

Philippians

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Introduction

The ancient name of the city of Philippi was a word meaning “little fountains.” In the 300s B.C., it was conquered by Philip II of Macedonia. He was the father of Alexander the Great. He named the city after himself, and that name has remained throughout history. The next major event there was in 42 B.C., where it is the place of a famous battle which began the Roman Empire. The citizens of the city of Philippi had Roman citizenship. It was a Roman colony. That’s uncommon for a city outside of Italy. The Philippians were quite proud of the fact that they were Roman citizens.

Paul went to Philippi on his second missionary journey. It was the first city in Greece (Europe) he went to. Read Acts 16:11ff, which describes this event. The family of Lydia was the original church at Philippi. Paul visited the city at least two other times on his third missionary journey, and they sent Paul gifts (financial support) on several occasions. The Philippians sent the gift when Paul stopped being a tent maker and became a fulltime missionary. After the third missionary journey, Paul was arrested. He was in prison two years in Caesarea and two years in Rome. While in prison in Rome, the Philippians sent another gift to him in the hands of Epaphroditus. At this point, Paul had not seen the Philippians for four years. But he received a gift from the Philippians through Epaphroditus, and he is sending this letter of Philippians back to the Philippians as a thank you for that gift. So this is a thank you letter. So the purpose of the letter is to thank the Philippians for this gift and other gifts they have sent.

The theme consists of two parts: a subject and a predicate. What Paul is talking about is participation in the Gospel, by their supporting Paul financially. What Paul says about that (predicate) is that it brings joy. In chapter 4 he defines that joy as peace that surpasses understanding. The joy of the Christian life is going to be seen when you participate in the Gospel.

What do you mean by the “Gospel”? In 1 Corinthians 9:23 Paul said he does all things for the sake of the Gospel. Therefore the definition of the Gospel is all the things Paul did. So it is bringing people to Christ, teaching them, nurturing them, exercising spiritual gifts, discerning true teachers from false teachers, etc.

“Joy” is different than the word “happy” of Matthew 5 Sermon on the Mount. That happiness is only realized in heaven. But this joy can be experienced on earth as one is involved with God in what He is doing—the Gospel.

Chapter 1

Verse 1—Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons

Παῦλος καὶ Τιμόθεος δούλοι Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἀγίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Φιλίπποις σὺν ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις,

First, we notice the letter came from both Paul and Timothy. Although it was clearly composed by Paul, probably during his imprisonment in Rome because he mentioned the Praetorian Guard and he sends greetings from Caesar’s household (Philippians 1:13; 4:22). He had his disciple Timothy as a close companion. Because of Paul’s failing eyesight (Galatians 6:11), Timothy may have even helped him write out the letter.

The first thing Paul does is to identify both of them as slaves or servants of Jesus Christ. There is one Old Testament word and there are 4 New Testament words for “slave.” The Old Testament word עֶבֶד referred to a bond-slave (Exodus 21:5-6; Deuteronomy 15:16-17). This is a voluntary permanent slave, and is probably the meaning Paul has in mind. The Greek word Paul used here in Philippians for “slaves” is the very common δούλοι from the root word δεο which means to “tie,” “bind,” “ensnare,” or “capture.” The object of their slavery is to be bound to Christ Jesus. This is stated in all of Paul’s letters. [The other Greek words for servant/slave are πιας – a child or servant, used of

Jesus in Acts 4:1, διακόνους,—generally translated “deacons” or “ministers,” as in the last word in this verse. And οικετες—the word for a household servant in Luke 16:13.]

This letter was sent to all the saints in Christ Jesus in the city of Philippi. Clearly Paul is writing to the church there (Philippians 4:15). So we can conclude that the church in Philippi is “all the saints” in the city of Philippi, those separated unto Christ positionally because of their salvation. “Saint” means “holy one.”

Next he specifically addresses the leadership of the church. He uses the word “with,” and then lists the ἐπισκόπους (overseers or bishops) and διακόνους (deacons). Paul is the only apostle to use either of these titles for leadership. (Those appointed to serve tables in Acts 6:1-4 were never called deacons.) Deacons are only mentioned here and in 1 Timothy 3. There is also no record of the other apostles ever using the designation overseer/bishop (ἐπισκόπους). Peter (1 Peter 5:1-3) and John (2 John 1; 3 John 1) only use the word πρεσβύτερος (elder), which is not used here in Philippians. But when Paul sent Titus to Crete, he only instructed him to appoint elders, although he seems to refer to them as overseers (or he is saying all overseers should be elders—Titus 1:5-7).

The author of Hebrews uses the word ἡγουμένους in 13:17. This is the common word for “leader” or “ruler,” literally “the one leading or ruling,” defined in verse 7 as *those who spoke the word of God to you*.

The New Testament does not spell out a formula for leadership. Paul gives some specific qualifications for overseers/elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, but he does not say what exactly they are to do, nor that every church should have them. And it does not seem to matter whether they are called overseers or elders. It is important to notice there was always a plurality of overseers and deacons (and elders and leaders and apostles and prophets and every New Testament designation for leadership).

Also notice Paul does not mention any pastor or priest. We can safely conclude there was no such person in the administrative structure of the church or it would have been rude for Paul not to mention him. So it seems that the pastor gift of Ephesians 4:11-12 is not intended to be a part of the structural administration of the church.

What seems most likely is that Paul simply addresses the leadership of the church without intending to establish any formal categories.

Verse 2—Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

This is Paul’s signature greeting. Its primary contribution to our study is to confirm that Paul is without a doubt the author of this epistle. It should also be noticed that there is an assumption that this is inspired-of-God literature. Paul says he writes a message ἀπο *from God and the Lord Jesus Christ*.

It doesn’t seem likely that Paul just uses the words *grace* and *peace* because they are common Greek and Hebrew greetings. The Hebrews would say “Shalom,” using the Hebrew not the Greek word. The use of “grace” is an emphasis on unmerited favor, and “peace” for believers has the idea of “the tranquil state of the soul assured of its salvation” (“Thayer’s Greek Lexicon”). So Paul’s constant use of this formula reminds his readers that they are saints who do not merit their salvation but, at the same time, they can be assured of it.

Verses 3-6—I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνησίᾳ ὑμῶν πάντοτε ἐν πάσῃ δεήσει μου ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν, μετὰ χαρᾶς τὴν δέησιν ποιούμενος, ἐπὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν, πεποιθῶς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ὅτι ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει ἄχρι ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ

Here, in the first paragraph of the actual content of the letter, Paul begins with what becomes a key word in the epistle—*joy*. The first word here is Εὐχαριστῶ (Eucharist), which came to represent the Lord’s Supper or Communion. It was the term given to the prayer the bishops offered for Communion (in the 200s). Here it is part of

Paul's prayer of thankfulness to God for his memories of the Philippian believers. But the main word for prayer here is δεήσει (used 2 times), which stresses the idea of a request.

The point of this paragraph is to tell the Philippian believers not just that Paul remembers them but that the memory is one of joy. Paul's joy here is based on 2 things: (1) their fellowship in the gospel and (2) his confidence that God will perfect or complete the work He Himself began at their salvation. And it seems the second confidence comes from the first fellowship. The fact that they participated with him financially in ministering the good news of Christ was, in part at least, the reason for Paul's confidence of their ongoing maturity until they face Christ Jesus at the time of their judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10).

So we see the **theme** of the letter developing in the first paragraph—**Participation in the gospel is inseparably connected to joy in the life of the believer**. The Gospel is specifically the good news *that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures*, (1 Corinthians 15:1-4) The ministry of the Gospel can be defined by the life of the Apostle Paul because he said: *I do all things for the sake of the gospel* (1 Corinthians 9:23). Therefore, we can conclude that the Gospel ministry is defined by all the ministry things Paul did—evangelism, teaching, pasturing, administrating, helping, giving, condemning false teachers, traveling, writing letters etc. **There is a sense in which we can summarize the ministry of Christ and the Apostles by saying it pointed people away from this world and toward heaven.**

The word for *joy* (χαρά) is in Philippians 1:4, 25; 2:2, 29; and 4:1. It is connected with gladness (ἀγαλλίασις – exalting or exuberance) in Luke 1:14 concerning the birth of Christ, and in the benediction of Jude 24. Χαρά is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), and it exists among the angels in heaven (Luke 15: 7, 10). Jesus also used this word when He said to the Twelve in the upper room: *These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full* (John 15:11).

By way of contrast, it should be noted that this is not the word for “blessed” or “happy” used in the Beatitudes of Matthew 5 or Luke 6. That word is μακάριος. It has the idea of a reward from God and is never promised to humans on earth in this age. It is always reserved for heaven. The idea is: we should consider ourselves happy in the midst of hunger and rejection because of our future rewards in heaven. But the word χαρά used here in Philippians is not like that. It is something we believers experience here in this life because of our participation in the Gospel—via our calling (our gifts, talents, desires, and life situation).

Verses 7-8—For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me. For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.
Καθώς ἐστὶν δίκαιον ἐμοὶ τοῦτο φρονεῖν ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν διὰ τὸ ἔχειν με ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμᾶς, ἔν τε τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀπολογίᾳ καὶ βεβαιώσει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου συγκοινωνοῦς μου τῆς χάριτος πάντας ὑμᾶς ὄντας. μάρτυς γὰρ μου ὁ θεὸς ὡς ἐπιποθῶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ἐν σπλάγχνοις Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

Verse 7 states the purpose of the letter, namely, to thank the Philippian believers for their financial support. Here Paul points out that their gift makes them (literally) *fellowship together with me in grace*. I take it *grace* is a reference to God's unmerited favor in allowing Paul to be involved in ministering the Gospel. But the emphasis here is on their fellowship together (a combination word, the prefix συγ—meaning “with” or “together”—being added to the word κοινωνοῦς for “fellowship”). This fellowship is highlighted by the way Paul thinks about them. He has them in his heart (it's καρδιά, the organ that literally pumps our blood).

In verse 8 he says he longs for them with σπλάγχνοις, literally, the “bowels” or “belly” of Christ, indicating that he feels for them with the same intensity Christ felt for His disciples. What is amazing is that Paul expresses fellowship with them in the strongest of terms, and he is not part of their congregation. In other words, the concept of the church Paul expresses here is not a congregation model (which cannot be found in the New Testament) but rather a network of people participating in the grace of God through the Gospel.

I would like to pass along a discovery made by George Barna. Barna has been doing polling of various Christian statistics for years. In 2005, he published a book of his findings that showed, to his surprise, that the congregation

defined local church is not the epicenter of true Christian spirituality. He found that the epicenter was in a group he calls “Revolutionaries.” Here is a bit of what he wrote:

My original assumption as we set out to profile the hallmarks of contemporary spiritual transformation was that most of the life change we found would be related to the ministry of the local church. ... While we certainly found some wonderful examples, I was stunned—and deeply disappointed—at how relatively rare such instances were. ... As time went on, it became clear that God is affecting lives through many ... mini-movements, reaching literally millions of people. You are probably connected to one of them, or to people involved in them, without realizing their significance. Some of these mini-movements include home schooling, ... fellowships (i.e., house churches), ... various market-place ministries, several spiritual disciplines networks, ... and others. Most of the religious analysts I confer with are only vaguely aware of these groups—and completely unaware of their spiritual significance within the Church today. There are three major reasons why the mini-movements have flown below the radar screen. First, their numbers are relatively small. ... Second, in most cases, the mini-movements themselves are disorganized and even disunited. While God is at work affecting the lives of the individuals involved, the group with which the transformed individual is associated tends to be poorly structured. ... Third, there is a pervasive mind-set among many journalists, scholars, and religious leaders that all legitimate spiritual activity must flow through a local church (George Barna, “Revolution,” 2005, pp. 53-55).

Toward the end of his book Barna says the “revolutionaries” were actually the basis of the New Testament church as well. Next he reports that he could find no evidence of a congregation defined church in the Bible. Then he writes: “True Revolutionaries ... while they may not be integrated into a formal church congregation, they are not isolated from the Church. ... every Revolutionary I have interviewed described a network of Christians to whom he or she relates regularly and a portfolio of spiritual activities which he or she engages in on a regular basis. This schedule of relationships and ministry efforts is the Revolutionary equivalent of traditional congregational life – but better” (Ibid. p 116).

Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus, and the Philippians Paul is addressing are like those “Revolutionaries” Barna discovered today.

There seems to be 4 descriptions of the church (called out ones) in the New Testament:

1. The Universal Church, made up of all true believers in Jesus Christ.
2. The city/regional church, which is the most common designation and refers to all the believers in a city like Corinth, Rome, or Philippi, or a region like Galatia or Judea.
3. The various house churches throughout those cities or regions.
4. The network church of believer relationships referred to in the personal greetings at the ends of most of the epistles.

Next, we learn something of the nature of Paul’s ministry in the Gospel. He describes it with two words, *απολογία*—a spoken defense, and *βεβαίωσις*—a confirmation that produces confidence. So Paul’s ministry for the Gospel was not just proclamation but defending and giving confidence (Acts 17:2-3; 28:23-24). The “Ryrie Study Bible” says: “The Greek words underlying *imprisonment*, *defense*, and *confirmation* were courtroom terms. Paul is saying that the Philippian believers shared with him in his courageous witness in the law court in Rome” (p. 1888).

Verse 9—And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment
Καὶ τοῦτο προσεύχομαι, ἵνα ἡ ἀγάπη ὑμῶν ἔτι μᾶλλον καὶ μᾶλλον περισσεύῃ ἐν ἐπιγνώσει καὶ
πάσῃ αἰσθήσει

Here we have another one of Paul’s prayers and another word for prayer, *προσεύχομαι*—the third one he has used in these 9 verses. This is perhaps the most common and general word for prayer. But the point here is to tell the Philippians that their love should be applied in the context of real or true knowledge. The word is *ἐπιγινώσκω*. The *ἐπι* emphasizes the “real” or “true” nature of the knowledge. Next, he says love requires *αἰσθήσει*, meaning “discernment” (a word used only here in the New Testament, stressing perception by the senses and the intellect). The word *love* is *ἀγάπη*, which is basically defined as giving (John 3:16; Luke 10: 25-37). So the giving love of the

believer must be in the context of real true (we might say absolute, objective) knowledge, and being perceptive with an intellectually honest discernment. The Philippians' gifts to Paul were with this kind of love.

Two of the most difficult questions concerning giving are who do we give to and how do we know that gift is actually helping. There are a few general observations we can make about the attitude of Christ and the Apostles concerning giving love.

1. It was never a social redistribution of wealth. It was usually a specific act of compassion aimed at a specific individual in need (Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 10:25-32). The closer you get to the person to whom you are giving, the more efficient your giving will be.
2. It prioritized the needs of fellow believers. It was usually from believers to believers, not from believers to the world or from the world to believers (2 Corinthians 8-9). It was not that it was exclusively to believers. The primary reason for giving is not for the one you are giving to—giving reflects the heart of God, compassion pleases God. God doesn't need your money to take care of people.
3. Its value was primarily in the attitude of the giver, not the amount of the gift (Mark 12:42-43).
4. There was never any consideration given for the impact the gift would have on the world. Erasing world hunger, disease, or poverty was never a purpose for giving in the Bible.

Verses 10-11—so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα, ἵνα ᾗτε εἰλικρινεῖς καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ, πεπληρωμένοι καρπὸν δικαιοσύνης τὸν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς δόξαν καὶ ἔπαινον Θεοῦ.

Next, Paul gives the reason why he wants their love to be abounding in true knowledge and all discernment. It is so they can prove or approve (Greek δοκιμάζειν—from which we get the word “document”) the things that are excellent. This word sincere is διαφέροντα. In English it is something like our word “differentiate.” Literally, it’s “to carry to different places.” It’s used in Acts 27:27 to refer to Paul’s ship being carried up and down by the waves. What Paul wants here is for them to have discernment, to be able to differentiate between, or prove what is right and wrong about, all the ideas that are carried about or bounced around. So it could be paraphrased: “that you might prove (what is right and what is wrong about) the things (i.e. the ideas) that are being tossed around.”

And even that is not an end in itself because (he adds) the reason for that discernment is so the Philippians might be sincere and blameless in the day of Christ, i.e., in the day they stand before Christ in judgment. The word for “sincere,” εἰλικρινεῖς, is a combination of the word for “judgment” preceded by the word for “sunlight.” It has the idea of “judged by sunlight” or “pure.” So notice the purity comes from the discernment in the previous phrase. The word for “blameless” (ἀπρόσκοποι) carries the idea of “not causing someone to stumble” (1 Corinthians 10:32). So one reason for discernment is to be as pure as sunlight, and the reason for being pure as sunlight is to not have something we stumble over when we face Christ in judgment.

Verse 11 tells us three things about that discernment process: (1) it is the fruit of righteousness, (2) it comes through Jesus Christ, and (3) it is to (or unto) the grace of God. In other words, it is part of the unmerited favor we receive from God.

Verses 12-14—Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

Γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ μᾶλλον εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν, ὥστε τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ γενέσθαι ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πάσιν, καὶ τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐν κυρίῳ πεποιθότας τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου περισσοτέρως τολμᾶν ἀφόβως τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν.

What is interesting here is, first of all, that Paul thinks of ministry in terms of the success or progress of the Gospel—verse 12. It is also interesting that he defines that success in two ways: (1) that Christ has been made known in an accurate way (manifested) to more people—verse 13 and (2) that there is a greater boldness or courage on the part of the other believers to *speak the word without fear*—verse 14. The puzzling question here is, What is it

about Paul's bonds or imprisonment that causes the other believers to have more courage of confidence to proclaim the word of God? One might expect people to speak out less, thinking, "If I speak out like Paul does, I'll be in prison too."

But it actually doesn't work that way. Courage in one person tends to bring out courage in others who have the same desires. The example itself tends to be a motivator. People otherwise timid will often say "I think I can do that". I remember a while back my flight instructor called me at about 8:00 at night to ask me if I wanted to fly with him to a town about an hour away. It was winter, snowing, and it meant we would be flying until about midnight in the dark. I had never done much night flying so I agreed to go along. On the way back we flew through some pretty heavy snow, but everything was fine. That experience gave me the courage or confidence to do more night flying. I have been doing it ever since and now I really like it. That is real leadership, I think—when we take risks and endure hardship and venture out into things which others would like to do but lack the courage until they have an example.

Verses 15-18— Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice.
τινὲς μὲν καὶ διὰ φθόνου καὶ ἔριν, τινὲς δὲ καὶ δι' εὐδοκίαν τὸν Χριστὸν κηρύσσουσιν· οἱ μὲν ἐξ ἀγάπης, εἰδότες ὅτι εἰς ἀπολογίαν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου κείμεαι, οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἐριθείας τὸν Χριστὸν καταγγέλλουσιν, οὐκ αγνώως, οἰόμενοι θλίψιν ἐγείρειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου. Τί γάρ; πλὴν ὅτι παντὶ τρόπῳ, εἴτε προφάσει εἴτε ἀληθείᾳ, Χριστὸς καταγγέλλεται, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρω. Ἀλλὰ καὶ χαρήσομαι.

It is important to understand the problem Paul is overlooking here. The issue is that some are preaching a true Gospel with evil motives. There is nothing wrong with their message; the only problem is in their motives. They are proclaiming the real Christ in an accurate way but with bad motives. Paul says when people do that the only harm is to the one doing the proclaiming, who will have less rewards in heaven. But since the truth of the Gospel is not affected, Paul rejoices in their proclamation. Motives are God's business, not ours, to judge. Today we have lots of people proclaiming the gospel in order to promote their organization or to make money or to become popular. That should not be our concern as long as the true Gospel is being preached.

But notice that the situation is very different when the Gospel itself is being changed. Paul told the Galatians, *I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!* (Galatians 1:6-8).

We are not to judge the motives, but we are to judge the message. When people are changing the Gospel, or compromising the truth of the Word of God, it is our responsibility to make that known and discipline those involved as best we can. When the disciples of Jesus were hindering those who were casting out demons but were not part of their group, Jesus said: *He who is not against us is for us.* (Mark 9:40). But when speaking of the Pharisees, Jesus said: *He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters* (Matthew 12:30).

What exactly Paul's enemies were trying to do is not clear. The "MacArthur Study Bible" says: "Strife connotes contention, rivalry, and conflict, which resulted when Paul's critics began discrediting him. . . . selfish ambition . . . describes those who ruthlessly sought to get ahead at any cost. Paul's detractors used his incarceration as an opportunity to promote their own prestige by accusing Paul of being so sinful the Lord had chastened him by imprisonment" (p. 1821). Anyway, whatever the specifics of the conflict, it is noteworthy that there were selfish oriented conflicts within the ministry of the Gospel among true believers from the very beginning.

Verses 19-21—for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι τοῦτό μοι ἀποβήσεται εἰς σωτηρίαν διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν δεήσεως καὶ ἐπιχορηγίας τοῦ πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἀποκαταδοκίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα μου, ὅτι ἐν οὐδενὶ αἰσχυνθήσομαι ἀλλ' ἐν πάσῃ παρρησίᾳ ὡς πάντοτε καὶ νῦν μεγαλυνθήσεται Χριστὸς ἐν τῷ σώματί μου, εἴτε διὰ ζωῆς εἴτε διὰ θανάτου. Ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος.

There is some confusion over the exact meaning of verse 19. Paul uses the word σωτηρίαν which can mean both salvation in an eternal sense and deliverance in an earthly sense. So some say Paul is talking about his ultimate salvation, some say he is talking about his earthly release from prison. It seems from the context that Paul may have used this word intentionally to mean either one because in verse 21 he says that Christ will be exalted whether by his life or by his death. The ultimate result in any case is the great statement of verse 21.

There are two more observations that should be made here:

1. Paul sees his deliverance/salvation as a product of both their prayers and the Spirit of Christ—which, by the way, I think is the spiritual presence of Christ rather than the Holy Spirit, but it doesn't really matter which person of the Godhead delivers him. What's significant is that Paul's confidence and hope are in both the free will effort of their prayers and the sovereignty of God.
2. Paul figures he has got the Romans right where he wants them. It's a checkmate. Either way, Paul wins. If they let him go he will go on proclaiming Christ. If they kill him, then Christ will be proclaimed through his death. Paul will personally win either way because he just has one objective, to live for Christ. So if he dies, that's just more Christ.

Verses 22-25—But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith

εἰ δὲ τὸ ζῆν ἐν σαρκί, τοῦτό μοι καρπὸς ἔργου, καὶ τί αἰρήσομαι οὐ γνωρίζω. συνέχομαι δὲ ἐκ τῶν δύο, τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι καὶ σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι, πολλῶ [γὰρ] μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον τὸ δὲ ἐπιμένειν [ἐν] τῇ σαρκὶ ἀναγκαϊότερον δι' ὑμᾶς. καὶ τοῦτο πεποιθὼς οἶδα ὅτι μενῶ καὶ παραμενῶ πᾶσιν ὑμῖν εἰς τὴν ὑμῶν προκοπὴν καὶ χαρὰν τῆς πίστεως.

Paul is not contemplating suicide. He is explaining the win/win situation described in verse 21. But he opts to stay here. It's actually not his choice, but he chooses it anyway, and he is convinced (or confident) that he will stay. The word μενῶ, usually translated “remain,” occurs three times in this passage: once by itself, once in combination with ἐπι (upon) in verse 24, and once with παρα (along side of) in verse 25, translated “continue” by the NASV. Literally, “I will remain and remain alongside of you all.” The reason it is better for Paul to remain is: (1) it will be fruitful labor for Paul and (2) it is necessary for them. This word ἀναγκαϊοτερον, meaning “necessary,” is used of all the spiritual gifts being necessary (1 Corinthians 12:22) and something required by the condition of things (here in Philippians 2:25). The necessity here was (a) their progress and (b) their joy in the faith.

So Paul saw no need to establish an indigenous ministry in the sense of it being one that would go on just as well without him. He saw his presence as a necessary part of their ongoing progress and joy in the faith. Eventually God would take him off the scene, but until then, he would remain on with them, defined as writing to them, traveling to be with them, and sending others to see them. Actually, when the Apostles were gone, in the 100s and 200s, the churches began a process of hierarchical leadership and almost destroyed themselves.

Verse 26—so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.
ἵνα τὸ καύχημα ὑμῶν περισσεύῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ διὰ τῆς ἐμῆς παρουσίας πάλιν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

Here Paul gives another reason for staying on in the flesh – that they may have confidence in their faith through what Christ accomplished through Paul. The word he used is καύχημα incorrectly translated by the NASV as “proud confidence.” This is not the word for pride. It is a word for “rejoicing in an accomplishment.” It is legitimate to translate it “boasting” which is used both in a positive and negative way (1 Corinthians 5:12; Romans 4:2). But that can easily be misunderstood as pride. It is probably better to translate it “rejoicing” or “confidence.” The formal definition of καύχημα is: “stating the value of something which is caused by an accomplishment.” Sometime it is necessary to tell what we have done. Of course we should give God the glory, but nonetheless, He has used us to do

it. If we don't say so, it does not give the true picture of what has happened. For example, Paul was eager for them to imitate him (1 Corinthians 11:1), but they couldn't very well do that if they didn't know what he did.

There are two Greek words for **pride**. One is *ὑπερηφάνους*. It means to establish or assume value independent from God. The Bible says God is opposed to this word for pride and gives grace to the humble (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5; Luke 1:51; Mark 7:22). The other word for pride is *αλαζονεία*, which is the boastful pride of life mentioned in 1 John 2:16. Thayer defines this word as “an empty assurance which trusts in its own power and resources” (Accordance 6.4).

So “proud confidence” is an inappropriate translation here. Paul is saying that he will be released from prison with the result that he will come to visit them and give them a cause for rejoicing in that foundation of Christ Jesus, which they learned from Paul. Although pride is never ever appropriate, sometimes you have to describe the positive things that have happened to you or through you. This is a form of boasting and rejoicing (in that it expresses value), but it should never be called pride because pride places that value in a person or thing independent from God.

Verse 27—Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel

Μόνον ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε, ἵνα εἴτε ἐλθὼν καὶ ἰδὼν ὑμᾶς εἴτε ἀπὼν ἀκούω τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν, ὅτι στήκετε ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι, μιᾷ ψυχῇ

Then Paul tells them to *πολιτεύεσθε*, literally “live as a citizen” worthy of the Gospel of Christ. He defines that as their being of one spirit and one soul, in other words—unity. Since this is a major issue he takes up again in 2:1-4, I shall discuss it further at that point. Simply notice here that it is so important that he couples it with being worthy of the Gospel.

Verses 28-30—in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God. For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

καὶ μὴ πτυρόμενοι ἐν μηδενὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀντικειμένων, ἥτις ἐστὶν αὐτοῖς ἔνδειξις ἀπωλείας, ὑμῶν δὲ σωτηρίας, καὶ τοῦτο ἀπὸ θεοῦ· ὅτι ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, οὐ μόνον τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύειν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν, τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγῶνα ἔχοντες, οἷον εἶδετε ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ νῦν ἀκούετε ἐν ἐμοί.

This is a parenthesis Paul puts in his discussion on unity. He says that their unity will keep them, save them in the sense of delivering them, from being alarmed by their opponents. Actually, he goes so far as to say their opponents will be destroyed, probably meaning their influence on the Philippians will be destroyed by their unity.

Verse 29 says that they actually have two gracious gifts given to them by Christ. The word *ἐχαρίσθη* is the verb form of grace or gracious gift. For example it is the same root word used for spiritual gifts from which we get the word charismatic. So our suffering as well as our salvation is a gracious unmerited favor from God. This is probably because the benefits of both are realized in heaven.

Verse 30 goes on to say that the gracious gift of suffering is also part of their fellowship with Paul. They have the favor of God to be able to experience a similar *ἀγῶνα*. This is another athletic word; it means “contest” or “conflict”. In English we have the similar word “agony”. Their fellowship included their experiencing a similar gift of agony (or conflict with the world) for the sake of the gospel of Christ.

Application Principles from Chapter 1

1. We should always be working in a discipleship context—like Paul with Timothy. We should always be a Paul or a Timothy (verse 1).
2. The definition of our ministry should be that we are a bond slave to Jesus Christ. We are not here to serve the world, and we are not to be bond slaves to people (verse 1).
3. Christian leaders should serve believers throughout their city or region, not only those in one particular group (verse 1).

4. The church includes a network of believers which might extend anywhere in the world. The network is based in love, fellowship, and giving (verse 1).
5. Administrative leadership for the church should always be a plurality. There should never be one person dominating any group of believers (verse 1).
6. We do not merit our salvation, but we can be secure in it (verse 2).
7. One source of joy on this earth as a Christian is our financial participation with those who are spreading the Gospel (verses 3-5).
8. One source of joy on this earth as a Christian is realizing that Christ is perfecting in us what He started with us at our salvation (verse 6).
9. Christian fellowship includes a love for believers across a network that might extend anywhere (verses 7-8).
10. Love always includes giving (verse 9).
11. Love should never be divorced from knowledge and discernment (verse 9).
12. The reason love must be in the context of knowledge and discernment is to approve excellent things, which in turn will earn rewards in heaven (verse 10-11).
13. We should boldly step out doing unusual things for the sake of the Gospel because it encourages the more timid believers to do so. Then bold becomes normal (verses 12-14).
14. We should ignore the motives of those proclaiming a true Gospel, but not ignore those proclaiming a false gospel (verses 15-18).
15. If we choose to be a bond slave to Christ (verse 1) our final circumstances can only turn out good. It is the only win-win (verses 19-20).
16. Even though heaven is better, we should always choose to live on in the flesh and minister to our disciples in Christ until He takes us home (verses 22-25).
17. Make positive joyful declarations about what Christ has done but never do it with pride (verse 26).

Chapter 2

Verses 1-4—Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Εἴ τις οὖν παράκλησις ἐν Χριστῷ, εἴ τι παραμύθιον ἀγάπης, εἴ τις κοινωνία πνεύματος, εἴ τις σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί, πληρώσατέ μου τὴν χαρὰν ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονήτε, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμψυχοι, τὸ ἐν φρονοῦντες, μηδὲν κατ' ἐριθείαν μηδὲ κατὰ κενοδοξίαν ἀλλὰ τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλλήλους ἠγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν, μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες ἀλλὰ [καὶ] τὰ ἐτέρων ἕκαστοι.

In verse 1 Paul gives several effects or benefits of unity. They are:

1. παράκλησις, “encouragement,” “exhortation,” “consolation.” This word is used to describe the work of the Holy Spirit as a *Helper* sent from God (John 14:16).
2. Παρ αμύθιον ἀγάπης, “comfort of love.”
3. κοινωνία πνεύματος, “fellowship of the Spirit.”
4. σπλάγχνα, “affection.” This is the word for intestines or belly, like a gut feeling.
5. οἰκτιρμοι, “compassion, mercy or pity.”

In verse 2 Paul defines **unity**. He calls it **oneness of: mind, love, soul, and purpose** (1:27 and 2:2). Once again he mentions his theme word “joy.” This time he says it will be πληρώσατέ “filled” or “fulfilled” or “made complete” by their unity. Then he describes unity with four words. The first and last of the four descriptive words are from the same root φρονεω, usually translated “to be wise, think, or have understanding.” He precedes the first word with “same” translated “of the same mind” (NASV), and the last one with “one” translated “intent of the same purpose” (NASV). It might be better translated more simply “the same mind” and “being one mind.” The word for *love* is the common ἀγάπη. The word translated “united in spirit” (NASV) is σύμψυχοι a combination of the word “soul” and “together”—“the same soul.”

In verse 3 Paul tells us how to accomplish that unity—through ταπεινοφροσύνη “humility.” And humility is defined in contrast to ἐπιθείαν “strife” or “selfishness” (NASV), and κενοδοξίαν “conceit.” This humility is ultimately defined by the example of Christ emptying Himself.

But before we get into that I would like to compare and contrast **unity** with **community**:

UNITY	VS	COMMUNITY
1. Definition: oneness between individuals		Definition: a union of individuals
2. It's a fellowship of minds, and souls		It's a common patriotism/loyalty
3. It's an affection for one another		It's a sense of belonging to the group/entity
4. It's a source of personal development		It's a source of security/identity
5. The impact looks inward at people		The impact looks outward toward the world
6. It keeps one from being alone		It keeps one from feeling lonely
7. It points toward individualism		It points toward communism
8. It serves people with high motivation		It serves people with little to no motivation
9. It is only available to a few people at a time		It is available to the masses
10. It increases the impact of one's giving		It increases the impact of spending/buying
11. Giving is to aid individuals		Giving is to redistribute wealth
12. It focuses on the joy of one another		It focuses on the collective good of the group
13. Individual core values hold it together		Individual core values can tear it apart
14. Meetings are focused on special interests		Meetings are focused on traditions
15. There is an emphasis on action		There is an emphasis on belonging
16. There is no particular value in the group entity		There is immense value in the group entity
17. It leads to a fellowship of friends		It leads to a camaraderie of comrades
18. There is a sense of belonging to other people		There is a sense of belonging to the group
19. There is a motivation toward serving people		There is a tendency toward using people
20. Everybody has a similar “flag”		Everybody salutes a common “flag”
21. Each individual takes ownership of the truth		Personal ownership of truth is a divisive.
22. Everybody owns something of value		Everybody owns everything/nothing
23. Leaders are those with personal insight		Leaders are the superstars/entertainers/heroes
24. Leaders provide wisdom		Leaders represent the purpose of the group
25. Humility is attractive and encouraged		Pride is attractive and encouraged
26. Boasting sounds foolish		Boasting sounds successful
27. Emphasis is on your gifts abilities and talents		Requires you ignore gifts abilities and talents
28. Your unique beliefs make you attractive		Your unique beliefs make you dangerous
29. Leadership encourages original thinking		Leadership encourages group thinking
30. Belonging is via relationship		Belonging is via attendance
31. Discipline is for people hurting themselves		Discipline is for people hurting our reputation
32. Programs are replaced by events		Events are made into programs

33. It speaks in term of joy	It speaks in terms of success
34. It is a network of intimate individuals	It is a grouping of casual acquaintances
35. It's managed like a sand lot ball team	It is managed like a corporation
36. Its distinction is "love one another"	Its distinction is tolerate one another
37. Love is defined by truth and discernment	Love is defined ignoring truth and discernment
38. Spiritual gifts are for people	Spiritual gifts are for positions
39. People choose to be interested in each other	People have a vested interest in each other.
40. Success cannot be measured or controlled	Success must be measured and controlled
41. It's like salad—mixing individuals together	It's like soup—blending individuals together

Verse 5—Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus

Τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,

Paul begins a new paragraph with this general command, which he will apply in the area of Christ's humility. The verb φρονεῖτε is an imperative of φρονεῶ, the word used two times in verse 2, meaning "to be wise" or "to think." So the general command is to have the wisdom (or thinking) of Christ. His thinking is the standard we will all be measured against. For example, I was recently meeting with a wealthy Christian who was asking me about the right perspective on money. I told him that I thought the real problem was not having wealth but living in luxury. He suggested that living in luxury was different for everybody. He pointed out the fact that extremely wealthy people have a different standard for luxury than he did, and his was different from mine, and mine was different from the poorest people. I said that I didn't think God had more than one standard. I believe we will all be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ by the life Christ lived on earth. He said that was depressing. I said that was one of my gifts. But seriously, in all areas of our lives our judgment when we stand before Christ will not be based on the standards of other people but the example, thinking, and wisdom of Jesus Christ.

Verses 6-8—who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ αρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, ἄλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ

Ryrie writes: "This passage on the humility of Christ is the high mark of the epistle. Unlike the informal, conversational style of the rest of the letter, verses 5-11 are highly polished. ... verse [6] may be paraphrased: 'Who, though of the same nature as God, did not think this something to be exploited to His own advantage' (*Ryrie Study Bible*, p.1890).

In verse 6 the use of the word μορφή in the first statement means "form" or "appearance." It's the same word which says He was in the "form" of a bond-servant (that is a man) in verse 7. The object of verse 6 is stated in the last 2 words ἴσα θεῷ "equal with (from the dative case) God." Paul says this equality was not something Jesus ἠγήσατο, meaning: "to lead, consider, count, or regard" (*Strong's*), αρπαγμὸν meaning "something to be grasped" (*Ibid.*). King James translates this *thought it not robbery to be equal with God*. NASV says: *did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped*. Clearly, this is difficult to translate, but the central idea is that Jesus did not consider reaching out for, or grasping for, equality with God. Clearly, He had the same deity as God the Father (John 1:1; 17:5; Hebrews 1:8). But it is questionable if the King James Version is correct here. The issue seems not to be His assuming His equality with God but rather that He did not consider grasping for it, as Satan did (Isaiah 14:14) and as many of the leaders of this world have done (Acts 12:21-23). The purpose of Jesus' life on earth was not to grasp for equality with God but to demonstrate the quality God is looking for in a perfect man—humility (Micah 6:8; Isaiah 66:2). This also is consistent with John 1:18 which tells us *No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him*. Jesus did not become man to pursue being God (because He already was the God/man), He lived with us on earth to explain God.

Verses 7 and 8 describe the humility of Christ with four statements: (1) *emptied Himself*, (2) *taking the form of a bondservant*, (3) *being made in the likeness of men*, and (4) *becoming obedient to the point of death ... on a cross*. This passage is one of the best statements of the deity and humanity of Christ. He did not need to seek for equality with God yet he voluntarily gave up (ἐκένωσεν = emptied) His use of certain divine attributes. **The doctrine called kenosis is the voluntary non-use of certain attributes.** It is not the giving up or getting rid of those attributes. If Christ got rid of some divine attributes, He would no longer be God.

Since Christ is our model, we can apply this by saying we should: (1) empty ourselves of any authority we have, (2) take the form of a servant bonded to God and a slave of those we serve, (3) make ourselves as no more than a common person, and (4) be obedient to God until the point of our death.

Verses 9-11—For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα, ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πάντων γόνα κάμψῃ ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων καὶ πάντα γλώσσα ἐξομολογήσῃται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.

The main idea of this passage is that the humble emptying of self, results in exaltation from God. But the special exaltation of Christ is because being in form of God He voluntarily lowered Himself to the position of a man and even took on the sin of man and died for it on the cross. For that humbling, God is going to put Him over absolutely everything and everybody.

Let's look a bit closer. In verse 9, the word ὑπερύψωσεν is a combination word. It is the word "exalt" with the word "hyper" in front of it so it is the strongest possible way to express exaltation. It's a hyper exaltation. The "and" is the softer conjunction καὶ which usually means "and as a part of" rather than "and in addition to." So the statement which follows this is a part of and an explanation of the exaltation. The word itself is a bit surprising. ἐχαρίσατο is the word for a gracious gift, whereas we think of Christ as getting something deserved not something unmerited. Apparently, the idea is that because of His obedience and humility, God the Father is going to give Him a position even greater than He had before the incarnation. It could just be a figure of speech or it could mean the Father will give Him a position even beyond what His obedience earned. At any rate, He will be worshipped by every being who has ever existed.

The next thing that grabs our attention is the focus on the word "name." It is used three times here, and it is preceded by the same word ὑπὲρ which precedes the word "exaltation." The name Ἰησοῦς (pronounced Yeaasus) will be a hyper name, one which is above every name. Paul may not mean this particular Greek name, which is pronounced in different ways in different languages of the world. Actually His name at the Second Coming seems a bit mysterious (Revelation 19:11-16). The point is this particular person, the one known as Jesus of Nazareth, the one the church knows as Christ Jesus, this one will have a hyper name above every name.

In verse 10 we learn that Ἰησοῦς will be bowed down to (literally γόνα "knee," κάμψῃ "to bend." They will "bend the knee" to Him. The beings who bow down are put into three categories:

The first category is those in heaven or in the heavenly places. This would include the saints who have died, the angels, and even those magnificent four living creatures around the throne of God (Revelation 4:6-8). It includes everyone but God the Father (read 1 Corinthians 15:27-28).

The second category is those on the earth. The word ἐπιγείων is another combination of two words. The first is "upon" and the second is "ground" or "earth." So it clearly refers to those upon the terrestrial earth. I suspect this is a reference to the Millennial Kingdom when Christ will reign over the whole terrestrial earth (Revelation 20:1-10).

The third category of those bowing the knee is καταχθονίων, those under the earth. This is the only use of this word in the New Testament, so we have little to go on for its explanation. It is a combination of κατα, a word meaning "down from, according to, or under," and χθονίων, an unusual word for earth. It could mean those dwelling under the surface of the earth or those under the earth itself or those on the underside of the earth. In other words, it could mean those in Hades (Luke 16:22-23). Or it could mean those who have died and did not get

Raptured, so their bodies are still under the earth. Or it could mean those in the outer darkness (Matthew 8:12). This would be those who are under the earth, or around the bottom of the earth from the perspective of the New Jerusalem as it sits on the new earth (Revelation 21–22). Whatever this last category refers to, it will be the unbelievers. So this is not worship or adoration but a forced homage to a king.

Verse 11 begins with another καὶ, indicating that the statement to follow is probably a part of, not just in addition to, the bowing of the knee. The sentence says that every γλῶσσα will confess the Lordship of Christ. The word can mean “tongue” or “language.” The significant thing is that the whole creation of spiritual beings, believers in Him and haters of Him, will confess (or “admit”) that Jesus is Lord. The last phrase is also significant. The Lordship of Christ is not the end of all righteousness. The end of all righteousness is the glory of God the Father. Glory δόξαν is a word that can also mean “opinion” (used here in Philippians 1:11 and 3:19). The word also is usually in a context of advertising or making someone known. So the final state of things is when all are confessing the Lordship of Christ unto the ultimate goal of making known the character of God.

Verses 12-13—So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Ὡστε, ἀγαπητοί μου, καθὼς πάντοτε ὑπήκούσατε, μὴ ὡς ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ μου μόνον ἀλλὰ νῦν πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἐν τῇ ἀπουσίᾳ μου, μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατατεργάζεσθε· θεὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ θέλειν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας

Paul begins this new paragraph with another statement that illustrated the network nature of the church. Paul even expects the Philippians’ obedience (to the truth of the word of God which they learned from Paul) to extend over this network, and to be effective during his (now 4 year) absence from them. But it is the specific obedience that gets our attention in this sentence. They are to *work out their own salvation with fear and trembling*. The word translated “work out” is κατατεργάζεσθε. It is the last word and the main verb of the sentence. It is a present middle imperative. The present tense usually indicates an ongoing action. The middle voice emphasizes the idea that they themselves had to do it by themselves. And the imperative says it’s a command. The root word means to: “accomplish”, “bring about”, “produce”, or simply “do.” It is the word “work” with the prefix κατα means “according to” but used here mostly for emphasis. So an amplified translation might be: “You must take it upon yourself to keep on working according to your own salvation.”

The object of that work is the Philippians’ salvation. This has been underscored by the Armenians who say: “See, I told you we could lose our salvation.” And it draws a quick qualification from the Calvinists who say: “It’s ‘work out,’ not ‘work toward’ your salvation.” The best understanding is that Paul is saying the salvation, which was accomplished by Christ on the cross, and received by the Philippians (resulting in their being called saints in 1:1), must be their life long work if they are going to bring pleasure to God (verse 13). The **security** of our salvation comes through the election of God (Ephesians 1:3-11), but **assurance** comes through the lifelong working out of that salvation (1 John 2:4).

Whereas verse 12 is all about the free will of the believer, verse 13 is about the sovereignty of God. Here Paul gives us the other side of that coin. Verse 12 says it is you who should work. Verse 13 says it is God who works, and He works for His own good pleasure. **So the work we do which will succeed is the work that accomplishes the good pleasure of God.**

Verses 14-16—Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

Πάντα ποιεῖτε χωρὶς γογγυσμῶν καὶ διαλογισμῶν, ἵνα γένησθε ἄμεμπτοι καὶ ἀκέραιοι, τέκνα θεοῦ ἄμωμα μέσον γενεᾶς σκολιᾶς καὶ διεστραμμένης, ἐν οἷς φαίνεσθε ὡς φωστῆρες ἐν κόσμῳ, λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες, εἰς καύχημα ἔμοι εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ, ὅτι οὐκ εἰς κενὸν ἔδραμον οὐδὲ εἰς κενὸν ἐκοπίασα.

Verse 14 tells them two ways to *do all things*. The first way is without γογγυσμῶν, which means “murmuring or grumbling.” This is done by people who agree about what is right, but don’t want to do it. For example, they might

say: “I know God hates divorce, but I can’t live this way any more.” The second way is without *διαλογισμῶν*, which means “thought, opinion, or discussion.” This is done by people who do not agree with what is right, and therefore, want to discuss it. For example, they might say: “I want to discuss whether or not it is true that God hates divorce.” The point is: **don’t grumble about doing what you know you should do and don’t dispute what the Bible says you should do.**

Verse 15 begins with *ἵνα*, which is a purpose word. So one purpose of believers not grumbling or disputing with one another is to be a better light in the darkness of this generation. It’s interesting that Paul does not see that the purpose of our harmony is to create a peaceful society on earth but to make an impact for the Gospel on the generation in which we live. He uses 3 words to describe this. Believers are to be *blameless*, *innocent* (or harmless), and *above reproach* (another word for blameless or spotless). Then he says we are not to be monks or hermits, but we are to live among the darkness as lights to the world.

There are two words used to describe this generation: *σκολιᾶς* and *διεστραμμένης*. The first word means “crooked.” It’s where we get the English word “scoliosis,” a disease where one has a crooked spine. The second word means “to turn or pervert.” The nature of sin is that it has to have some truth to pervert. Sin cannot exist by itself. The ying/yang theory is wrong. Good and evil are not two co-equal opposites that create a whole. Sin can only exist if there is first something good to “make crooked” or “pervert.” We are all perverts, but the difference between the believer and the world is that the world doesn’t admit it or repent of it. By overcoming our perversion, our crookedness, we can be lights in a world that believes that crooked is normal.

Verse 16 tells us that the way to do that is not just to suck it up and try harder, but to hold fast to the word of life. Then Paul gives us an interesting insight into his motivation. He says he wants the Philippians to do all that so *I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain*. Notice that ultimately virtue is described two ways: (1) It is an individual thing. It was Paul and the rewards he could rejoice about when he stood alone before God. Apparently, he wanted the Philippians to know that because it was true for them, too. And (2) it is an eternal thing. To not run in vain or toil in vain. **Paul saw his eternal rewards as depending not just on the people he led to Christ but on the spiritual development and maturity of those people.** This appears to be why he was so interested in maintaining a network pipeline of contact with them.

Verse 17—But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. You too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me
Αλλά εἰ καὶ σπένδομαι ἐπὶ τῇ θυσίᾳ καὶ λειτουργίᾳ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν, χαίρω καὶ συγχαίρω πάντιν ὑμῶν τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ ὑμεῖς χαίρετε καὶ συγχαίρετέ μοι

Verses 17 and 18 seem, at first glance, to just be a footnote to the previous discussion. Actually, this reiterates the theme of the book. Paul says that he is rejoicing in the midst of suffering. He is suffering because of the ministry, which resulted in the faith of people like the Philippians. He is hoping they will *συγχαίρετε* “share (their) joy together” with Paul. But actually, suffering and joy are connected because joy comes from suffering for the Gospel. So Paul encourages them to also suffer for the sake of the Gospel so that they will have the same kind of joy to share with him.

Verses 19-24—But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; and I trust in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly
Ἐλπίζω δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Τιμόθεον ταχέως πέμψαι ὑμῖν, ἵνα καὶ ἐγὼ εὐψυχῶ γνοῦς τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν. οὐδένα γὰρ ἔχω ἰσόψυχον, ὅστις γνησίως τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν μεριμνήσει· οἱ πάντες γὰρ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ζητοῦσιν, οὐ τὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. τὴν δὲ δοκιμὴν αὐτοῦ γινώσκετε, ὅτι ὡς πατρὶ τέκνον σὺν ἐμοὶ ἐδούλευσεν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦτον μὲν οὖν ἐλπίζω πέμψαι ὡς ἂν ἀφίδω τὰ περὶ ἐμὲ ἐξαυτῆς· πέποιθα δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ταχέως ἐλεύσομαι.

There are several interesting observations here which we should not overlook:

1. Paul has no intention of the Philippians becoming an independent, self sufficient, indigenous church. He intends to maintain contact with them, send Timothy to them, be encouraged by them, and come to them himself.
2. It is crucial to have a friend and fellow worker like Timothy who is a ἰσόψυχον. The word means “the same soul.” Partners in ministry you can trust are indispensable.
3. Missionaries should be interested in two things: first, the interests of Christ, and second, the welfare of the people they are going to see.
4. Most people involved in ministry are focused on their own interests, some on the interests of other people, but few on the interests of Christ.
5. Most significant relationships will involve submission—like a father and a son. Co-equality is actually unhelpful in most areas of ministry. For example, Timothy was of the same soul but submissive to Paul.
6. An effective team is effective individuals functioning together. The “team” as a collective entity is irrelevant. Paul and Timothy were a team because of each of their individual contributions.

Verses 25-30—But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need; because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you. Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.

Αναγκαῖον δὲ ἡγήσάμην Ἐπαφρόδιτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ συνεργὸν καὶ συστρατιώτην μου, ὑμῶν δὲ ἀπόστολον καὶ λειτουργὸν τῆς χρείας μου, πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἐπειδὴ ἐπιποθῶν ἦν πάντας ὑμᾶς καὶ ἀδελμονῶν, διότι ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἠσθένησεν. καὶ γὰρ ἠσθένησεν παραπλήσιον θανάτῳ· ἀλλὰ ὁ θεὸς ἠλέησεν αὐτόν, οὐκ αὐτὸν δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμέ, ἵνα μὴ λύπην ἐπὶ λύπην σχῶ. σπουδαιότερως οὖν ἔπεμψα αὐτόν, ἵνα ἰδόντες αὐτὸν πάλιν χαρήτε καὶ γὰρ ἀλυπότερος ὦ. προσδέχεσθε οὖν αὐτὸν ἐν κυρίῳ μετὰ πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ τοὺς τοιούτους ἐντίμους ἔχετε, ὅτι διὰ τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ μέχρι θανάτου ἠγγισεν παραβολευσάμενος τῇ ψυχῇ, ἵνα ἀναπληρώσῃ τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα τῆς πρὸς με λειτουργίας

Several more observations are in order concerning Epaphroditus:

1. There is a significant friendship in ministry that is a step below a kindred spirit (as Timothy was to Paul) but is a *brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier*.
2. With all our technological advances, word of mouth is still a very effective means of communication. The Philippians accurately had heard of the illness of Epaphroditus.
3. Healing was either a temporary or limited gift. Paul says Epaphroditus was healed by God’s mercy after he almost died. Paul not only did not heal him but he was afraid he would die.
4. We are to hold in high regard those who suffer for the work of the Gospel, even when that suffering is not from persecution. High regard is for those who suffer for the Gospel, not for those with high positions in our organizations or those who are “successful.”

Application Principles from Chapter 2

1. Unity is more valuable than community (verses 1-4).
2. Our standard of measurement before the Judgment Seat of Christ is the standard revealed by the life of Jesus Christ (verse 5).
3. Humility means to: empty ourselves of authority, take the form of a servant, act like a common person, and be obedient to God until death (verses 6-8).
4. Keep in mind—absolutely everybody will bow before Jesus (verses 9-11).
5. We need to balance the two concepts: the security of our salvation is up to God and the assurance of our salvation is up to us (verses 12-13).
6. We should avoid grumbling with one another because it adversely affects our being lights in a perverse generation (verses 14-16).
7. Joy comes from suffering for the Gospel (verses 17-18).
8. It is extremely valuable, but rare, to have a kindred spirit in ministry (verses 19-24).

9. There are crucial fellow workers in ministry who are beloved soldiers but something less than a kindred spirit (verses 25-30).

Chapter 3

Verse 1—Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.

Τὸ λοιπὸν, ἀδελφοί μου, χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ. τὰ αὐτὰ γράφειν ὑμῖν ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐκ ὀκνηρόν, ὑμῖν δὲ ἀσφαλές.

Verse 1 of chapter 3 sounds like Paul is starting over. Once again, he states the subject of the letter: *rejoice in the Lord*. He also makes the point that repetition is valuable as a safeguard.

Verse 2—Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision
Βλέπετε τοὺς κύνας, βλέπετε τοὺς κακοὺς ἐργάτας, βλέπετε τὴν κατατομήν.

The first word is the verb *Βλέπετε*, and it is repeated three times. It is a command from the root word to “see” or “look.” It could be literally translated “look for (or “Look out for”) those who are” ... and the next word is *κύνας*. It is literally the word for “dogs,” and it is used of the animals in Matthew 7:6 and 2 Peter 2:22. But this word is often used of homosexual men (male prostitutes or sodomites). This is probably its meaning in Revelation 22:15 and of the Hebrew word for “dog” in Deuteronomy 23:18-19. *Strong’s* lists “male prostitutes” as a metaphorical definition of this word. Clearly, Paul is using the word metaphorically, but it is not clear if it is a warning against the influence of male prostitutes. The following context is that of false teachers and Jews attacking the new Christians. Possibly some of these false teachers were male cult prostitutes, but most likely, Paul is using this metaphor of homosexuals to show how despicable these false teachers are.

Paul also warns the Philippians to “watch out” for *κακοὺς ἐργάτας* “evil workers,” referring to evil so-called Christian workers. And to “watch out” for *κατατομήν*. The word literally means “mutilation,” probably here referring to the Jews who were telling them they had to keep the Law of Moses to be saved, therefore the NASV translation “false circumcision.” **This is a very strong exhortation to use discernment.**

Verses 3-6—for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

ἡμεῖς γάρ ἐσμεν ἡ περιτομή, οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες καὶ καυχώμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐν σαρκὶ πεποιθότες, καίπερ ἐγὼ ἔχων πεποίθησιν καὶ ἐν σαρκί. Εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἄλλος πεποιθέναι ἐν σαρκί, ἐγὼ μᾶλλον περιτομῆ ὀκταήμερος, ἐκ γένους Ἰσραὴλ, φυλῆς Βενιαμίν, Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων, κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖος, κατὰ ζήλος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἀμεμπτος.

From verse 3 it appears that the Jews who were criticizing the Gentile Christians were saying they couldn’t be God’s people because they weren’t circumcised. Paul points out that Christian circumcision is spiritual not physical. Circumcision here is a sign of belonging to God and being separated from the world. That sign for Israel was physical circumcision of all males. For John the Baptist and his disciples (some of whom were Christ’s first disciples), it was baptism. But for church age believers, the sign of separation is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who leads us to *glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh*. These Jews made the mistake that the covenant theologians make today—forgetting that we are in a different age or dispensation.

Verses 4 through 6 are an elaboration of the Jewish idea about the significance of the flesh. Paul plays their game and says, if they want to look at the flesh, he has as much fleshly, and for that matter religious, significance as any of them. The difference is, Paul says, is he doesn’t think any of that means anything.

Verse 7—But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ

[Ἀλλὰ] ἄτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη, ταῦτα ἤγημαι διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν.

Verse 7 both concludes Paul's thoughts about the significance of physical Judaism and offers a general principle about earthly things. It might be translated: "Whatever gain of mine that exists, this I consider (count or regard) as loss (or penalty) for the sake of (or on account of) Christ. The point is: **these earthly gains are like choosing to be rich for a day instead being wealthy forever.**

Verses 8-11—More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

ἀλλὰ μενούγγε καὶ ἠγοῦμαι πάντα ζημίαν εἶναι διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου, δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα ἐζημιώθην, καὶ ἠγοῦμαι σκύβαλα, ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω καὶ εὑρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ, μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει, τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ [τὴν] κοινωνίαν [τῶν] παθημάτων αὐτοῦ, συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ, εἴ πως κατακτήσω εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν

This very long sentence (verses 8-11) is an elaboration on the statement in verse 7. Paul begins verse 8 with the very strong contrast phrase, ἀλλὰ μενούγγε, "but on the contrary," as if he were disagreeing with himself or correcting himself. The correction is that not only the Jewish things he gained, but all the things he gained, are by him considered ζημίαν. The word means "loss" or even "penalty." So the gain of earthly things can even hold one back or be like a penalty.

The real goal is knowledge. Paul considers his relationship with Christ as one based on knowledge. But it is knowledge of the truth, not worldly knowledge, which is always a mixture of truth and error viewed from the tainting of a satanic philosophy. The object of Paul's knowledge is the person and lordship of Jesus Christ. It is, however, the same epistemology (philosophy of knowledge) which the world claims to pursue in that it is based on real, objective, true, verifiable, historical, events.

By comparison, everything else is loss or punishment (ἐζημιώθην,) a verb form of the earlier word. It's an aorist passive, meaning: "I have been punished by" or "I have taken a loss from" all things. He finishes the verse saying he counts all these things as garbage, then he uses the purpose word ἵνα, stressing that the purpose of counting these things as loss is to gain Christ. So Paul's purpose is to have the ultimate personal gain—Christ.

Verse 9 tells us how Paul wants to be found by God—having a righteousness through faith, not works. This is a one verse statement of the great theological address in Romans 3:21—5:21. This is the great truth that converted Martin Luther and started the Protestant Reformation.

Verse 10 elaborates on (the connective is καὶ, so it is not just an addition to) the knowledge of Christ with two descriptions: the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering. The last item is expressed further as being conformed to (sharing in or taking the same form as) His death.

Verse 11 puts all this in the perspective of Paul's ultimate goal: to *attain to the resurrection from the dead*. He uses the word for resurrection in verse 10 but puts the word εἶς in front of it creating a word used only here in the New Testament. He is probably referring to the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:16). We have to translate it something like "resurrecting out of" or even "springing up."

This is Paul's personal, individual, self-oriented, profit motive. So we must conclude it is a good perspective. But notice that Paul's self-orientation is not selfishness. Selfishness is an attempt to gain at the expense of another. It is win-lose. In other words, all of the pursuits, which result in gains on this earth, are where you win and someone else loses, in spite of anything some success motivation course has taught you. You and your client may put together a deal where you both win. But your competitor loses. That's because there is only so much to go around. You would not consider my self-ness to be selfishness if it does not take away from you or others. For example, if I am hungry

and eat some bread, you'll have no problem with that. But if you and I are both hungry and I eat all the bread, you'll have a problem with that. You see, self-ness is not the same as selfishness. Following Christ for eternal rewards is never selfishness because God never runs out of assets. When seeking eternal rewards, I am only competing with my sin nature. **I can never take any eternal rewards away from you and you can never take any away from me.**

Verses 12-14—Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Οὐχ ὅτι ἤδη ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι, διώκω δὲ εἰ καὶ καταλάβω, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ κατελήμφθην ὑπὸ Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ]. ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ ἐμαυτὸν οὐ λογίζομαι κατειληφέναι· ἐν δέ, τὰ μὲν ὀπίσω ἐπιλανθανόμενος τοῖς δὲ ἔμπροσθεν ἐπεκτεινόμενος, κατὰ σκοπὸν διώκω εἰς τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

In these three verses, Paul gives us his philosophy of education. In the previous verses he told us the goal of his knowledge, now he tells us how he plans to get there.

The first principle is to understand that he has not arrived or become perfect or complete in his knowledge. That may seem obvious but this is, as a matter of fact, the biggest obstacle to adult Christian education. Most people I teach, outside of a discipleship context, say something like: "I agree with most of what you say but not everything." What they are usually saying is they did not listen to learn, they listened to check out what I was saying to see if it matched with what they already believed. Most people don't come to learn, they come to check the speaker out. They ended their learning years ago. That is what Paul says he determined not to do.

Of course, we are not going to agree with all Christian speakers, but we can choose to learn from them instead of just checking them out. I remember, when I was in seminary, listening to a disagreeable and boring speaker in chapel. When I was about to mentally check out and study my Greek notes, I noticed my favorite professor, Howard Hendricks, sitting behind him on the platform writing like crazy. After chapel I asked him if he was just writing a letter to someone. He said something like: "No. I learned some things which made me think of other things which I wanted to write down before I forgot them. I usually can learn something from nearly every speaker." While I was wasting time checking this guy out (or off), Prof Hendricks was reaching for what lies ahead.

The second principle is described with the words διώκω δὲ εἰ καὶ καταλάβω, literally, "I pursue (or press on) and if also I may take (overtake or reach or apprehend)." So Paul's educational strategy is not just to live life and expect the Spirit of God to teach him as he goes but to aggressively pursue and apprehend this knowledge, which he has not yet obtained.

The third principle is ὀπίσω, "that which lies behind." Concerning that, he uses the word ἐπιλανθανόμενος, meaning "I myself will be continually be forgetting" (a present, middle, participle). A prerequisite for learning new things is leaving old things behind. Paul is specifically, in the context, referring to his old Jewish accomplishments. But he could also have in mind his persecution of Christians. So it could be either good things or bad things. Of course, all knowledge takes into account previous knowledge. But one of the most common mistakes people make in decision making, both on the corporate and personal level, is to look at how much they have invested in a given project. They think about all the time and money they have already put into the project or person. But none of that matters. The only significant question for any decision is, Will this get me where I am going in the future? That mistake keeps people in the wrong religion, the wrong church, the wrong house, and the wrong relationships. Paul says, "I am determined not to do that."

The fourth principle Paul gives us is his goal orientation. He has a goal, but it is not an earthly one. His goal is the ἄνω ("upward," "above," or "upper") call of God in Christ Jesus. I have found that earthly goals, even religious goals of Christian organizations, will usually be used to justify immoral actions. We will do things that are wrong without realizing it because they help achieve our earthly goals. But if our goals are one day on the other side of the grave, that doesn't happen (unless, of course you are following a false religion).

Verses 15-16—Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.

Ὅσοι οὖν τέλειοι, τοῦτο φρονῶμεν καὶ εἴ τι ἐτέρως φρονεῖτε, καὶ τοῦτο ὁ θεὸς ὑμῖν ἀποκαλύψει πλὴν εἰς ὃ ἐφθάσαμεν, τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν.

Paul's statement concerning those who are perfect or complete is referring to the positional sanctification of believers. They are positional saints (1:1). The point here is we should all have the φρονῶμεν, the "attitude" or "understanding" that is the philosophy of education Paul has just given. If however some believers have a different attitude concerning education the conviction of the Holy Spirit will convince them.

The point of verse 16 is to tell us not to abandon the basic knowledge and the standard of morality we have obtained from the Bible. New teaching which is correct will build upon existing standards not change them or abandon them. From the standpoint of the sovereignty of God there is, of course, no new truth. But for us who live in the unfolding of history new truth is added all the time and new true knowledge come when the new truth is accurately understood. But new truth never contradicts old truth. Anything that contradicts old truth is not true, because actual contradictions are impossible.

Verses 17-19—Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

Συμμιμηταὶ μου γίνεσθε, ἀδελφοί, καὶ σκοπεῖτε τοὺς οὕτω περιπατοῦντας καθὼς ἔχετε τύπον ἡμῶν. πολλοὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦσιν οὓς πολλάκις ἔλεγον ὑμῖν, νῦν δὲ καὶ κλαίων λέγω, τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὧν τὸ τέλος ἀπώλεια, ὧν ὁ θεὸς ἡ κοιλία καὶ ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ αὐτῶν, οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονοῦντες.

Verse 17 begins with Συμμιμηταὶ μου γίνεσθε, "be imitators together with me." The verb γίνεσθε is a present middle imperative, so we could say "you are commanded to take it upon yourselves to keep on being—an imitator together with me." The first word is a lot like 1 Corinthians 11:1, which says: *Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.* But here Paul adds that they are to join him in being a "fellow imitator" or an "imitator together" with Paul. Here he also adds that there are others who also walk according to this pattern. And, as we have seen, that is not an example of having arrived but striving, seeking, and pressing on.

Verse 18 gives us the reason for this exhortation. There are many who are not walking this way. **Every book of the New Testament except Philemon has a warning about false teachers.** In contrast to Paul, these people are a false example. He concludes they are enemies of the cross.

Verse 19 completes the list of things Paul says about these immoral, so-called brothers. Most of what Paul has to say about them concerns their judgment. But he has two significant descriptive comments:

First, their god is their κοιλία, literally "belly," metaphorically "appetite." I suggest it could be paraphrased "physical desires" or "addictions." Physical appetites deceive us in two significant ways: they tell us they will satisfy us, and they tell us we can't live without them.

For example, romantically "falling in love" is a sexual addiction. One day you are fine, the next day you absolutely cannot live without someone. You become convinced your relationship will be satisfying and that you can't live without it. The same is true for other appetite addictions: food, drugs, alcohol, hobbies, etc. Then Paul adds that the false glory of appetites is their own shame. In other words, the very over indulgence they promote is itself shameful.

The second descriptive comment of verse 19 is that they set their mind on earthly things. This is the fastest growing church emphasis in American evangelicalism. The emphasis is on this-life, this-world Christianity. The "Emergent Church Movement" specializes in it, but they are, by far, not the only ones. Some even espouse the false teaching that this earth is our eternal home. Beware!

Verses 20-21—For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει, ἐξ οὗ καὶ σωτῆρα ἀπεκδεχόμεθα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, ὃς μετασχηματίσει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν καὶ ὑποτάξαι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα

Verse 20 may be intentionally using the citizenship metaphor because Philippi was a Roman colony with Roman citizenship, which was rare for a city outside of Italy. But, whether it refers to their Roman status or not, the point is the same, this world is not our home, we are just a-passin' through.

Verse 21 focuses on the transformation of our bodies, a doctrine Paul develops in 1 Corinthians 15:50ff. The principle to notice here is that our body will conform to the image of Christ's resurrected body. With it, He could eat, be touched, appear in rooms without coming through the door. It also apparently looked a bit different.

Application Principles from Chapter 3

1. Repetition is good for learning (verse 1).
2. Beware of false teachers and false believers; they have always been there and they will always be there (verse 2).
3. None of our earthly, fleshly accomplishments (education, wealth, positions, talents) mean anything (verses 3-7).
4. We should focus on knowing more about Christ, with the goal of attaining to the resurrection from the dead (verses 8-11).
5. Our philosophy of education should include: (1) We will never arrive at full knowledge in this life. (2) We should aggressively pursue knowledge about God—don't wait for it to come to you. (3) We should ignore our past investments—good or bad. (4) We should focus on the eternal, not on this life (verses 12-14).
6. Be around people who focus on the character of God and heavenly things, and avoid people who focus on this world and its appetites (verses 15-21).

Chapter 4

Verse 1—Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοὶ καὶ ἐπιπόθητοι, χαρὰ καὶ στέφανός μου, οὕτως στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ, ἀγαπητοί.

In verse 1 Paul describes the Philippians in 4 ways: (1) *beloved*, (2) ones he *longs to see*, the word is ἐπιπόθητοι, literally ones I “long for” or “am passionate about,” (3) *my joy*, the theme word *χαρὰ* again, and (4) *my crown*, meaning his rewards in heaven. His command to stand firm in the Lord is more of a summary than something new.

Verses 2-3—I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Εὐοδίαν παρακαλῶ καὶ Συντύχην παρακαλῶ τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ. ναὶ ἐρωτῶ καὶ σέ, γνήσιε σύζυγε, συλλαμβάνου αὐταῖς, αἵτινες ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ συνήθησαν μοι μετὰ καὶ Κλήμεντος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου, ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα ἐν βίβλῳ ζωῆς.

We don't know how these women are connected to each other or who Clement is. They could be brother and sisters or in the same house church. What we do know is: (1) Paul considers them true believers, (2) they supported Paul in some way—probably financially, (3) they are part of Paul's network—church, along with Clement (it is interesting that Paul knew about this problem all the way over in Rome), and (4) they can't get along with each other. Paul appeals to Clement to help these women get along—not a job to be envied. The principle is: **mature men have to step in and help believers who cannot get along with one another.**

Verses 4-5—Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.

Χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ πάντοτε· πάλιν ἐρῶ, χαίρετε. ἡ τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις. ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς

Verse 4 is another statement of the subject of the epistle.

Verse 5 is one of the most difficult commands for most men. The key word is ἐπιεικὲς. It means something like: “seemly,” “equitable,” “yielding,” or “gentle.” This idea is common in the New Testament (see 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 3:2; 1 Peter 2:18). It is especially difficult for those men who are use to solving problems with force by being rough. Paul is obviously not talking about their being soft theologically or morally, or encouraging them to tolerate those things in the body of Christ. The command is not against being tough; it’s against being rough. He is saying: **We must have a gentile way about our moral and theological toughness.**

The last short sentence is often troubling to those of us who live 2000 years later. It says: *The Lord is near.* The word ἐγγύς can mean: “near” (in place or time), “at hand,” “close,” “nearby,” “nearer,” or “ready.” But it seems here, and elsewhere in the New Testament, that the Apostles want us to live in such a way that we realize the Rapture of the church is at hand (Revelation 1:3). But that is not to say the Apostles believed the coming of Christ would not be a long way off. In 2 Peter 3:3-10 Peter even seems to indicate that the second coming of Christ could be thousands of years away. Nevertheless, the Rapture of the church (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) could be at any moment, so it can be (and should be) taught that *the Lord is near.* Since no one knows the time of His Coming for the church, it can never be said that it is not near, or that it might not be near.

Buy contrast the events prophesied in both the Old and New Testaments surrounding the Second Coming of Christ cannot be said to be near since many signs must precede those events (Matthew 24:4ff). But the point the Apostles are making to the church in their epistles is that there are no signs before the Coming of Christ to Rapture His church. Therefore, until He comes, His coming is near. **The Lord is near in the sense that there is nothing which needs to be accomplished before He comes for the church.**

Verses 6-7—Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε, ἀλλ’ ἐν παντὶ τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ δεήσει μετὰ εὐχαριστίας τὰ αἰτήματα ὑμῶν γνωρίζεσθω πρὸς τὸν θεόν. καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ ὑπερέχουσα πάντα νοῦν φρουρήσει τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν καὶ τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

This may be the most quoted and memorized passage in Philippians. It is also the most specific promise of a specific answer to a prayer other than salvation (John 1:12; 3:16; 5:24). Let’s take a closer look at it.

First, in verse 6, we have the command not to μεριμνᾶτε. The word can mean: “to be anxious,” “to care for,” “to be concerned for,” or “to be worried about.” The command is much like the one Jesus gave in Matthew 6:25-34, and it uses the same word Jesus does for “worry.” Generally, in English, the difference between “worry” and “concern” is that worry leaves out the sovereignty of God. So we can confidently translate this word as “worry.” Clearly, Paul is not forbidding concern for people. The lead word μηδὲν can mean either “nothing” or “no one.” So Paul is forbidding any kind of worry.

The alternative he gives is prayer. He introduces it with ἀλλ’ the hardest contrast word for “but” followed by “in everything.” Then he uses all three of the most common words for prayer and a fourth more general word for making a request. The idea is not to present some magic formula for getting our prayers answered, but the specific words he uses are important.

The first word προσευχῇ is the most general word for “prayer: (it sometimes even refers to a place of prayer). It is connected to the second prayer word by καὶ which is the soft “and” that can also mean “that is” or “and as a part of.”

The second word for prayer is δεήσει, which has the idea of a request. So these two are bound together into one idea “a prayer, and as a part of that, a request.” The connective, between them and the next prayer word is μετα, generally translated “with.”

The third prayer word is εὐχαριστίας meaning “thanksgiving.” So the prayer, which includes a request, is surrounded by thanksgiving. This is followed by a summary general (fourth) word for “request.”

Next comes the word γνωρίζεσθω, “let it be made known,” followed by “to God.” This verb is a present passive imperative. The present and imperative are expected here, they indicate a command to keep on doing it. But the passive indicates someone else is doing the action. Passives are usually followed with the word “by” (either spoken or understood). It would not be by the one doing the praying or it would be middle, not passive. Paul may be referring to Romans 8:26 where our prayers are cleaned up, so to speak, and presented to God by the Holy Spirit. I should then make my prayer request to God the Father (we are never given an example or a command to pray to the Holy Spirit) and the Holy Spirit will clear out all the foolish parts and present it to God the Father (even though He already knows it). So, if I may paraphrase the phrase: But (by way of contrast) pray, that is, make your request, and do it in the context of thanksgiving, making the specifics known, realizing that it will be presented to God the Father by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 7 has the promised answer. First, we must notice that the promise is not that your specific request will be answered. We are to make that specific request known to God, not because He does not know it, or because He will grant it. We are simply commanded to do it. The answer we are promised (if I may offer an amplified translation) is that: a peace of (or from) God, which “exceeds all mind (or thought)” will guard (or keep, or set a garrison around) your heart and mind (or thought) in Christ Jesus. Notice, this is not the result of counseling or fellowship or a supportive community. **This is a peace from God as a direct intervention of God, which supernaturally penetrates the mind and heart of the individual believer in Christ Jesus.**

Verses 8-9—Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Τὸ λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί, ὅσα ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ, ὅσα σεμνά, ὅσα δίκαια, ὅσα αγνά, ὅσα προσφιλή, ὅσα εὐφρημα, εἴ τις ἀρετὴ καὶ εἴ τις ἔπαινος, ταῦτα λογίσεσθε· ἃ καὶ ἐμάθετε καὶ παρελάβετε καὶ ἠκούσατε καὶ εἶδετε ἐν ἐμοί, ταῦτα πράσσετε· καὶ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν.

Verse 8 is a one of Paul’s impressive grocery lists, and he tells the Philippians to dwell on it. First let’s look at the list. There are 8 items, which we might call attitude virtues. We’ll put them under the microscope a bit.

- ἀληθῆ= true, honest, genuine, or real.
- Σεμνα = reverend, serious, dignified, honorable
- δίκαια = righteous, correct, innocent, just
- αγνα = pure, holy, sacred, free from (ceremonial) defilement
- προσφιλή = lovely, cheerful, pleasing, agreeable
- εὐφρημα = worthy of praise, good repute, well reported of
- ἀρετη = virtue, moral excellence, moral goodness
- ἔπαινος = praise, commendation

Concerning these attitudes, Paul commands the Philippians to λογίσεσθε (NASV “dwell on”). It is a present middle imperative verb from the word “to think, count, or calculate” (*Strong’s*). In English we get the word “logic” from this. An amplified translation might be: (I am commanding you) to continue, to take it upon yourself, to keep on logically thinking (or meditating or reasonably/logically/mentally calculating) about things which have these 8 characteristics.

Verse 9 is another educational grocery list. He says they are to put into practice the things which they have observed in Paul. Specifically that includes:

- ἐμάθετε = The things which you have learned. (This is the basic word for a disciple.)
- παρελάβετε = The things you have received. (This is the common word for take or receive.)
- ἠκούσατε = The things which you have heard. (This is the common word for hear.)

εἶδετε = The things which you have seen. (This is the common word for see, look, or perceive.)

The specific command concerning these words is not the simple word for “do” but the word *πράσσετε* which means “to practice or accomplish.” It is a present active imperative. So it is like the verb for “think” in verse 8, except the emphasis here is on the action of continuing to practice these things. The emphasis in verse 8 is on the person himself (middle voice) taking on the responsibility, but the focus here in verse 9 is the ongoing action.

Notice that Paul’s whole exhortation to them is based on the time he was physically there with them. No one just handing out tracts, or even Bibles, or just using computer age technology, or just writing books, could give people this exhortation. It requires an incarnational (in the flesh) presence with the people you are exhorting. Many of the Apostles wrote books and letters, which were of immense value (and, of course, still are today). But they wrote them to people they had personally ministered to, or those they planned to come and personally minister to.

Verses 10-19—But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Ἐχάρην δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ μεγάλως ὅτι ἤδη ποτὲ ἀνεθάλετε τὸ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ φρονεῖν, ἐφ’ ᾧ καὶ ἐφρονεῖτε, ἠκαιρεῖσθε δέ. οὐχ ὅτι καθ’ ὑστέρησιν λέγω, ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔμαθον ἐν οἷς εἰμι αὐτάρκης εἶναι. οἶδα καὶ ταπεινοῦσθαι, οἶδα καὶ περισσεύειν ἐν παντί καὶ ἐν πάσιν μεμύημαι, καὶ χορτάζεσθαι καὶ πεινᾶν καὶ περισσεύειν καὶ ὑστερεῖσθαι· πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με. πλὴν καλῶς ἐποιήσατε συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει. οἶδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππηῖοι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινώνησεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, ὅτι καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι ἐπέμψατε. οὐχ ὅτι ἐπιζητῶ τὸ δόμα, ἀλλὰ ἐπιζητῶ τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν. ἀπέχω δὲ πάντα καὶ περισσεύω πεπλήρωμαι δεξάμενος παρὰ Ἐπαφροδίτου τὰ παρ’ ὑμῶν, ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας, θυσίαν δεκτὴν, εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ. ὁ δὲ θεὸς μου πληρώσει πᾶσαν χρεῖαν ὑμῶν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος αὐτοῦ ἐν δόξῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

Verses 17-19 lists for the Philippians at least 5 financial principles about giving and living:

1. Concern will find an opportunity for financial/material giving (verses 10 and 13).
2. Needs are actually met by strengthening from Christ, whether in prosperity or poverty (verses 11-12).
3. Sensitivity to giving needs should be early and regular (verses 15-16).
4. The value of giving is primarily to the giver (verse 17).
5. It is important to give, but it is also important to receive, and to do so with appreciation (verses 18-19).

Verses 20-23—Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit

τῷ δὲ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ ἡμῶν ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν. Ἀσπάσασθε πάντα ἅγιον ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ ἀδελφοί. ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι, μάλιστα δὲ οἱ ἐκ τῆς Καίσαρος οἰκίας. Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν.

Verse 20 gives us a good look at the inclusive use of *καὶ* for “and” when Paul expresses glory to our God “and” Father. It is clearly not “and in addition to” but “and as an explanation of.” Notice, with all Paul’s love and adoration for Jesus Christ, his final expression is the glory of the Father.

Verses 21-22 are the closing of the book. Notice that the word *ασπάζομαι* occurs 3 times in 3 different forms. It is simply the word for “greet,” but we shouldn’t miss the significance of it. It shows once again the universal nature of

the Body of Christ. Paul is drawing together those who are with him and the believers in Philippi. He even draws in the believers in Caesar's household whom the Philippians had never met.

Verse 23 ends the letter with a wish of grace (unmerited favor) from Jesus Christ, to be with the spirits of the Philippian believers. The reason for the emphasis on their "spirit" is not given. What is clear, however, is that the unmerited grace of Christ was applied to their spiritual condition. Interestingly, if we compare this to verse 20, he points the giving of **glory** in the direction of the Father—up. And he points the giving of **grace** from Jesus towards the Philippians—down.

Application Principles from Chapter 4

1. Ministry should be in the context of love for and longing for the people we serve. In a mature ministry, the focus naturally changes from evangelism to nurturing (verse 1).
2. Disharmony in the Body of Christ is an ongoing challenge, but it must not be allowed to continue. Mature men need to step in (verses 2-3).
3. We should always pursue having a gentle spirit (verses 4-5a).
4. We should always live (in this age) as if Jesus might come today (verse 5b).
5. Whenever we feel anxious and are beginning to worry, we should make our request to God and expect a peace that passes understanding (verses 6-7).
6. We should meditate on things that are real and righteous (verse 8).
7. Discipleship requires the context of a physical (incarnational) presence (verse 9).
8. Giving and receiving are valuable to both the giver and the receiver. Both should be thankful—the giver for the opportunity and the receiver for the material benefit. When we refuse to receive, we disallow someone the opportunity to practice generosity (verses 10-19).
9. All believers are part of the same universal Body of Christ (verses 20-23).

THIS CONCLUDES OUR STUDY ON THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS.