

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."

“Therefore”, concludes that the recipients should stand fast, or “persevere,” in the relationship with Christ. Not allowing the Judaizers, perfectionists or hedonists to disrupt their Christian walk.

“Beloved and longed for”: Paul reveals his deep affection for the Philippian believers. The Greek term for “long to see” which is used in various bibles, refers to the deep pain of separation for loved ones.

“My joy, my crown”: Paul did not derive his joy from circumstances, but from his fellow believers in Philippi. The Greek term for “crown” refers to the laurel wreath received by an athlete for winning a contest. Or by a person honored by his peers at a banquet as a symbol of success or a fruitful life. The Philippian believers were proof that Paul’s efforts were successful.

In the last lesson, Paul had talked of the great resurrection as the hope of all believers. Now he says, in light of that, stand fast in the Lord. It is not enough for Paul to call them his brethren, he adds that he loves them dearly. He longs to be with them again, but that will not be on this earth.

He loves these Philippians the most, because they love God and live for Him. He is proud of them, because of their great faith and charity. He calls them his crown, because it was through his ministry that they came to God. He uses dearly beloved, twice in this verse, showing the sincerity of the statement.

Philippians 4:2 "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord."

“Euodias ... Syntyche”. These two women were prominent church members who may have been among the women meeting for prayer when Paul first preached the gospel in Philippi. Apparently, they were leading two opposing factions in the church, and were at odds with one another over some matter(s).

There was a more prominent group of women in this leadership here at Phillip, than there was in Corinth or Galatia. Since they were prominent in the running of the church, it was very important that they be in one accord.

The leaders of a church must always be in one accord, or there will be confusion in the church. Spiritual stability depends on the mutual love, harmony and peace between believers. Apparently, the disunity in the Philippian church was about to destroy the integrity of its testimony.

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

Yokefellow or companion is from a Greek word picturing two oxen in a yoke, pulling the same load, as someone who worked side by side with another. A companion is a partner or an equal in a specific endeavor, in this case, a spiritual one.

It is possible that this individual is unnamed, but it is best to take the Greek word translated "companion" as a proper name ("Syzgos"), who was likely one of the church elders.

Some believe this is speaking of Paul's wife, but I do not believe Paul was ever married. I believe this means they were yoked together for the common cause of the gospel.

This yokefellow would have been someone in the Philippian church, because that would be the only way they could help these women who worked with Paul in the ministry. Clement would be with the two women mentioned (in verse 2), although nothing is known of this person. He seemed to be an unidentified friend of Paul's who would try to help these two women become reconciled to one another.

Everyone who is saved should help whoever is ministering in the church. They should all be in one accord. Having their names in the book of life means they are saved through belief in Jesus Christ and God has recorded those inheritors of eternal life in that book.

Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always: [and] again I say, Rejoice."

The mention of believers' names being recorded in heaven (verse 3), causes the author to write rejoice in the Lord always. Harmony among church members, as Paul assumes will be the result of his plea (in verses 2 and 3), is another reason to "rejoice." In adding and again I say, Rejoice, it is as though the apostle looks into the future, considers all possibilities of sorrow, and in spite of them all repeats "the command".

This command to rejoice at all times and in all circumstances, is nothing less than a call to faith. For if the Christian believes that his life and all its circumstances are in the hands of a sovereign, wise, and loving God who is always working to accomplish good for him, then he can indeed "rejoice always."

Paul wants them to learn the joy of serving Jesus. Christians should rejoice more than all other people, because our names are in the Lamb's book of life. We have heaven to look forward to.

Philippians 4:5 "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord [is] at hand."

Moderation means "graciousness" or "sweet reasonableness." The believer who is at peace with his fellow Christian (verse 2), and who rejoices always (verse 4), is indeed a gracious, reasonable person.

“The Lord is at hand” means two things. First, His return to earth is near. His imminent coming as judge encourages the Christian to be “gracious” unto all men, for He will judge the believer for all of his actions toward all people and will avenge all wrongs committed by others against him.

Second, the “Lord is a hand” spiritually. The Lord’s being presently near should free the Christian from fear and anxiety, hence the command of (verse 6).

The word that was translated moderation here, was translated as gentleness (in 2 Cor. 10).

2 Corinthians 10:1 "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence [am] base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:"

Whether it should mean be moderate in all things, or to be gentle to all, it doesn't matter. They both are headed in the same direction. A gentle person is moderate. I believe this moderation is in everything in our life.

Women dressing in moderation are a very good example of what I am speaking of. Moderation should be practiced by men and women in all walks of our life; in what we drink, and what we eat, and especially in the way we act.

"The Lord is at hand", means just what it says. I am looking for the return of the Lord at any moment. Be ready, for He comes in an hour when you think not.

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."

“Be careful for nothing” means “don’t worry about anything.” The Lord’s nearness (verse 5b), leads Paul to forbid his readers from worrying. This is no summons to irresponsibility or an invitation to dismiss legitimate concern.

Christians should not go around wringing their hands in worry. Worry is lack of faith. We should trust the Lord in every aspect of our life. Supplication (in the verse above), means petition. Prayer should not be just a time to request things of God that we want.

“In every thing”, in any matter of life. The way to be free of anxiety is to be prayerful about everything. While God is eager to hear our requests, they are to be accompanied with thanksgiving.

We should go to Him in prayer, thanking Him for all He has already done for us. We should praise Him for who He is, and then make our request known. God is loving and He will give you the desire of your heart, if you love Him as He loves you.

Psalms 37:4 "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

Philippians 4:7 "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Inner calm or tranquility is promised to the believer who has a thankful attitude based on unwavering confidence that God is able and willing to do what is best for His children.

“Shall keep you” means to “guard”, or “keep watch over”. God’s peace guards believers from anxiety, doubt, fear and distress.

“Hearts and minds”: Paul was not making a distinction between the two, he was giving a comprehensive statement referring to the whole inner person. Because of the believer’s union with Christ, He guards his inner being with His peace.

Jesus is the King of Peace. This is the kind of peace that we have in the midst of problems. Look at the promise that should bring perfect peace to all believers.

Psalms 91:7 "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; [but] it shall not come nigh thee."

This peace passes all understanding, because it is in the midst of the problem. Remember with me, that God saved Noah in the flood, not from the flood. Knowing all of this, we should have perfect peace in our mind and heart, knowing that God takes care of us.

Get your eyes off of the circumstances around you, and know within yourself that God will take care of you.

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."

“True”: What is true is found in God (2 Tim. 2:25, in Christ, Eph. 4:20-21), in the Holy Spirit (John 16:13), and in God’s Word (John 17:17).

“Honest” or honorable meaning a term “worthy of respect.” Believers are to meditate on whatever is worthy of awe and adoration. I.e., the sacred as is opposed to the profane.

“Just” or right. The believer is to think in harmony with God’s divine standard of holiness.

“Pure”: That which is morally clean and undefiled.

“Lovely”: The Greek term means “pleasing” or “amiable”. By implication, believers are to focus on whatever is kind or gracious.

“Of good report”: That which is highly regarded or thought well of. It refers to what is generally considered reputable in the world, such as kindness, courtesy, and respect for others.

Paul is saying, keep your mind and your heart stayed on the good things of God. Christians should not be negative. We should always look on the bright side. There is more than enough despair in the world without the Christians adding to it. Be positive in this negative world; bring hope in Jesus to the lost world.

Matthew 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

It is the responsibility of every Christian to be a bright light, reflecting the Light of Jesus to this lost world. You may be somebody's only look at what Christ is all about. Give them hope, not more despair.

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."

The Philippians are too busy themselves with the right activities. They were to follow the truth of God proclaimed, along with the example of that truth lived by Paul before them.

Paul is encouraging them to go out and win souls for Christ. Don't just be a hearer of the Word of God, be a doer of the Word of God. I hear so many say, I do not know enough to lead someone to Christ. If you are saved, you know more than those who are lost. Share what you do know. If you are a Christian, walk like Christ, talk like Christ and do Christ like things.

John 14:12 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater [works] than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

If you feel that you are not capable of ministering to others, let Christ minister to them through you.

"The God of peace": God is peace (Romans 16:20), makes peace with sinners through Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-20), and gives perfect peace in trouble (verse 7).

In (verses 10-19), Paul expressed his gratitude to the Philippians for their kind expressions of love and the generous gift they sent him and thus provides a powerful example of how a Christian can be content regardless of his circumstances.

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."

As we said earlier in these lessons, this was the only church that Paul would accept help from. They were a poor church, but they loved a lot. This is Paul's way of thanking them for helping him, when they had opportunity to do so.

Paul was saying “regarding your care for me, you really were concerned”: Paul acknowledges that they were concerned about his needs all along, but they lacked opportunity to minister to him.

Philippians 4:11 "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, [therewith] to be content."

“Not that I speak in respect (because) of want”: Paul’s ability to be content despite the circumstances assures the readers that his joy of (verse 10), is not solely over his “need” being met at their expense. He implies that he could have done without their financial aid.

For justifies this implication. I have learned ... to be content: The Greek here suggests that contentment is a lesson learned neither in a classroom nor overnight, but through many practical experiences in life.

Paul probably had been a wealthy man when he was a Pharisee, before he came to the Lord. We said earlier, Paul was not concerned at all about things of this earth. He enjoyed whatever provision he had and was not concerned about that which he did not have. He knew that God would provide for all of his needs, not his greeds. The parable of the sparrow teaches that.

Philippians 4:12 "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

By listing some specific examples, this verse elaborates upon the very general and broad “in whatever state I am in” (of verse 11). Be abased means literally to discipline oneself, that is, to tighten the belt in lean times. To abound means to live in prosperity.

“Every where and in all things I am instructed” (or in all circumstances I have learned the secret of how) to be full, that is “well fed.” To abound means to have plenty. To suffer need means to go without. Paul has acquired the skill required for successfully living with little and with much, the latter probably being harder.

Paul had learned something, we all need to learn. He learned that his happiness was not in the things he had, but were in God. True joy comes from God and is a feeling inside of us, regardless of the circumstances around us. Even the need sometimes suffered can turn into a blessing from God.

Paul's secret was that he was in this world, but not of this world. He refused to be controlled in his emotions by hardships around him.

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

The apostle’s ability of knowing how to live skillfully on little or in prosperity, does not mean that he is a spiritual superman. The reason he can live in such extremes is not owing to his own

ability. Rather he can do all things through Christ who strengthened him, thus enabling him to adapt to his various, ever changing circumstances.

God orders Paul's various situations and God gives him the strength to be content in them all, trying and perplexing though they may be.

Because believers are in Christ (Gal. 2:20), He infuses them with His strength to sustain them until they receive some provision (Eph. 3:16-20; 2 Cor. 12:10).

Every Christian should have this implanted in their heart. Things that are impossible in the flesh are more than possible through Christ who is our strength. The secret is realizing that it is not our strength, but His.

Philippians 4:14 "Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction."

Paul adds a word of clarification here so the Philippians would not think he was being ungrateful for their most recent gift, because of what he just wrote (verses 11-14).

Paul didn't want them to conclude that, since he can live just as well in poverty as in prosperity, perhaps the money then sent him was wasted. So, he hastens to assure them that they did well in sharing or meeting his financial needs.

Paul says here, even though I could have gotten along without your help, it is good that you helped. They realized there was a need, and they took care of Paul's need. They will be blessed of God for it.

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."

Ten years had passed since Paul first preached the gospel in Philippi and then had left. Paul informs the Philippians that he is still appreciative of the gifts they sent long ago while he ministered in Macedonia. Since he remains grateful for that aid given years ago, it stands to reason that he is appreciative of their latest help received recently in Rome.

Every person who ministers the Word of God, whether missionary or local minister, needs a church like Philippi that will take care of that need. Those who minister should never have to raise their own money. They need to stay in the Word of God and prayer, and let others who are called furnish the needs to do their job.

One of the greatest callings (in my opinion), is to have the gift of a giving heart. Paul is telling this church at Philippi that they were the only ones who helped him with his needs.

Philippians 4:16 "For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity."

Paul had preached to the Thessalonians for a few months, during his second missionary journey.

Paul is reminding them of the times they helped, and letting them know that he has not forgotten their generosity.

Philippians 4:17 "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account."

Paul appreciated the gift, but what pleased him the most about it, was the fact that they had matured as Christians and were bearing fruit. Giving freely to those in need is certainly fruit bearing.

The Philippians were in effect storing up for themselves treasure in heaven (Matt. 6:20). The gifts they gave to Paul were accruing eternal dividends to their spiritual account.

Philippians 4:18 "But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things [which were sent] from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God."

Epaphroditus had brought things from the church at Philippi to take care of Paul's needs here in Rome. They had not forgotten him, even though he was a prisoner. He is saying in this, I have all of my needs met because of your generosity toward me.

He also says he accepts these things in his name, and in the name of God. God will not forget their generous heart either.

In the Old Testament sacrificial system, every sacrifice was to provide a fragrant aroma and be acceptable to God. Only if it was offered with the correct attitude would it be pleasing to Him. The Philippians' gift was a spiritual sacrifice that pleased God.

Philippians 4:19 "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Paul addressed all of the Philippians' material needs, which had probably been depleted to some extent because of their gracious gift. God would give increase to the Philippians in proportion to His infinite resources, not just a small amount out of His riches.

Because they were so generous in their giving to Paul, and really to God, God will bless them abundantly and take care of all their needs. Give and it shall be given to you pressed down and running over.

You cannot outgive God. He multiplies when giving back to you, what you have given with no hope of return. Do not give expecting to get. Give without hope of return and God will give you so much your cup will not be able to hold it all.

Philippians 4:20 "Now unto God and our Father [be] glory for ever and ever. Amen."

This is so typical of Paul. He ends with praises to God. This is speaking of God the Father, God the Word (Jesus), the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

This doxology is Paul's praise in direct response to the great truth that God supplies all the needs of the saints. In a more general sense, this is praise in response to the character of God and His faithfulness.

Philippians 4:21 "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you."

Instead of using the collective "all," Paul used the individualistic "every", to declare that each saint was worthy of his concern.

"The brethren" certainly included Timothy and Epaphroditus. Others who were preaching the gospel in Rome were present. It is possible that Tychicus, Aristarchus, Onesimus, and Jesus Justus were also there.

This too is typical of Paul. He sends greetings to all the brothers and sisters in Christ, and sends it from himself and all the believers with him.

Philippians 4:22 "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household."

A significant number of people not limited to Caesar's family, which would include courtiers, princes, judges, cooks, food tasters, musicians, custodians, builders, stablemen, soldiers, and accountants.

Within that large group, Paul had in mind those who, through the proclamation of the gospel by members of the church at Rome, had been saved prior to his coming. Newly added to their number were those led to Christ by Paul himself, including those soldiers who were chained to him while he was a prisoner (1:13).

There is a little morsel in this. We know that Paul's stay as a prisoner of Caesar has not been unfruitful, because he speaks of the converts to Christianity in Caesar's household.

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

We see in Paul's writings, that Paul begins and ends his letters with grace. This is a benediction favorite of Paul's, a common conclusion to Paul's epistles.

I must say along with Paul, so be it (Amen).

Philippians Chapter 4 Questions

1. What two things does Paul call the Philippians in verse 1?
2. What is the hope of all believers?
3. What words show how Paul feels about these Philippians?
4. Why does Paul love them so much?
5. What 2 women does Paul speak to in verse 2?
6. What instructions did he give them?
7. Who does the author believe the yokefellow to be in verse 3?
8. What was the yokefellow to do?
9. What, in verse 3, did all of these people have in common?
10. When are Christians to rejoice?
11. Why should Christians rejoice more than other people?
12. What are some things we should do in moderation?
13. What does the statement "the Lord is at hand" mean?
14. How are we to let our requests be known unto God?
15. Worry is lack of _____.
16. Who is King of Peace?
17. What is the promise, in Psalms, that should bring peace to believers?
18. Noah was saved ___ the flood, not _____ the flood.
19. Get your eyes off the _____ around you.
20. Christians should not be _____.
21. What is the responsibility of every believer to reflect?
22. Do not just be a _____ of the Word, be a _____.
23. When had they helped Paul?
24. Paul said, "for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be _____."
25. I know both how to be _____, and how to _____.

26. Memorize and quote Philippians chapter 4 verse 13.
27. Who was the only church that helped Paul with his needs?
28. In verse 17, Paul desired _____ that may abound to your account, more than gifts.
29. Who had brought the gifts to Paul from the Philippians?
30. Who did Paul tell them to salute?
31. How do we know some in Caesar's house came to Christ?