16 at Php 4:19: This verse is often taken out of context to say that the Lord will meet our every need. That is not exactly what Paul was saying. He was speaking to the Philippians who had given to him on more than one occasion (Php 4:16). They had, in a sense, made a deposit into a spiritual account (see note 13 at Php 4:17), and God would use their generosity to multiply their giving toward the meeting of their own needs.

It is God's will to supply all our needs, but it doesn't work without us believing. How is it that we express our faith in the area of finances? It is through giving. It takes faith to give away a portion of what we have and trust that we will have enough. If there were no God and if His promises of multiplying our gifts back to us were not true, it would be stupid to give. If what we have isn't enough, then giving part of that away will leave us with even less.

But there is a God who is true to His promises, and when we give, we express that faith. People who are not giving, because they don't have enough, are people who don't believe. They can say what they want, but that is the bottom line.

The Philippians had proved their faith through their gifts, and Paul was confident that the Lord would meet their every need. Those who are not walking in faith through giving cannot claim this scripture.

Note 17 at Php 4:19: Some people have used the word "need" to say that only the bare necessities are covered in this promise. The primary definition of the word "need," according to the American Heritage Dictionary, is "a lack of something required or desirable."

The word "supply" in this verse came from the Greek word "PLEROO," and this Greek word means "to make replete, *i.e.* (literally) to cram (a net)...satisfy" (Strong's Concordance). It is the same word that was used in Php 4:18 and translated, "I am full." The Lord is speaking of abundance.

The Lord doesn't want us to just barely get along. We can see what the Lord's standard of abundance is when Jesus turned the water into wine (see note 6 at Joh 2:6), and when He fed the 5,000 (see note 4 at Joh 6:12) and the 4,000 (Mr 8:8). See note 8 at 2Co 9:8.

Note 18 at Php 4:19: Our needs will be supplied "according to his riches in glory," not according to the current economic status. Sometimes people fear how their needs will be supplied, because of recession, layoffs, or small-town economies. But God uses His resources in glory to meet our needs. We can be assured that there is no shortage there. God's economy is not affected by man's problems.

PHILIPPIANS 4:21

Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you.

Note 1 at Php 4:21: Here, Paul and the brethren with him greeted all of the saints in Christ Jesus. The word "saint" is not referring to one's holiness; rather, it is a description of those who belong to Christ.

PHILIPPIANS 4:22

All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.

Note 2 at Php 4:22: They that were of "Caesar's household" were probably the Christians who were servants in the palace of the emperor. Paul said in the first chapter of this letter (Php 1:12-13) that his bonds were known to all who were in the palace. There is no doubt that Paul took this opportunity to preach the Gospel, and this verse makes it clear that some accepted Christ as their Savior.

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