

Philippians

Chapter 4

Let's open with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

Again we thank you for your word. We pray that as we finish up this last chapter that you will help us to understand what it is that you want to teach us. Help us to clear our minds so that we may focus on your word. Again we thank you and we pray in Jesus' name, Amen!

We are continuing in these last two chapters that make up the details of the doctrine of Christian fellowship and how those details are applied. Paul is sharing from his own life the sacrifice, the lowliness that is needed to put others above ourselves.

As we get into Philippians Chapter 4, we have a particular situation there in Philippi that Paul's going to deal with.

C.O.

Philippians 4:1
The Position for the Believer

<https://john14-6.webs.com/biblestudies.htm>
Bible Studies - The Way, The Truth, and The Life

10/3/2018
Page 2 of 21

First of all the position for the believer in Verse 1:

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

Concerning affection, Paul says therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown,

Again, the word joy has to do with satisfaction. He says you are my satisfaction. They are also his crown. The people that he's ministering to, that is his reward when he gets to heaven, as we've shared from other scriptures.

So he shares his affection. He says my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and my crown, and concerning his command, he says so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

Stand fast is to stand firm. That is the believer's position. Once you have received Christ, the bible tells us stand firm in Christ.

Ephesians Chapter 6 talks about putting on the whole armor of God so that you will be able to stand and resist the attacks of the devil.

Nowhere in the bible does it say that we are supposed to fight him. He's already been defeated. That's part of his scheme to keep us busy and fighting him.

Stand in the Lord. Stand in the Lord's truth.

James says in James 4:7, submit yourself to God and resist the devil and he will flee from you. So he says stand firm in the Lord my dearly beloved.

C.O.

Philippians 4:2-3
The Procedure for Fellowship

M.V.

Philippians 4:2

So then he shares the procedure for fellowship, having to do with disputes and contentions back then.

First of all Paul's instructions in Verses 2 and 3:

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

He says I beseech Euodias, and beseech means to appeal. I appeal to Euodias, and I appeal to Syntyche,

These are two women in the church at Philippi. And his instruction is that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

Here's our term Phroneo for frame, that they be of the same frame of mind or attitude in the Lord.

And again he's saying that this is the key to everything, that whatever your problems are ladies, you can hold to your preferences, but the bottom line is that the Lord's work and our fellowship is based on wanting what the Lord wants.

If you want what you want more than what the Lord wants, that's where the problems come in. They need to be of the same mind in the Lord, to think or have the same frame of mind.

It doesn't mean to have the same thoughts, but it's the disposition or the frame of mind, the approach to this life.

So concerning attitude, he appeals to Euodias and Syntyche.

Concerning assistance, he says:

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.

<https://john14-6.webs.com/biblestudies.htm>
Bible Studies - The Way, The Truth, and The Life

10/3/2018
Page 4 of 21

And I appeal to you also, true, or genuine yokefellow, meaning people who are yoked together. Help those women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with my other fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.

So he's emphasizing that these are saved people who have worked with Paul and assisted Paul in the ministry. But just like in everything, there's going to be some kind of dispute or contention with people.

The key he says is have the same frame of mind, the same attitude in your approach towards life together, and it will clear up the problem. So he asks the others to assist them.

C.O.

Philippians 4:4-7
The Precepts for Fellowship

M.V.

Philippians 4:4

Now the precepts of fellowship, here is his instruction, and there are four commands that he's laying out for what it means to have a humble frame of mind in fellowship.

Command number one:

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

Now that you know what rejoice means from a Greek context, he says be continuously satisfied in the Lord: and again I will continue to say, be satisfied in the Lord.

If you're banking your satisfaction on getting your own way, it won't work!

The difficulties in that area seems to work with people who over a period of time have given a lot of money, or have performed a lot of work, to the

point that they think that their investment is in that church and therefore they think that people ought to do things their way. We have problems!

So find your satisfaction in the Lord, and again I will say make your satisfaction in the Lord. So he's saying I'm going to say it over and over, and if we go over this again, I'm going to say the exact same thing.

The problem isn't what you want, and the problem isn't what she wants. The problem is that both of you don't want what the Lord wants more than anything.

You can have your favorite color. You can have your favorite place in the church. But you have to want what the Lord wants more than what you want.

So that's command number one. You're commanded to be satisfied in the lord.

M.V.

Philippians 4:5

Command number two:

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

Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is near.

Some English texts, instead of moderation, they say gentleness. But there's a big difference between gentleness and moderation. The Greek word literally means to withdraw.

If you put that in context, he is saying let your reputation among people be that you withdraw from the material things of the world, not indulge.

You see, that's pretty good advice for these two ladies, and all situations. In the physical and human realm, there shouldn't be anything that means something to me in value that would overshadow what the Lord wants.

<https://john14-6.webs.com/biblestudies.htm>
Bible Studies - The Way, The Truth, and The Life

10/3/2018
Page 6 of 21

It should never be. But that's true for all of us. We can all look at our lives and say "Well, I don't know, I've got some things and some people that I put right up there. I don't know if I could make a decision between them and Christ if I had to."

That's why I said earlier that the Lord is taking us through a lifetime process of reeling us in. We start out by making the mistake that all Christians make in the western world, is that we think that we take Jesus into our lives while we go back out into the world again.

And over a period of years you realize that that's not what happened, and it's that Jesus came into my life and took me with Him down the road that He has for me.

That's why He said if anyone desires to be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. I don't take Jesus with me. He takes me with Him.

And it's over a lifetime that we learn, to the point, and just like the song says, that the things of earth grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.

Let your moderation, let your reputation be moderate. You're involved. You have your necessities, and you have your times. But it doesn't mean that much to me that I can't give it up, especially for the sake of Christ.

M.V.

Philippians 4:6

Command number three:

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;

The word careful is the word Merimnao which is the Greek word for anxiety, the Greek word for worry. And basically in summary, it means the occupation of the attention of your mind. Not the occupation of the mind, but the occupation of the attention of the mind.

Remember back in Matthew Chapter 6, Jesus said that you can only serve one master. And right after that verse, He says do not be anxious for your life, same word, what you shall, eat, what you should drink, or what you shall put on. Those are the necessities.

If I and my family did not have food for the next few days, and for the Lord to tell me don't be occupied with it, what am I to do?

Clothing, you don't have any clothes? Don't worry about it. Nothing to drink? Satan will even use the necessities of life to keep us distracted and occupied.

So he says be anxious, literally for not one thing. We're worriers. We sit around and we think and we're occupied.

But remember, and again this is in summary, but in Job Chapters 1 and 2, it tells us that Satan scouts people to find out what it is about them that he can attack.

And when he finds out the people that mean the most to us and the things that mean the most to us, that's what he attacks us with. But he attacks us by putting it in our minds. And it snowballs and we run away with it. And for some people, it can even destroy them.

Do not be anxious for one thing. That's easier said than done. But look what he says to do about it.

He says but in every thing by prayer and supplication, and supplication means petition. Prayer is general. Petition is specific.

<https://john14-6.webs.com/biblestudies.htm>
Bible Studies - The Way, The Truth, and The Life

10/3/2018
Page 8 of 21

Everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, command number four: let your requests be made known unto God.

He's not saying pray about it. The bible teaches that prayer is the means by which we communicate and express our submission to God and His will. That's what the bible teaches.

Prayer is for me to be upset or involved in a situation here, and most of the time, emotionally and/or psychologically this thing has a hold of my life.

And I'm praying for God to step in. And what God is saying is let go of that and pray and submit it to me, and you line up and pray for my will to be done in that situation.

So that's what he's saying here. Don't be occupied. When you find yourself occupied, give it to the Lord. It will destroy you if you don't.

And ask for God's will to be done. A lot of times we ask for specifics and if it doesn't turn out that way we get even worse in our anxiety.

"Hey, I've prayed about it." The bible doesn't say to pray about it. Paul is saying, and the bible teaches that it's not just about praying about something and then saying "Well, the Lord didn't answer my prayer because I asked Him to do it this way, and it's the only way that it's got to turn out that I'm not going to get upset."

And that's why Satan is working that way to begin with. We are to surrender it to Christ!

And then it says to do it with thanksgiving. How can you do it with thanksgiving unless you practice it? And that's the point. He's not telling you to practice it.

When you give it to the Lord, it's with thanksgiving. It's like the Lord is there for me to give it to. And we can be thankful for that! And then of

course command number four, let your requests be known unto God. So whatever it is, give it to Him. Let Him know about it.

And then lastly, the consequence of this all. Not the conclusion but the consequence because this is a promise. All four of these commands produce this:

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

The word keep is the word guard. The peace of God guards our hearts and minds in His peace, knowing that we've given it to Him and He's going to take care of it His way.

C.O.

Philippians 4:8-9 The Practices of Paul
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First of all, Paul shares about his meditation and tells us to do the same.

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.

He says finally, or in summary my 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, the command is think on these things.

I'll give you the meaning of each one of these words.

Whatsoever things are true: that is truth. Think about things that are the truth, especially in Christ.

<https://john14-6.webs.com/biblestudies.htm>
 Bible Studies - The Way, The Truth, and The Life

10/3/2018
 Page 10 of 21

Secondly, whatsoever things are honest: the word honest means something that is honorable and reverent toward God. If it honors the Lord!

Whatsoever things are just: that's the word for righteousness. And it means those things that are right with God.

Whatsoever things are pure: this word comes from the word for separation. And it means concentrate or think on those things that are separated from the corruption of the world, things that are pure, unmixed with the world.

Whatsoever things are lovely: that is whatever things that are pleasing from a spiritual perspective.

Whatsoever things are of good report: this word comes from the word fame. So when people come and give you a report about somebody else, only listen to reports that are of good report that fits in with everything else, pure, pleasing spiritually. Don't listen to the negative reports.

He says if there be any virtue, Arete, and it means character, anything for the development of your character. And if there be any praise to God, the command is think on these things.

The Greek word for think is Logizesthe, and it is where we get our word logic from, the reasoning processes. It is a present imperative which means continue to set your reasonings and your thoughts on these things.

We do have control over what we meditate on and focus on. We worry to the point of sickness because we want to. Well just trust the Lord with it.

But I don't want to let go of it, I want to worry about it, you know? It's like is I let God take care of it then it might not get done right. So I've got to do it.

Paul says your mind is the arena. We're not talking about psychological principles. We're taking about the fact that the Spirit of Christ lives in you, and He is renewing your mind through His word, so guard it.

If something invades your thinking processes that's going to do you harm, give it to the Lord. That's what He's there for. Trust Him with it. Let it go. Think on these things, things that are honor to the things of the Lord and things that are separate from the corruption that's involved, and things that are pleasing to God.

Don't listen to reports where people are going to drag other people through the dirt. It's all for character. It's because we care about our relationship with the Lord and the character and integrity of our lives because it represents Christ!

Meditate, consider, let your reasoning processes be continually on these things.

M.V.

Philippians 4:9

Then Paul gives the command:

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.

Those things, which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do:

That's pretty authoritative! The word do is the word Prasette which means practice, not just do it, Poieo, but practice. It's a present imperative. Continue to practice going down the road that I've gone, both in what you have learned and received, and heard and seen in me Paul says.

<https://john14-6.webs.com/biblestudies.htm>
Bible Studies - The Way, The Truth, and The Life

10/3/2018
Page 12 of 21

The consequence, and again, it's a promise: and the God of peace shall be with you.

C.O.

Philippians 4:10-20
The Participation of the
Philippians

Paul's evaluation concerning his celebration:

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.

He says, but I rejoiced in the Lord greatly,

And you know what the word rejoiced means. He was celebrating the satisfaction in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me has flourished again;

The word care is Phroneo, your frame of mind. Your frame of mind is set back on me again wherein you were also careful, but you lacked opportunity.

He's talking about this gift of finances that Epaphroditus brought. He says before, you didn't have opportunity. But I'm celebrating in the Lord that now your care of me has flourished again. You would have before but you lacked opportunity.

Then Paul says about his contentment in Verse 11. Now I like this. I wish more of those in ministry could adopt Paul's ways.

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 of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am in, therewith to be content.

Whatever condition you're in, he says I learned this to be self-contained. I have everything in Christ living in me. I have everything that I need.

I don't even need to go out anywhere, except that my physical body has to have that food stuff! We have to take care of the necessities.

But Paul learned how to develop his relationship with the Lord so that Satan would not have those handles out there. All of those people, all of those activities that mean a lot on the outside of me that Satan can use against me and hold me hostage.

He says I've learned.

M.V.

Philippians 4:12

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.

I know both how to be abased, that is to be made low, and I know how to abound:

You have to learn how to abound. And you have to learn how to be made low.

God takes us to a point where He just puts us in a place where seemingly we're losing everything. And then a few years later it's like wow, our ship comes in, you know?

We have more than what we need, which can be just as bad. Both are trials.

Every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

<https://john14-6.webs.com/biblestudies.htm>
Bible Studies - The Way, The Truth, and The Life

10/3/2018
Page 14 of 21

Notice what he said. I'm instructed. God wants us to learn how to be in any condition to abound, or to be brought down low and still be content.

In other words, our contentment, our satisfaction in life is not dependent on anything that's happening outside of our physical bodies. That's maturity!

M.V.

Philippians 4:13

And then he says a Verse you all know:

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

I can do all things in Christ who is empowering me.

That's the literal translation. I'll go through it again.

The first line that says I can do all things, he says I have sufficient inherent strength already in me in Christ. I have sufficient inherent strength. The power of God lives in me.

I can do all things in Christ, not through, but in Christ. And then describing Christ: who is the one who is empowering me, showing that God's power is continuing to produce His power and strength in me.

I like that first line. I like how it says that I have sufficient inherent strength to do all things.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians Chapter 12 when he prayed that the thorn in his flesh, his health problem, that God would heal and take away, God said to him my grace is sufficient for you.

He doesn't have to take anything away. He doesn't have to change a thing. His grace is sufficient. And He is continually empowering me to do all things, to go hungry or to be full, to be made low or to abound.

So the prompting of the Philippians, the commendation of Paul concerning their communication:

And the word communication here is the word for fellowship. This is now our third instance. In Chapter 1 we had two.

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

He says, notwithstanding you have done well, but you did communicate with my affliction. You're having fellowship with my affliction.

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.

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

So he went up into Thessalonica, and went up into Berea and a couple of other places after Philippi, and only the church in Philippi gave in his support. Nobody else did.

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

For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again, and the word again is twice, unto my necessity.

They sent two offerings.

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

You see, this has to do with fellowship.

<https://john14-6.webs.com/biblestudies.htm>
Bible Studies - The Way, The Truth, and The Life

10/3/2018
Page 16 of 21

My prayer is that those in ministry would understand these two things about a normal relationship with Christ.

Number one, learn to be content with Christ within, even if they are going without on the outside, so that they are content with Christ and they don't have to go to people and say "Hey, you people need to give or else we're through!"

And secondly, that they would desire people to give and participate with ministry, not because it has anything to do with them or their need, but so that it goes to their account before God.

Giving and receiving is part of fellowship with the Lord. And those in ministry should encourage others to support and to give, and support what the Lord's doing spiritually through the human realm, but not for the sake of the ministry.

It should be for the sake of your relationship with Christ and your participation with God's work.

Then the provision of the Philippians, and the satisfaction of Paul concerning his condition:

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.

But I have all, I have everything, and I am abounding: I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you,

And then he says it's a sacrifice: an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.

He says I've received your gift that you presented to God as a sacrifice out of your love for Him.

M.V.

Philippians 4:19

Concerning their condition:

This is interesting. We've heard this verse quoted a lot. But to see it in context, he is telling them that he has received the gift from Epaphroditus.

But he also knows that the Christians in Philippi are not rich people. They are now having financial hardship because they gave.

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

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

He's telling them that you might have made a sacrifice to give to God, and help me in ministry. And though you have nothing now, God shall supply all that you need. You don't have to worry about it!

And then the praise of Paul, as he gives glorification to God, his confession is:

20 Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

In other words, may it all be Him. May it all be so that people can see His substance and His person in all that we do.

C.O.

Philippians 4:21-22
The Personal Greetings

His personal greetings, the communication from Rome. Concerning the command from Rome, he says:

<https://john14-6.webs.com/biblestudies.htm>
Bible Studies - The Way, The Truth, and The Life

10/3/2018
Page 18 of 21

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

Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.

Salute means to greet. Aspadzo is the Greek word for greeting. He's commanding them. Greet all the saints for us.

Concerning the community in Rome, he says the brethren which are with me, they greet you.

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

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

C.O.

Philippians 4:23
The Pronouncement of Paul

And then the pronouncement of Paul as he mentions a fact, not a wish or a prayer, but a fact:

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

It's literally the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with you all. Amen.

Notice the word "be" is in italics. It was added into the translation. It is stating a fact. The grace of our Lord is with every one of you.

In other letters he said the grace of our Lord is with your spirit.

In Ephesians Chapter 3, he says strengthen the inner man where Christ dwells.

You see, Paul is always pointing people to Christ within, to find our satisfaction from within, and less and less attachment, as a matter of fact, withdrawing from the things that are on the outside.

That person's life will be effective for Christ. The more we've withdrawn, the more we find our satisfaction in the Lord, and the more we are at peace with God. There isn't anything else that can compare to that.

The person who has complete peace with God and satisfaction with Christ is a very rich person, even if you have nothing!

So Paul lays out for us in Philippians what it takes for fellowship, participation. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

If I were God and it was appointed that at a certain time I was going to come and become a human being and be born into this life, would I choose a modern hospital or a cave?

I want a hospital. I don't know about you but I want a hospital!

All of God's choices was the low road. And when people came up to Jesus and said I want to be your disciple, the Lord would say I have no place to lay my head. I sleep out in the Mount of Olives.

Hmm, I don't know if I want to do that.

Lord I want to be your disciple, but let me first go say goodbye to my family. Jesus said no, you come now. there's no "me first."

Another man comes up and says Lord I want to be your disciple but first let me bury my father. Jesus said let the dead bury the dead, you come and follow me.

Those are hard words. But the Lord understands that Satan uses people and things that are very important to us. That man's father could have lived another 60 years and he never would have been able to follow Christ.

And Satan knows what to pick to try to tie us down and get us distracted and detoured.

<https://john14-6.webs.com/biblestudies.htm>
Bible Studies - The Way, The Truth, and The Life

10/3/2018
Page 20 of 21

Jesus wasn't trying to be hard on people. He just knows how Satan works. If you put your hand to the plow, you can't look back!

There came a point where Jesus set His face towards Jerusalem. And everywhere He went, the people would not receive Him because He wouldn't stay with them. His face was pointed towards Jerusalem.

Some people rejected Him because that's where His face was pointed. Remember earlier in the gospels Jesus taught that we only have the capacity to serve one thing, one person.

An example would be to hold your thumb out in front of you. If you focus only on your thumb, everything else becomes blurry. But when you start focusing on everything else, your thumb becomes blurred.

You can only notice one thing. Everything else is going to be blurred.

You set your mind towards Jerusalem. You set yourself towards the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus, that path that's going to take us down the road to grasp and take hold of that for which Christ has gotten a hold of us.

Your focus has to be Christ. And everything else has to fall into place somehow, because it's in God's hands. That's what growth in Christ does. It doesn't mean that your head is filled with bible knowledge!

That might happen, but like Paul says, to know Him, to be satisfied with Him. When we're satisfied with Him, we don't need anything else.

And that's where Paul came to so that he could have fellowship and be effective in and amongst the believers, because for him to live is Christ, and to die is gain!

Do you see the focus?

Let's close in prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

Thank you for this time. Thank you for this wonderful book. Thank you for what it means to us to have Paul our brother be our example and our pattern, and to give us the opportunity to understand growth, and understand true peace and satisfaction. We pray that your Spirit would continue to teach us about these things, in Jesus' name, Amen!