

Introduction: Philippians

January 18, 1987 · AM · <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/1987/philippians-1-1987/>

The **BACKGROUND OF PHILIPPIANS** Is Important to Understand the People and Circumstances.

- A. Paul visited Philippi after the Council at Jerusalem on his second evangelistic trip (Acts 16).
 - 1. Paul took Silas with him after he and Barnabas had a division over Mark (Acts 15:36-41).
 - a. Paul did not have much respect for the slothful John Mark (Acts 15:38 cp 13:13).
 - b. By comparing this event with Col 4:10, we see that Barnabas was guilty of nepotism.
 - c. Who was right? Barnabas is Ignored further in Acts, and Antioch endorsed Paul (15:40).
 - d. Mark later repents, changes his behavior, and becomes profitable to Paul (II Tim 4:11).
 - 2. Luke joins up with Paul and Silas in Troas before they are called to Philippi (Acts 16:10).
 - a. Luke wrote the books of Luke and Acts to instruct Theophilus (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1).
 - b. The change in personal pronouns from third to first person IS Important (Acts 20:5).
 - 3. It was at Lystra that Paul reaps Timotheus from his previous trip (Acts 16:1-3 cp 14:1-23).
 - a. Timothy was raised by mothers to be a godly young man (Ac 16:1; II Ti 1:5; II Ti 3:15).
 - b. Timothy had a good report of the disciples at Lystra and Iconium (Ac 16:2; I Tim 3:7).
 - c. Paul circumcised Timothy and didn't circumcise Titus to save men (Acts 16:3; Gal 2:3).
 - d. Circumcision was rejected (Ac 15:24) and deemed Christ (Ga 5:2), but Paul was wise.
 - 4. This period of Paul's efforts was blessed with confirmation and much growth (Acts 16:4-5).
 - 5. Our sovereign God directed the gospel from Asia and Bythinia to Macedonia (Ac 16:6-10).
 - a. It is God's pleasure to reveal and blind as He pleases (Matt 11:25-27; Rom 11:30-33).
 - b. Paul was allowed to preach the gospel extensively in Asia later (Acts
 - c. Macedonia was the beginning of Greece; Philippi was named after Alexander's father.
 - 6. Paul and the others show their obedience by immediate and positive action (Ac 16:11-12).
 - 7. As was Paul's manner to seek the spiritually awakened, he converts Lydia (Acts 16:13-15).
 - a. He did not go to bars, jails, hospitals, or boys homes; he went where prayer was made.
 - b. While God opened the heart of Lydia to heed Paul, she already worshipped God (16:14).
 - c. Though false teachers lead captive silly women, Paul evangelized women himself.
 - 8. Paul gets himself In trouble by exorcising a profitable demon from a soothsayer (16:16-24).
 - a. He describes this event to the Thessalonians as being shamefully entreated (I Thes 2:2).
 - b. When preaching destroys financial gain from superstition, look for trouble (Ac 16:19).
 - c. Though Paul obeyed the call of God, he immediately faced trials and temptations.
 - 9. Maintaining a constant spirit, Paul and Silas reap the jailor that night (Acts 16:25-40).
 - a. Need we be surprised that this jailor asked about salvation (Acts 16:17 cp 16:31)?

- b. Note Paul's wisdom and fun at the expense of the city magistrates (Acts 16:36-39).
- B. Paul visited Philippi again on his third trip when he preached in Ephesus of Asia (Ac 20:1-6).
- C. Paul wrote the epistle to the church while he was imprisoned in Rome (Phil 1:13; 4:22).
 - 1. The Philippians supported Paul while he was at other churches (Phil 4:15-16; II Cor 11:9).
 - 2. With Paul in bonds at Rome, they sent Epaphroditus with gifts (Phil 1:7; 2:25; 4:10-18).
 - 3. Paul sent Epaphroditus back to Philippi with this epistle for the church (Phil 2:25-29).

The **SALUTATION OF PHILIPPIANS** Is the Formal Statement of Authors and Readers (Phil 1:1-2).

- A. Paul and Timothy are the two ministers of Christ who write with authority from Christ.
 - 1. Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, visited them on his second and third trips (Ac 16:12; 20:6).
 - 2. Timothy accompanied Paul the first visit, and Paul sent him there later (Acts 19:22).
 - 3. Timothy was Paul's main man (Ro 16:21; 1 Co 4:17; 16:10; 1 Th 3:2; 1 Ti 13:23).
 - 4. Timothy had enough authority and respect in the church to be sent there again (Phil 2:19).
 - 5. The title of servant describes their obedience (Rom 6:16) and their authority (II Cor 5:20).
 - a. The soothsayer spoke of Paul and Timothy as servants of the most high God (Ac 16:17).
 - b. Jesus Himself became a servant (Phil 2:7). Should we not do the same (Heb 9:14)?
- B. The epistle is addressed to the saints, elders, and deacons in Christ which were at Philippi.
 - 1. The address is obviously limited to the saints in the church or churches at Philippi
 - a. The saints are addressed as being at Philippi along with the bishops and deacons.
 - b. Paul put saints into churches (Ac 14:23), since he knew God's will (Ac 2:41-47; 11:26).
 - c. Paul and Timothy's ministerial gifts were limited to local churches (I Cor 12:27-28).
 - d. A disciple is not in God nor Christ fully until in a church (I Th 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:2).
 - e. Communion and fellowship occur in the local church (I Cor Hebrews 10:29).
 - 2. The saints at Philippi had bishops and deacons, but no ruling elders, cardinals, priests, etc.
- C. The salutation includes an apostolic blessing of God's grace and peace to them all (Phil 1:2).
 - 1. Instead of wishing good luck or other trite word, Paul admits God as the Giver (Js 1:17).
 - 2. He closes all epistles this way (II Thess 3:17), and he opens most this way (Rom 1:7; etc.).

The **INTRODUCTION OF PHILIPPIANS** Covers Paul's Thanksgiving and Request for Them (1:3-11).

- A. Paul is thankful to God for the Philippians each time he remembers them (Philippians 1:3).
 - 1. Paul's thanksgiving varies (Ro 1:8; Ep I : 15-16; Co 1:3-4; II Th 1:3 vs I Co Gal 1:6).
 - a. Paul was thankful for their faith and love: Corinth and Galatia lacked them both.
 - b. So do ministers have varying degrees of thanksgiving for different members (Heb 13:17).
 - 2. Paul is particularly thankful for their fellowship in the gospel from the beginning (1:5-8).
 - a. They showed fellowship in Philippi (Acts 16:15,34) and continued to do so (4:14-16).

- b. Fellowship is a major benefit of the gospel (Ac 2:42) and requires holiness (I Jn 1:3-7).
- 3. He is confident that God would preserve the Philippians for the day of Christ (1:6-7).
 - a. God's work in calling will be followed by other works (2:13; Ro 8:28-39; I Th 5:23-24).
 - b. God's things do not include conversion as Calvinists teach (Ja 5:19-20; Ph 3:12; Ti 3:8).
 - c. God does a work in us, but not by us; and Jesus Christ will complete it (John 6:38-39).
 - d. They proved God's work by their fellowship and grace in affliction (1:7; II Co 8:1-4).
 - e. It is diligent effort and abounding fruit that evidences preservation (II Peter 1:8-11).
- 4. Paul swears by God that he has great longing in the bowels of Christ for them (1:8; 4:1).
 - a. In order to provide greater weight to his words, he calls God to witness (Rom 1:9; 9:1).
 - b. Bowels describe inner, affectionate emotions (Ge 43:30; I Ki 3:26; SS 5:4; I Jn 3:7).
- 5. God's elect ought to enjoy wonderful fellowship and bowels of compassion (Col 3:12-15).
- B. Paul requested greater fruits of godliness for them to the glory and praise of God (1:9-11).
 - 1. Paul prayed their love would increase beyond its present state (I Th 3:12-13; Ph 3:12-15).
 - a. It was not a wasted request by Paul, since others lost their love (Ma 24:12; Re 2:4).
 - b. True love can only exist and flourish in an environment of truth (I Cor 13:6; Eph 4:13).
 - 2. The knowledge and judgment of love was to promote approval of excellent things (1:10).
 - a. Approving excellent things requires knowing and using God's word (Ro 2:18; I Th 5:21).
 - b. Judgment discerns true doctrine and practice (Ro 14:13-23; 16:17; Pr 19:11; Jn 7:24).
 - 3. He desired them to be filled with the fruits of righteousness through such conduct (1:11).
 - a. Such fruits of righteousness are by Jesus Christ as the Source of them (John 15:1-5).
 - b. Jesus Christ by calling dead sinners to life is the Source of fruits (Eph 2:10; Phil 2:13).

The **FIRST LESSON OF PHILIPPIANS** Gives Understanding in Suffering Afflictions (1:12-30).

- A. The Philippians had heard that Paul was in prison, so they were concerned (1:30; 4:14).
 - 1. They heard of his Jew troubles, shipwreck, and trip to Rome (Acts 21:27; 27:44; 28:16).
 - 2. Being the great apostle, they were obviously concerned about Paul's gospel influence.
- B. Paul instructs them that this "bad news" had actually been a blessing to the gospel (1:12-14).
 - 1. Joseph (Gen 45:5), Moses (Ex 18:1), and Philip (Ac 8:4) knew God's wisdom (Psalm 76:10).
 - 2. When he first arrived in Rome, Paul was treated well for two years (Acts
 - 3. He had reaped some spiritual fruit even in the palace of Caesar (1:13; 4:22; II Tim 2:9).
 - 4. It was manifest to everyone he was suffering for Jesus Christ (Acts 26:32; Eph 3:1; 4:1).
 - 5. A leader who is brave in danger often motivates his followers (Jn 19:38-39; II Ti 1:6-12).
- C. Though some preached Christ for evil motives, Paul rejoiced that He was preached (I: 15-18).
 - 1. These evil men envied Paul's ministerial success and aimed to afflict him in bonds (2:3).
 - 2. They had correct doctrine, but not motives (Matthew 23:1-7; I Cor 1:12; 13:1-2; Job 6:14).
- D. Through their prayers and Christ's Spirit, Paul was not worried by circumstances (I: 19-20).

1. Paul was confident that even in prison prayer and the Spirit were not bound (II Tim 2:9).
2. Paul's earnest expectation and hope was to boldly magnify Christ by whatever means.
- E. Paul encourages them by his own courage in viewing death as a means to heaven (1:21-26).
 1. Paul did not buy the "soul sleep" of the Seventh-Day Adventists, Russellites, and others.
 2. He knew death would bring gain (Phil 1:21), Christ (1:23), and something better (1:24).
- F. He encourages them directly to godly conduct and courage in spite of coming trials (1:27-30).
 1. Their conversation – manner of living – should become or adorn the gospel of Christ (1:27).
 - a. Every church should realize that there can be no evangelism with an ugly gospel.
 - b. Paul's definition of becoming behavior is unity in the truth (1:27 cp 2:2; 3:16; 4:2).
 - c. This theme is Paul's favorite epistolary admonition (Rom 12:16; I Cor 1:10; Eph 4:1-3).
 - d. Jesus prayed for unity before He died (Jn 17:20-23 cp Ac 1:14; 2:1,42,46; 4:32; 5:12)
 2. Their suffering provided a different token depending on the party considered (1:28).
 - a. Paul exhorted them not to be terrified by their adversaries (Luke 12:4-5; Heb 13:6).
 - b. Men who persecute God's saints evidence reprobation (II Thess 1:4-10; Acts 13:44-46).
 - c. Enduring persecution evidences salvation (Ma 5:10-12; II Tim 2:11-12; I Pe 4:12-14).
 3. We are called not only to faith in Christ, but also to suffer for Him (I Thess 3:3).
 4. They were receiving what Paul had received and was receiving (Phil 1: 12-13; I Thess 2:2).

The SECOND LESSON OF PHILIPPIANS Teaches Unity and Humility By Christ's Example (2:1-11). A.

- A. Paul begins his exhortation by appealing to the benefits possessed by a child of God (2:1).
 1. The condition presented is rhetorical in force, since the condition IS obviously fulfilled.
 2. Is there any consolation in Christ (Lk 2:25; 11 Th 2:16; He 6:17-20; Ac 15:31; Ro 7:18-25)?
 3. Is there any comfort in God's love (Isaiah 40:1-2; Rom 5:6-11; Eph 5:1-2; I John 4:16)?
 4. Is there any fellowship of the Spirit (Rom 8:14-16; II Cor 13:14; Gal 4:6; Psalm 51:11-12).
 5. Are there any bowels and mercies in Christ (Philippians 1:8; Philemon 20)?
 6. Specifically note the consolation, comfort, fellowship, bowels, and mercies of chapter one.
- B. Paul concludes from the benefits of grace the duty of practical unity and humility (2:2-4).
 1. Ministerial joy for the growth of each individual saint is important (He 13:17 cp Phil 2:16).
 2. Paul rejoiced in other churches as well (Colossians 2: 5; I Thessalonians 3:5-10).
 3. Paul's joy of the Philippian saints was according to their love and unity together (2:2).
 - a. Paul emphasized likemindedness – having minds alike (Phil 2:20; Rom 15:5-7; Phil 4:2).
 - b. Having the same love results from love increasing in knowledge (1:9-10 cp Amos 3:3).
 - c. One accord is harmony and reconciliation of parts (Acts 1:14; 2:1,46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25).
 - d. Discord – the lack of accord and harmony – is hated by God (Prov 6:16-20; Acts 15:39).
 4. Accord among the saints is obtained by practicing and avoiding certain things (2:3-4).
 - a. Avoid conduct toward others that comes from strife or conflict (I: 15-16; Ja 3:14-16).

- b. Avoid conduct toward others that comes from personal ambition (I Cor 13:4-5).
 - c. Promote humility that makes others better than yourself (Luke 14:7-11; Rom 12:10).
 - d. Promote others' things and not just your own (Ro 12:15; 14:19-22; 15:1; I Co 12:12-26).
- 5. Consider and remember some practical instruction for the maintenance of peaceful accord.
 - a. Believe and hope all things; think no evil (I Cor 13:5-7; Ec 7:21-22; Jn 7:24; I Tim 6:4).
 - b. Bear, endure, suffer long, and pass over things (I Co 13:4-7; Pr 19:11;17:9; Is 29:18-21).
 - c. When you perceive a problem, confront the party for agreement (Ma 18:15-17; Ga 6:1).
 - d. Quickly and honestly admit your own faults and offences (Matt 5:23-24; James 5:16).
 - e. Stop all backbiting and criticism of others in your presence (Proverbs 25:23; 26:20).
 - f. In order to be of one mind and be in agreement, communication must occur (Jn 15:15). C.
- C. Paul defines the mind we ought to have toward each other by Christ's example (Phil 2:5-11).
 - 1. He has specified like mindedness and one mind; he defines that mind by Christ (Rom 15:5). 2.
 - 2. Paul doesn't care what mind you were born with; he expects you to renew it (Rom 12:1-2).
 - 3. Jesus Christ is the preeminent pattern and examples for righteous conduct toward others.
 - a. Jesus is the great example of a servant, which service we must emulate (Ma 20:26-28).
 - b. Jesus, as Lord and Master, washed His disciples' feet to show service (John 13:13-17).
 - c. Jesus worked to support the weak and taught giving is superior to receiving (Ac 20:35).
 - d. Paul called on Gentile saints to follow him, even as he also followed Christ (I Co 11:1).
 - 4. Christ's Incarnation and crucifixion are infinite examples of humility and service (2:6-8).
 - a. Prior to becoming incarnate as Jesus Christ, He was the Word of God (Jn
 - b. The only begotten Son given to Israel is and was the Mighty God (Is 9:6-7; Micah 5:2).
 - c. Setting aside His eternal glory, He assumed a lowly position in this world (Isaiah 53:2).
 - d. He showed Infinite humility and service in dying for His enemies (Romans 5:6-10).
 - e. He died a shameful death (Heb 12:2), as He died naked (Ma 27:35) with thieves (27:38).
 - 5. Paul uses Christ's example to exhort us to greater humility and service.
 - a. We should become of no reputation and condescend to men of low estate (Rom 12:16).
 - b. Do we care enough about the welfare of others to suffer loss for them (Rom 14:21)?
- D. Paul concludes his use of Christ's example by showing the exaltation of the humble (2:9-11).
 - 1. God shall exalt those who humble themselves under His mighty hand (I Pe 5:5-6; Ja 4:10).
 - 2. Jesus said that humble service constitutes the greatest men (Ma 23:8-12; Lu 22:24-27).
 - 3. Jesus has been highly exalted for His humble obedience and service to God (Lu 24:26).
 - a. David (Ps 110:1), Jeremiah (Je 23:6), and angels (Lu 2:11) prophesied of His Lordship.
 - b. Jesus was crucified, but He is now exalted as Lord (Ac 2:32-36; 5:29-32; Ep 1:20-23).
 - c. He received more than just the letters and syllables of "Jesus": He received glory.
 - d. The angels in heaven, men in the earth, and devils under the earth shall confess Him.

- e. He is King of kings and Lord of lords, and He shall soon reveal this fact (I Ti 6:13-16).
- f. He is Lord of the wicked (Pr 16:4), of chance (Pr 16:33), of kings (Pr 21:1), of the elements (Mark 4:41), of angels (He 1:4), of judgment (He 10:30), of holiness (He 12:14), of the future (Ja 4:15), of discrimination (I Pe 3:12), of the Lord's day (II Pe 3:10-11), of Satan (Jude 9), of power (Re 19:1-6), of lords (Re 19:11-16), and of all (Ac 10:36).
- g. When the man God hath ordained shall sit in judgment, all shall be subject (Rev 20:11).

E. The next lesson takes off immediately from this exalted state of Jesus Christ (Phil 2:12-16).

The THIRD LESSON OF PHILIPPIANS Exhorts to Obedience By Christ's Exaltation (2:12-18).

- A. Paul uses Christ's example of humiliation, obedience, and exaltation to motivate them (2:12).
 - 1. "Wherefore" refers directly to Jesus Christ's example of obedience and position as Lord.
 - a. Paul had exhorted them to the same mind as Christ Jesus – humble obedience (2:5).
 - b. Since Jesus is Lord and every creature shall worship Him, we should obey now (2:9-11).
 - 2. Though the Philippians were a very obedient church, Paul presses for diligence (1:3,5).
 - 3. Salvation is worked out by bearing fruit (Jn 15:1-8; Ga 5:22-23; Tit 3:8,14; II Pe 1:8-10).
 - 4. Fear reflects Christ's Lordship (He 10:23-31; 12:28-29) and deceitful hearts (He 4:1-II).
 - 5. Obedience in good works is the only evidence of a child of God (Ja 2:14-26; Romans 2:10).
- B. Any desire or ability we have toward righteousness is created in us by God Himself (2:13).
 - 1. Without God's quickening work, man would never will nor do God's pleasure (Rom 8:7-8).
 - 2. In regeneration, God creates us unto good works (Ephesians 2:10; 4:24; Titus 2:14).
 - 3. This verse does not teach the fatalistic idea of man as an automaton doing God's pleasure.
 - a. Calvinists are notorious for ascribing our passive obedience to the Spirit of God.
 - b. Observe that this work in us is closely associated with our own working by "for."
 - 4. To will and to do" are infinitive verb forms expressing ability or purpose of verb action.
 - a. The phrase "for the purpose of willing" is equivalent to the infinitive "to will."
 - b. The phrase "the ability of willing" is equivalent to the infinitive "to will."
 - c. Do not miss the intent of the infinitive: God regenerates for a purpose – His pleasure.
 - d. Other examples of comparable infinitives are I Kings 8:58; I Chr 29: 19; Ezra 1: 5; 7:27).
 - 5. Paul knew that "to will" was present with him, but working it out was hard (Rom 7:18-25).
 - 6. With God's power and protection, we are able to will and do if we choose (I Cor 10:13).
 - 7. The present tense "worketh" shows the Spirit's activity beyond regeneration (Heb 13:21).
 - a. God's Spirit is a power in us unto good works (Ro 8:14-15; II Co 4:16; Ep
 - b. We work through the Spirit: we are not passive (Ro 8:13; I Co 14:32; 15:10; Ga 5:25).
 - c. Sin neutralizes God's spirit (Ep 4:30; 1 Th 5:19; Ps 51:11; Is 63:10; 1 Ti 4:14; 11 Ti 1:6).
 - d. The spirit works while we work (Ps 27:14; 138:3; Ga 5:16-25; Eph 6:10; Phil 4:13).
 - e. Do not we lead and strengthen our children as they actively obey us (Heb 12:9-16)?

- C. God's good pleasure is our blameless and harmless reputations in a perverse nation (2:14-15).
 - 1. An important part of being blameless and harmless is to avoid murmurings and disputings.
 - a. If we practiced Paul's previous instructions (2:1-4), we would not murmur or dispute.
 - b. Murmuring is to complain or grumble (Nu 14:27; Ma 20:11; Mk 14: 5; I Co 10:10; Ja 5:9).
 - c. Disputing is to debate or argue (Mk 9:33-34; Ro 14:1; I Co 3:3-5; II Co 12:20; Ja 1:20).
 - d. We do not become God's children by obedience, but we show it (Ma 5:45; II Co 6:18).
 - e. The world will see Christ in us by the unity and love we have (John 13:35; 17:23).
 - 2. Since we live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, our conduct should shine.
- D. Paul's ministerial success and joy depended on the degree the Philippians obeyed (2:16-18).
 - 1. He desired the Philippians to hold forth the word of life by their conduct (I Thess 1:5-10).
 - 2. Paul appealed to his own efforts (Gal 4:11) and the coming of Jesus Christ (I Thess 2:19).
 - 3. If Paul were to be martyred with the Philippian obedience in mind, he would rejoice.
 - 4. In order to comfort them in their worrying for him, he exhorts them to rejoice also.

The FOURTH LESSON OF PHILIPPIANS sets Forth Paul's Opinion of Two Ministers (2:19-30).

- A. Paul intends to send Timothy shortly after Epaphroditus to know their state (2:19-24).
 - 1. A minister IS and should be concerned about the state of his flocks (Pr 27:23; Heb 13:17).
 - 2. A minister's comfort is increased by (1) knowing his flock and (2) knowing good things.
 - 3. Timothy was a unique minister in Paul's estimation – he did not know of another like him.
 - a. Timothy, unlike other ministers not so careful, had natural concern (I Cor 10:24, 33).
 - b. Timothy had proved himself well as a “chip off the old block” ministerially (Ac 19:22).
 - 4. He comforts the Philippians that he was trusting the Lord to be able to come himself.
- B. Paul commends Epaphroditus by whom he sends the epistle to the church at Philippi (2:25-30).
 - 1. Though Timothy and he stayed in Rome, he sent Epaphroditus back to them for their need.
 - 2. He had come to Rome to serve Paul and bring news and a financial gift from Philippi.
 - 3. Epaphroditus was another minister who had very great concern and care for them.
 - a. Though he was sick physically, he worried about them worrying about him.
 - b. Though he was very sick, Paul was thankful for God's comfort in restoring his health.
 - 4. Paul reduced his sorrow for the Philippians by sending Epaphroditus to cheer them.
 - a. Being their pastor, and a zealous and careful pastor, Paul exhorts gladness (Gal 4:14).
 - b. Being their pastor, Paul exhorted them to hold such a man in reputation (I Th 5:12-13).
 - 5. Epaphroditus was near to death in serving Paul and Christ, since only he could travel.

The FIFTH LESSON OF PHILIPPIANS Is a Warning Against Pharisee Legalism (3:1-11).

- A. Before Paul begins his doctrinal lesson, he summarizes their duty by exhorting to joy (3:1).
 - 1. Being concerned about his bonds, they had needed his comforting arguments
 - 2. Paul expected them to rejoice as he was rejoicing in several things (1:18; 2:17-18).

3. Since Epaphroditus arrived With the epistle, Paul exhorts them to joy in him (2:28).
 4. A Christian's life ought to be characterized by joy (Gal 5:22; Ro 14:17; 15:13; Col 1:8-11).
 5. Since Paul commands this Christian fruit, we Will study it further at that place (Phil 4:4).
- B. An important part of a minister's work is reminding (3:1 cp II Pet I: 12-15; 3: I; I John 2:21).
1. Obviously he had warned them many times while he was in Philippi (4:18 cp Ac 20:31).
 2. Success In any endeavor IS usually doing the basics well, not resorting to complexity.
- C. Paul warns carefully against any who would return to Judaism and its legal bondage (3:2-3).
1. The dogs to avoid are fools rather than sodomites (Deut 28:18 cp Prov 26:11; II Pet 2:22).
 - a. But the victorious nature of dogs must be transferred also (Psalm 22:16,20; Matt
 - b. Paul names a specific example of a dog in warning Timothy to beware (II Tim 4:14-15).
 - c. How would a modern, cultured preacher use such rude speech (Matt 15:26; Tit 1:12)?
 2. The evil workers are men who corrupt their ministerial work (3:18-19 cp II Cor I I: 13-15).
 3. The concision IS a sarcastic allusion to Jews who gloried in their physical circumcision.
 - a. The early church had to fight this Judaizing heresy (Acts 15: I; Gal 2:3-5; 5:2; 6:12).
 - b. The sarcastic use of "concision" makes the Jews guilty of a pagan rite (Le 19:28; 21:5).
 - c. We must still fight it in dietary laws, Jewish millemums, sabbaths, rituals, and works.
 - d. We must stand against the false imposters who call themselves Jews (Rev 2:9; 3:9).
 4. The true circumcision from God's viewpoint are regenerate saints (3:3 cp Rom 2:28-29).
 - a. We have been circumcised by the circumcision made without hands (Colossians 2:10-17).
 - b. We worship God by a Spirit-renewed heart (Tit 3:5) in the Spirit (Jn 4:24; Rom 8:5-6).
 - c. We rejoice In Christ – not Moses, John Paul II, or Billy Graham (Ga 6:14; I Co 1:29-31).
 - d. We have no confidence in the flesh before or after renewing (Jn 1:13; Ro 8:8; 7:18-25).
- D. If any man had reasons for confidence in the flesh, Paul the Pharisee certainly did (3:4-6).
1. Paul used supposition and boasting to build credibility (II Cor 11:5-12,16-33; 12:1-11).
 2. Paul was not a Jewish proselyte, but was dedicated by God's due order (Gen 17:12).
 3. He descended from the stock of Israel; he was a genuine Jew (Rom I I: I; II Cor 11:22).
 4. He knew his tribe (Ezra 2:59-63), and It was Benjamin (Ge 44:20; I Ki 12:21; Ezra 1:5).
 5. He was a definite Hebrew, by descent from Abraham and language (Ge 14:13; Ac 22:2).
 6. Religiously he was a Jewish Fundamentalist – the conservative sect (Acts 26:5; 23:6).
 7. As to his application of these great benefits, he was a very zealous Jewish Pharisee.
 - a. He was raised tn Jerusalem and taught by notable Gamaliel (Ac 5:34; 22:3; Ga 1:14).
 - b. He showed h1S zeal by persecuting Christians (Gal 1:13; Acts 9:1; 22:4-5; 26:9-12).
 - c. It is good to be zealous in a good thing (Gal 4:18; II Kings 10:16; I Tim I : 12-13).
 8. As to his personal morality, he perfectly kept the righteousness of the strict Pharisees.
 - a. Practical obedience may be considered blameless (Lu 1:6; I Ti 3:2; Ge 6:9; Job 1:1).
 - b. Blameless righteousness may be had by modifying the law (3:5 cp Matt 5:20;23:25).

- c. No man is blameless when God's law is seen in Its breadth (Ro 7:7-11; Matt 5:22,28).
- E. Paul gave up all his fleshly achievements in order to achieve the resurrection (3:8-11).
 - 1. True justification must be sought in Christ, not in the works of the law (Galatians 2:16).
 - 2. The true followers of Jesus Christ look for things to lose for Christ (Matthew 10:39).
 - 3. Compared to the glories of the exalted Christ, Paul counted all loss and dung relatively.
 - a. There is much excellence in knowing Jesus Christ (Eph 1: 17-18; 3:8-9,18-19; I Pet 2:7).
 - b. An excellent objective is to win Christ's approval and interest (Ma 13:44-46; He 3:14).
 - c. Paul cared only for Christ (I Cor 2:2), and he did suffer loss (I Co 4:13; II Co 11:23).
 - 4. The only safe place to be found when It comes to righteousness IS in Christ (Romans 8: 1).
 - a. We are chosen In Christ, justified In Christ, and quickened in Christ (Eph 2:5-6).
 - b. We shall yet be resurrected (I Cor 15:22) and glorified (Rom 8:28-39) in Jesus Christ.
 - c. We are found In Him by baptism (Gal 3:27) and practical holiness (Romans 13:11-14).
 - d. We need the righteousness of Christ's faith (Rom 5:19; Heb 3:1-2; Rom 3:22; Gal 2:16).
 - e. Righteousness is by God's own faith (Ro 3:24-26; Ps 89:30-33; 11 Ti 2:13; 1 Th 5:23-24).
 - 5. We must know Christ in an affectionate relationship that indicates our position as sons.
 - a. The power of His resurrection saved us (Eph 1: 19-20) to newness of life (Rom
 - b. If you know this resurrection (John 5:25), you shall miss the second death (Rev 20:6).
 - c. Fellowshiping in HIS sufferings is also evidence (Ro 8:17; II Tim 2:11-12; I Pe 4:12-14).
 - d. But we must also suffer in the same manner as He did (I Peter 2:21-24; Heb 12:1-4).
 - 6. One resurrection (Ac 24:15), but a great division (Ma 25:31-46; Jn 5:28-29; Re 20:11-15).

The SIXTH LESSON OF PHILIPPIANS Is an Example and Exhortation to Perfection (3:12-21).

- A. True faith, like true repentance, will work mightily according to God's glory (II Cor 7:11).
- B. Though converted to a great degree, Paul denies any confidence in his attainments (3:12-14).
 - 1. Though he counted all things loss for Christ, Paul was not satisfied with his situation.
 - a. Compared to other men, Paul appeared great; but he knew better (II Cor 10:12).
 - b. He knew he was not perfect by the continual warfare inside (Rom 7:15-25; Gal 5:17).
 - c. The perfecting of the saints is not achieved absolutely (Eph 4:12; Col 1:28; Heb 13:21).
 - d. Good Intentions and diligent effort may be perfection (Job 1: 1; II Chr 15:17; II Co 7:1).
 - 2. He continues to follow hard after Christ's calling to work God's pleasure (Phil 2:12-13).
 - a. Jesus Christ accomplished salvation to create a holy people (Titus 2:11-15; Eph 2:10).
 - b. He follows after this call to holiness by diligent and disciplined effort (I Cor 9:24-27).
 - c. No man has ever sought Christ, but that Christ first sought him (Gal 4:9; I John 4:19).
 - d. The resurrection will reveal eternal life, but we lay hold of it now (I Ti 6:11-12,17-19).
 - 3. Repeating himself, Paul again states that he does not rest in the accomplishments listed.
 - a. Is there one ambition in your life that exceed all others (Psalm 27:4; Luke 11:34-36)?

- b. Forgetting past good and bad things, Paul strains forward after Christ's holy calling.
 - c. We must continually deny the "historical mentality"; we must emphasize the future
 - d. If we look back and reconsider our former lives, we are fools (Luke 9:62 cp Ge 19:26).
- 4. Paul describes his Christian experience as "pressing" God's high calling in Jesus Christ.
 - a. Jesus said that men entered the kingdom by pressing and violence (Lu 16:16; Ma 11:12).
 - b. Practical salvation is work and warfare (I Tim 5:10; 6:11; II Ti 4:7; He 12:4; II Pe 1:10).
 - c. Do you hunger and thirst after God as you ought to (Psalm 42: 1; 63:1-3,8; 84:2)
 - d. Our light affliction in this world does not compare with eternity (I Th 2:12; II Co 4:17).
- C. Paul then sets forth the objective for the Philippian saints to also press forward (3:15-16).
 - 1. Having denied perfection, Paul now uses the term In a relative sense (Rom 15: 1; Gal 6: 1).
 - 2. He exhorts the saints to the same mind that he has – the mind of forgetting and reaching.
 - a. If there is some area in our lives that we are missing, God shall reveal it (Prov 4:18).
 - b. We work hard and ask God to reveal faults (Ps 139:24-25; Lu 11:13; Jn 7:17; Ja 1:5).
 - 3. In those areas where we feel accomplished, we ought to work for proper unity (Gal 6:16).
- D. Paul reminds the Philippians of the value of human examples to follow in pressing (3:17-19).
 - 1. As Christ's apostle to the Gentiles, Paul beseeches them to follow him (4:9 cp I Co 4:16).
 - a. They were to mark other men like Paul, so as to have several to follow (Psalm 37:37).
 - b. A primary purpose of the ministry is to set an example (I Tim 4:12; Tit 2:7; I Pet 5:3).
 - c. A minister's faith should be worthy of following by his purpose and duty (Heb 13:7).
 - 2. A real need for such examples is added protection against false teachers and examples.
 - a. There are many evil teachers in this world – more than we wish (3:18 cp Matt 7:22-23).
 - As Israel was plagued by false prophets, we shall have false teachers (II Peter 2: 1).
 - Paul warned the Ephesians of false teachers arising in the church (Acts 20:28-31).
 - b. All teachers must be known by their fruit – the effect of their ministry (Matt 7:15-20).
 - Do not use "fruits" as their personal, spiritual fruit: the fruits are only an analogy.
 - The effects of their ministry must be weighed. Do they work charity? righteousness?
 - c. Many false teachers are not ignorant: they are belly-worshipping enemies of Christ.
 - Their end IS destruction, since they were appointed to it (Jude 4; II Peter 2:12).
 - Their God is their own personal benefit (Rom 16:17-18; Micah 3:5,11; Ezek 13:19).
 - The sons of Eli used the priesthood for physical food and women (I Sam
- E. An emphasis on earthly things indicates a false teacher, since Paul was otherwise (3:20-21).
 - 1. Our conduct is not based on this world – it is in heaven (Col 3:2; I Co 15:19; Ma 6:19-21).
 - 2. We look forward to the redemption of our sinful bodies into glorious ones (I Cor 15:50-58).
 - a. True conversion is a life confirming this prospect (I Th 1:9-10; Tit 2:13; II Pe 3:14).
 - b. We shall either experience confidence or shame at His appearing (I John 2:28-29).

The SEVENTH LESSON OF PHILIPPIANS Is a Collection of Miscellaneous Exhortations (4:1-9).

- A. Paul first exhorts them to stand fast in the Lord as he has just instructed them (4: 1).
 - 1. His conclusion (“therefore”) reflects the heavenly conduct and reward of the just (3:20-21).
 - 2. is verbal affection is sincere (1:8), and it makes the rebuke easier to receive (Phil 8-9)
 - 3. They were Paul’s joy and crown, as were also the Thessalonians (Ph 2:16-17; I Th 2:19-20)
 - 4. The crown is a symbol of reward and honour (Prov 12:4; 16:31; 17:6; I Cor 9:25; Js 1:12)
 - 5. They were to stand fast (“so”) in pressing forward with their conversation in heaven.
 - 6. Standing fast is to be fastened in a place (1 co 1:27; 1 Th 3:8; 11 Th 2:15).
- B. Paul then rebukes Euodias and Syntyche for their differences and exhorts them to unity (4:2).
 - 1. Though he has already given the general instruction (2:2), he applies it specifically here.
 - 2. As a father would not be vague with a family, neither is Paul with a church (I Cor 1:11).
- C. Paul also exhorts Epaphroditus to take care of several elect ministers and women (Phil 4:3).
 - 1. The singular address (“thee’ and “yokefellow”) must refer to Epaphroditus, who is reading.
 - 2. Women are able to labor in the gospel by prayer (II Cor 1), hospitality (Ac 16:15), etc.
 - 3. Women have sufficient opportunity in the church to earn great respect (Romans 16:1-15).
 - 4. Having your name written in the book of life is a great blessing (Luke 10:20 cp I The 1:4).
- D. Paul exhorted them to rejoice, and this rejoicing was to be in the Lord and for alway (4:4).
 - 1. This verse is not descriptive nor suggestive; it is an imperative command to behave w lselly.
 - 2. Wall<ing in the Spirit brings joy (Gal 5:22; Rom 14:17; 15:13) that IS visible (Pr 15:13).
 - 3. Full joy is promised those who are fruitful in obedience (John 13:17; 15:10-12; Col 1:9-11).
 - 4. The early church enjoyed this state of joy and gladness (Acts 2:46; 8:8; 13:52; 15:3).
 - 5. Joy is a state of the heart. We can easily convince ourselves of joy or grief (Pr 15:15).
 - 6. No matter what the circumstances, we are to be joyful (James 1:2; I Peter 4:12-14).
 - 7. There is tribulation in the world, but we must remember our Victor (John 16:33; I Pet 1:8).
 - 8. God’s judgment awaits those who are not joyful with all things (Deut 28:47 cp Ro 8:28-32).
- E. Paul reminds them of their duty to moderation. He promotes such by Christ’s presence (4:5).
 - 1. The world should know us for our moderation. How would ten worldly associates rank you?
 - a. Temperance – self-restraint – is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23; II Pet 1:6; Tit 1:8; 2:2).
 - b. Our generation is characterized by incontinence (II Tim 3:3). Are you Impulsive or not?
 - c. How do you relate to flexibility, compromise, conformity, self-discipline, patience, etc?
 - 2. Moderation particularly applies to eating, wine, money, speech, anger, patience, etc.
- F. The strategy for a “care-free” life is to trust the Lord with a thankful heart (4:6-8).
 - 1. God has commanded us to limit the care In our lives (Matthew 6:25; I Corinthians 7:32-35).
 - 2. By trusting the Lord as we are here taught, our thoughts will be established (Prov 16:3).
 - 3. Trusting the Lord by faith in His word will bring perfect peace (Prov 3:21-26; Isaiah 26:3).

- G. A child of God should cultivate those thoughts and influences that promote godliness (4:8-9).
1. The BJU Art Museum claims, "Whatsoever things are lovely . . . think on these things."
 2. Applying this text absolutely would require condemning much of scripture, history, etc.
 - a. Are Genesis 19 and Ezekiel 23 very true? honest? just? pure? lovely? virtuous? etc?
 - b. Can we read the history of Nazi Germany? of the Roman Caesars? of Chappaquiddick?
 - c. The things we consider or our perspective of them must promote these virtuous ends.
 3. As in the previous chapter (3:1-7), Paul gives himself as an example for the right things.
 4. The blessings of God's peace comes through such obedience (Isaiah 57: 17-21; Psalm 37:37).

The EIGHTH LESSON OF PHILIPPIANS Covers Contentment and Their Giving (Phil 4:10-19).

- A. Paul is grateful for and commends their financial care of him while in bonds
1. A good minister exhorts to liberal giving to benefit the givers (4:17; I Co 9:15; II Co 9:6).
 2. Paul rejoiced in their giving, since it was a sign of life (Ma 25:40; II Co 9:9-14; Ac 10:4).
- B. Paul had learned that no matter what he did or where he was to be content (Phil 4:11).
1. By Christ's strength, Paul could handle both good and evil situations well (Phil 4:12-13).
 2. Contentment sees God's sovereignty (Job 1:20-22) and the right perspective (Psalm 37:16).
 3. Will it be the travail of discontent or the gain of contentment (Eccl 4:6; Prov 30:8-9)?
 4. Contentment is a great commandment (Luke 3:14; I Tim 6:5-10; Heb 13:5; Eph 5:5).
 5. When we become content with our things, God will supply our needs (4:19 cp Ma 6:24-34).

The CONCLUSION OF PHILIPPIANS Includes Final Greetings and His Salutation (Phil 4:20-23).

- A. The purpose for our existence in this universe is the glory of God (Prov 16:4; Rev 4:11).
- B. Observe the use of "and" in an explanatory sense (4:20). Compare I Thessalonians
- C. Though communion is a function of the local church, all the saints may salute one another.
- D. Paul closes with his regular salutation – his token in every epistle (II Thess 3:17; Col 4:18).