

Phil. 4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

Paul is stating that the contents of this letter should serve as motivation to “keep on keeping on” in the work of the Lord. He loves this body of believers not only as brothers and sisters in Christ, but with a special human connection of the heart. Their relationship brings him great joy and delight and represents part of his heavenly reward.

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

Evidently two women in the Philippian church were having public disagreement on some issue, and Paul is encouraging them to establish unity with one another. The Greek for *mind* states to “exercise the mind...set the affection on.” He is encouraging them to use their energy to focus on their love for the Lord and lay aside any differences they might have that would negatively impact the effectiveness of their testimony and, in turn, the testimony of the church.

Phil. 4:3 And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life.

The wording for this verse is interesting. Paul is definitely addressing a co-laborer in the ministry. Since the word is singular, I think the Greek for *yokefellow* gives reason to believe it is a specific person in the church named Syzygus. This would make more sense in reference to one in a letter to many. This *yokefellow* is encouraged to be of assistance specifically to the women who have labored with Paul in ministry (possibly Euodias and Syntyche). They had also assisted Clement and others who had ministered with Paul. It’s interesting that Paul adds that all these co-laborers have their names listed in the book of life (see Topical Study, The Book of Life). JFB had an interesting comment on this phrase: “Anciently, free cities had a roll book containing the names of all those having the right of citizenship.” The Book of Life is a registry of all who are citizens of heaven.

Phil. 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

This verse always makes me think of a chorus we sang as kids. Paul is encouraging the believers at Philippi to rejoice in the Lord at all times—good and bad. No matter what trial the Christian may suffer, he/she can be confident that his/her future is secure with the Lord and will be filled with joy beyond our imagination.

1Cor. 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

This seems to be the theme verse for this little book; the words joy or rejoice appear 16 times in these four chapters.

Phil. 4:5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

“moderation” = appropriate, i.e. (by implication) mild:—gentle, moderation, patient. Webster’s definition states “calmness of mind.”

The believer should be able to demonstrate gentleness and patience in dealing with the frustrations in life. Our calmness in times of trouble should stand out when compared with that of unbelievers. I am reminded of an event in the past year when a man murdered several Amish children. The response of the Amish community was very calm and forgiving. They were very confident that God allowed this for a reason. I found the following quote on the internet at <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/10/04/national/main2059816.shtml>:

“As they struggle with the slayings of five of their children in a one-room schoolhouse, the Amish in this Lancaster County village are turning the other cheek, urging forgiveness of the killer and quietly accepting what comes their way as God's will. They know their children are going to heaven. They know their children are innocent ... and they know that they will join them in death,” said Gertrude Huntington, a Michigan researcher and expert on children in Amish society.”

That's the attitude that all Christians should exhibit in times of trouble.

One of the strongest motivations for right living with a right attitude—“The Lord is at hand.” From the very beginning of the church, believers have been looking for the Lord to return. Though it may seem like forever in our way of thinking, it's just been a couple of days in God's way of thinking.

Psa. 90:4 For a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night.

2Pet. 3:8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Any hardship we may have to endure on this earth is hardly worth mentioning when compared to the joy that will be ours for eternity.

2Cor. 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

Phil. 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

“careful” = anxious; Webster = exposing to concern, anxiety or trouble; painful

This is a reference to worry. It's the opposite of the calmness referenced in the preceding verse. Personal example--I have had a propensity to worry unduly as a mom at times. As I have grown spiritually, I've been able to make the distinction between a healthy concern and worry or undue concern. I have learned that I need to do my best to make wise choices and intercede for my kids in prayer. I can then trust God to work according to His will knowing that He loves my children better than I possibly can. The character of God the Father, my Father, allows me to be thankful in advance; He is faithful, loving, merciful, and forgiving. I can do nothing better than place my kids in the care of the Father.

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

This type of peace is that pictured by the Amish as stated in the reference above. It's a peace that the world cannot understand. They can't see past the circumstances to understand that God is working in the lives of believers to

refine them and purify them and better prepare them for eternity. They don't understand that He is ever trying to draw sinners to their knees in repentance and faith. (See Topical Study, "Why Does God Allow...?")

The source of the believer's peace of heart and mind (thoughts, feelings and perceptions) is Christ Jesus. Only because of the provision of Christ through the Holy Spirit can we exhibit such peace before the world.

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

John 14:17 *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Phil. 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.

In this verse Paul is telling the believers how to be filled with the peace of God—by thinking and focusing on good things, spiritual things, things of God. I like David Guzik's quote referencing this verse: "This, Paul would say, is the fruit and the food of the mind that is guarded by the peace of God; the adage "garbage in, garbage out" is applicable here." I would change that to say "spiritual truth in, spiritual fruit out."

- *Whatsoever things are true* – There are many scriptures that equate the truth with God; I have listed just a few.

Deut. 32:4 *He is* the Rock, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he.

Psa. 31:5 Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Rev. 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

If we are meditating on things that are true, we are meditating on things that are connected to God. I usually think of *truth* as "conforming to fact" (i.e. Webster), but the Greek added more—"as not concealing." In other words there is no deception involved. It's a reminder to avoid hypocrisy. It's a reminder that any "wisdom of man" that contradicts God's Word is false.

- *Whatsoever things are honest* – The Greek for *honest* references "venerable," which Webster defines as being worthy of honor and respect, and "grave," which Webster defines as "of importance, weighty, influential and serious." I was surprised in doing a word search for "honest or honesty" to find that there were only 8 uses of this word in scripture, and they were all in the New Testament. Most uses are of the word "kalos," which references "beautiful, good, valuable, virtuous and worthy." This seems to indicate that our meditations should not be on frivolous, worldly things. This doesn't mean that we have to be serious all the time, but it

does seem to indicate that we are less likely to fall into a worldly mindset and/or deception of the enemy if our focus is on the things of God that are important to our eternal future. I believe that is what the apostle meant when he wrote the Colossians.

Col. 3:2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

As I continue to think about it, I am reminded of the negative impact that “worldly humor” has had on the morals of our nation—including the church.

- *Whatsoever things are just* – The Greek for **just** references things that are “equitable, innocent, holy and right.” Again, there are several scriptures that define God as just.

Deut. 32:4 *He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.*

Is. 45:21 *Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me.*

Rev. 15:3 *And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.*

I am reminded that to determine what is true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report one must have a standard by which to judge. Again, the only acceptable standard is the Word of God. This is a very non-tolerant and unpolitically correct statement; nevertheless, it is true. Our nation has taken a moral nosedive because we have slowly but surely kicked God out of our schools and government. Our courts are continually redefining what is “right” and “just” according to human wisdom rather than the wisdom of God as stated in scripture.

- *Whatsoever things are pure* – The Greek defines **pure** as “clean, i.e. (figuratively) innocent, modest, perfect:—chaste, clean, pure.” One of the first things that jumps out at you from a word search for *pure* in the scripture is how many times it is used in referencing the making of the tabernacle and all the vessels associated with it—pure gold, pure frankincense, pure myrrh, pure oil, etc. The Lord was emphasizing that just as He is pure and holy, everything associated with worship of Him is to be clean and pure. Immediately when we are saved we are imputed the righteousness of God in Jesus; we are made clean and pure.

2Cor. 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

2Cor. 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

Scripture also emphasizes that the commandments of the Lord and, in fact, every word of God is pure.

Psa. 19:8 The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes.

Prov. 30:5 Every word of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

This tells me that the purest thoughts and meditations we can have are on the scripture. These are the thoughts and meditations that will benefit us the most for eternity.

- *Whatsoever things are lovely* – Again, this reminds me of a song from my childhood, “He is Altogether Lovely.” The Greek for *lovely* states “friendly towards, i.e. acceptable.” Webster basically states that it is having qualities that excite one to love or friendship. This is more than a response to physical beauty; it’s a response to the character of a person. There is no one of higher or better character than God. It is to my/our shame that we are not totally committed to the Lord in every area of our lives because there is no one in our lives lovelier than the Lord. Solomon expresses the thought beautifully.

Song 5:16 His mouth *is* most sweet: yea, he *is* altogether lovely. This *is* my beloved, and this *is* my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

- *Whatsoever things are of good report* – This is a reference to your reputation. The Greek defines *good report* as “well spoken of, i.e., reputable.” I only found ten uses of this phrase in the scripture, and they were all in reference to a person’s reputation. So to think on things of good report, would be to focus on qualities that produce a good reputation or testimony in the life of the believer.

“if there be any virtue...praise” – *Virtue* is a reference to excellence and *praise* is a reference to that which is worthy of commendation, honor and holding in high esteem. The “ifs” are not in the original. Paul is making a statement about the things that are excellent and worth praising.

“think on these things” - The Greek for *think* states “to take an inventory, i.e. estimate (literally or figuratively)” and is from a root word that adds “reasoning (the mental faculty) or motive.” I have been using the word meditate in reference to thinking. Webster defines meditation as “To keep the mind in a state of contemplation; to dwell on anything in thought; to think seriously....” Taking an inventory / estimation and reasoning are a result of thinking seriously or contemplation. Paul is stating that he has listed the things that will produce virtue in our life and result in His praise (i.e., “Well done thou good and faithful servant.”). Thinking on these things will motivate us to honor God with our lives. I believe this is the point Paul was making in his letter to the Romans.

Rom. 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but **be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The JNT Commentary made an important point with the following quote: “The object is not retreat from an evil world, but sanity in it.”

Phil. 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.

Paul is confident that he is living in obedience to the Lord according to His word. Several times in his letters, he encourages the believers to follow his example. He is confident that he has taught the truth clearly so as to be understood (from the Greek for *learned*). The Greek for *received* states “to associate with oneself.” Paul is indicating that he has seen evidence of their applying that truth to their lives. Paul’s example had strengthened the effectiveness of his message. Paul can confidently tell the believers that they will experience the peace of God because He will be with them in the presence of the Holy Spirit—both individually and as a church.

Phil. 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

The KJV wording is a bit confusing; I like the phrasing of the Complete Jewish Bible for this verse.

In union with the Lord I greatly rejoice that now, after this long time, you have let your concern for me express itself again. Of course, you were concerned for me all along, but you had no opportunity to express it. This *care* for the Apostle was the financial gift delivered by Epaphroditus and, more importantly, Epaphroditus’ ministry to and with Paul.

Thought – One of the comforting lessons the Lord has taught me is that He will provide one the opportunity to serve according to His will in His timing and in the manner and place of His choosing. I have a heart to respond to many needs that present themselves, but I don’t have the wherewithal or ability to respond to most. It is very comforting to know that where God guides, He will provide.

Phil. 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content.

Phil. 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.

Paul is very careful to declare God’s sufficiency for him; he doesn’t consider himself a needy person. Paul has learned to be satisfied with whatever the Lord provides—be it in poor circumstances or experiencing the luxuries of life. The writer of Hebrews encourages the believer to embrace this truth.

Heb. 13:5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

“instructed” = from the base of 3466; to initiate, i.e. (by implication) to teach....3466. (to shut the mouth); a secret or “mystery” (through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites):—mystery.

The Greek for *instructed* was quite thought provoking. It sounds as though Paul is referencing direct instruction that was given him by the Lord that was specifically for him—not necessarily to teach to others, but to example in his life. As I continue to think about this, I’m not sure you can “teach” that kind of

attitude toward life effectively except through personal example. Our testimony before others is sooooo important.

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

This is a wonderful verse and is probably a life verse for many people—including one of my daughters. It flows very naturally from Paul's statement in the previous verse. No matter where God leads, no matter what the circumstances, Paul is confident that he can do anything "through Christ," the source of his strength in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Greek for *through* states, "denoting a fixed position." I think the better translation would have been "in Christ." The believer's position "in Christ" is a preeminent truth throughout the letters of the Apostle Paul.

Rom. 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

Rom. 12:5 *So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

2Cor. 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Gal. 3:28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Philem. 6 *That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.*

It is our position in Christ that allows us to benefit from the indwelling Holy Spirit—comfort, empowerment, gifting, etc.

I also note that our position in Christ is "fixed"—made firm, set permanently, fastened immovably, made definite. I can't help it; I love to emphasize every scripture that supports the security of my salvation.

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

Even though Paul is content with the sufficiency of Christ's provision for him, he is very thankful for the provision of the Philippian believers. It was interesting that the Greek for "communicate with" stated, "to co-participate in, be partaker of." Their provision for Paul caused them to share in Paul's *affliction* (persecution, trouble). Their sacrifice connected them with Paul's experience.

The best connection I can make is how I feel hurt or a burden in my heart for certain people who are experiencing hard times in their life. My time of prayer on their behalf or in writing a note of encouragement and asking God to give me the right verse to share is a result of the heart connection I feel with that person and what they are experiencing.

Phil. 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.

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

We noted earlier that the church at Philippi was the first church in Europe established by the Apostle Paul. It was located in the northern area of the

current nation of Greece. “In the beginning of the gospel” seems to be referencing the time that Paul first shared the gospel with this group of people. It seems that, until this time, this was the only church to respond with missionary giving in support of the Apostle Paul. He makes note that they sent gifts of provision to him at least twice during his time of ministry in Thessalonica.

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

Because Paul had learned to be satisfied according to God’s provision for him, he is emphasizing to the believers at Philippi that he was most pleased by their gift because of the treasures in heaven that would accrue to their account. The use of the word “fruit” also makes me think of the people in Rome who would come to know the Lord through Paul’s ministry as part of their participation with him. (cf verse 14 above)

Phil. 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.

Paul feels like a rich man after receiving their gift at the hands of Epaphroditus. He has everything he needs and more. He compares their gift to a sweet smelling sacrifice, acceptable both to him and to God. When we serve others in the body of Christ, we are serving God.

Col. 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

Col. 3:24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Heb. 6:10 For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

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

I think Paul is making the point that when we make sacrifices to promote the ministry of the gospel, it will never result in our going without what we need. God will always supply the needs of His children. Of course, what we deem to be our needs and what He knows our needs to be may be a bit different. There is no need we have that the Father can’t supply. His riches in glory are limitless. Our access to the Father and His riches is provided through Christ Jesus, His Son. We can never outgive God.

Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

I almost forgot to look up the Greek for *need*. Not only does it reference necessities that we lack; it first references employment. As the best Father, God knows that one of our main needs is employment, and that we tend to appreciate most the things that we have earned. The fact that we are given provision to

earn in no way detracts from the fact that it is God supplying since every ability we have is from God in the first place.

Ecc. 5:19 Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this *is* the gift of God.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Paul is proud to identify God as “my God.” His relationship with the Lord is personal.

Phil. 4:20 Now unto God and our Father *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.

As Paul closes his letter, he gives praise to God the Father. It reminds me of a kid who is very proud of his dad. To Paul, God is “my God” and “our Father.” He treasures his personal relationship to the Lord, and he treasures the fact that he has a family in the Lord. Another blessed truth—we will get to praise the Lord for eternity.

Amen = so be it, verily—my translation: you can count on it

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

Phil. 4:22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household. The Greek for *salute* is referencing an embrace or hug. Paul is sending his love to all the saints at Philippi. It sounds as though he is asking them to share hugs with one another as they think of him. Maybe he is asking Epaphroditus to pass around the hugs. Whatever—I love to “salute” the saints.

Paul also sends greetings from their fellow Christians who are with him. They too are sending them expressions of Christian love. It would seem that the saints surrounding Paul are from the ranks of those that work in and around Caesar’s palace.

Phil. 4:23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

Paul closes with a short prayer for the saints at Philippi. He prays that they will possess the grace of “our” Lord Jesus Christ. I love the Greek for grace: “The divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life.” This is a prayer for the Philippians to have submissive hearts. A heart that is truly submitted to the Lord will reap the fullness of God’s blessings. It will not necessarily, and most probably will not, be material wealth as taught by the so-called “prosperity teachers”; but it does not discount material blessings now. Personally, I believe I possess some of the greatest treasure given by the Lord in having a husband that loves the Lord and loves me accordingly and in knowing that my children love the Lord and want to live their lives according to His word (and three beautiful grandchildren who are being raised to love the Lord and His word). There just is no worldly blessing more valuable than that.

To *the* Philippians written from Rome, by Epaphroditus.

This is an affirmation that this letter is being sent from Rome in the care of Epaphroditus.