

# Philippians 1

You know where the Epistle to the Philippians starts...that's right, in Acts 16:12-40

## Overview

written in a Roman prison during his 1<sup>st</sup> imprisonment...later is released  
he is beheaded after his 2<sup>nd</sup> imprisonment

the Philippian church:

- Founded by Paul on his 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey in the midst of a storm of persecution
- Paul arrived, looked for the synagogue but there was not one... meaning there were not 10 Jewish men in town
- Began very small, with only a few women on a river side
- Lydia, the first convert in Europe, was the beginning of the church  
A very successful business woman
- Then, while he and Silas were walking around town, Paul cast the demon out of a servant girl...and her master led an uprising that resulting in Paul and Silas being beaten and chained in shackles in the dungeon
- Paul to Silas, "Know any good worship songs?"  
they start to worship the Lord in song
- Then came an earthquake that broke down the prison walls and the chains holding the prisoners
- Since the "Great Escape" would cost him his life in a very cruel execution, the jailer decides to commit suicide
- Paul stops him...and leads him to the Lord...and then his whole family
- It is discovered that Paul is a Roman citizen...which puts the magistrate in BIG trouble if Rome ever found out
- Rather than leaving town immediately as encouraged to by the magistrate, Paul hangs around a while preaching the Gospel...
- ...and a church is born!  
And it was a very healthy bouncing baby church!.

What kind of people fellowshiped at Philippi?

- mature
  - spiritual health is seen in maturity
  - Metaphor: a funnel of God's love
    - With maturity the narrow end of the funnel widens until it becomes a pipe
    - we all need to stop and look back on our walk...a funnel
    - Blocked up?
    - Free flowing?
    - As wide as a pipe?
  
- they trusted in the Lord – He was their peace and their strength
  - Is 26:2-4, 12
  
- they continued steadfastly in
  1. the apostle's doctrine (faithful to the Word)
  2. fellowship (fellowship is with others in the Word of God...any Christian gathering without the Word is a social event)
  3. breaking of bread (Family Dinners)
  4. prayer (I think the prayer meetings were packed!)

reminds me of Philadelphia!
  
- Appreciative and generous
  - Ch 4:14-16
  - They had a big heart...they cared for people...they knew no strangers
  
- I think they turned off their TVs and computer games and read and meditated on the Word of God...rather than getting their brains sucked out, they were diligent about the renewing of their mind and being transformed
  
- I think they had people like Chris Herzog (**Arizona Republic article**)
  - They went out in the love of the Lord and affected their community for Jesus

Now, from another prison in another town, Paul writes a wonderful letter to this special church

- a spiritual love letter written with great affection and gratitude, filled with encouragement
- written under very difficult circumstances, it underscores the joy and victory of walking with Jesus
- rejoicing
  - in prayer (1:4)
  - in the Gospel (1:18)
  - in Christian fellowship (2:1-2)
  - in being a living sacrifice (2:17-18)
  - in the Lord (3:1)
  - for the love in the Body of Christ (4:10)

v1 servants of Jesus Christ to saints...bishops and deacons:  
Paul is with Timothy, his son in the faith whom he met in Lystra before going to Philippi

servants have no rights...no will...no possessions

performance criteria: faithfulness

many times we have good intentions...but good intentions often are fueled by self-centeredness ie what do I get out of this

servants of Jesus Christ don't have good intentions, they have God's intentions

Paul's attitude is key:

- he does not see himself as a prisoner of Rome...
- He sees himself a prisoner of Jesus Christ with Rome chained to him!
- He sees himself as God does...a missionary in Caesar's Palace!

a letter from servants to:

1. saints
  - designation given by the Lord, not the Church
  - not only found on dashboards or in people's yards
2. servants
  - bishops
  - deacons

God exalts the humble and humbles the self-exalted

"If you want to be great in the kingdom, be a servant of all."

Christian leadership...and Christianity...is all about servanthood...serving God and serving others.

v2 Grace and peace:  
as with every other letter Paul wrote, "Grace and peace"...in that order

v3-5 every remembrance of you...for your fellowship:  
it has been about 10 years since Paul has seen these dear people  
face-to-face  
Paul has sweet memories of the fellowship he had in this church...the love  
of the Lord permeated it  
( I pray that this church would be known for its love )  
Paul thanked God for the sweet fellowship in Jesus Christ with this body  
of believers.  
In his current circumstance, the Lord encouraged and comforted His  
servant with the joy found only in God's family...  
...and when the Lord puts them on his mind, Paul prays for them

from the first day:

*koinonia* with other believers - an instant bond in Jesus...nothing in  
common but everything in common...like the one with Carl and  
Olga Graca, house-bound seniors here in Ahwatukee who listen to  
the radio program every Sunday and who call to pray.  
Many of us here are so different...but in Christ....

Satan hates Christian fellowship - he attaches more importance to it than  
we do!!!

Why? It is a spiritual bond...a spiritual relationship...where he is a loser  
he will do anything he can to keep you away from gathering with other  
believers...but...

v6 he which has begun...will perform it:  
Paul is "convinced, certain" that God will "finish" what He has started,  
working the clay up to the day the Lord Jesus Christ returns  
"I'll see you again. Even if I die here, I will see you again in the kingdom  
of our God."

the sweetness of this promise cannot be measured... my salvation is  
dependant upon God's faithfulness, not mine  
God is faithful to finish what He has started in me...He is not going to

- stop...
- give up on me as a lost cause...
- bring me this far just to dump me!

I am WIP. When He is done, He will ship me home.

Ps 138:7-8

2 Tim 1:12 I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded  
that he is able to keep that which I have committed  
unto him against that day  
(what day?)

until the day of Jesus Christ...either

- thru death of the physical body (v21-23, 2 Cor 5:8)
- thru the catching up of the Body of Christ (1 Thes 4:12-18)

until whichever day for us individually, God will be working on us

today...God is working on me and you

a man of God...in the will of God...is immortal until his work is done

v7 in my bonds...ye all are partakers:

the Philippian church supported Paul on his missionary journeys

on his current journey, Paul is writing while chained to a Roman soldier,

in Rome defending the Christian faith before Roman judges, the

Roman Senate, and the Caesar

“Your gifts have enabled me to do this...your sweet fellowship

encourages me to go forward...you will share in the fruit of the

Vine with me.”

v8 in the bowels of Jesus Christ:

“As God as my witness, I deeply yearn to be with you.”

Paul has been away for about 10 years...he yearns from deep within him

to see them

it has been about 9 years since I saw my Dad healthy and happy...

I still long to see him

It has been 38 years since Monica saw her mother...

To this day she longs to see her

Those who have been separated from loved ones know what Paul is

feeling

That is how Paul longs to see the Philippians...only deeper

this from a guy who, before Jesus saved him, hated Gentiles

- v9 that your love may abound yet more and more:  
Love, the fruit of the Spirit, increases as we
- grow in knowledge and in the grace of Jesus Christ thru the study of God's Word
  - deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and follow Jesus
  - decrease so that He may increase

With that growth comes spiritual discernment because discernment requires intimate knowledge and understanding of the Truth in God's Word

1 Thes 5:21

Acts 17:11

And it grows...it feeds on itself!

Greater love results in greater trust and submission...which yields more knowledge of Scripture and a keener spiritual discernment

- v10 that ye may be sincere and without offence:  
as love, knowledge, and discernment grow, we
- seek God's intentions
  - seek God's ways

sincere: pure, genuine...not phony

without offense: without stumbling, slipping, falling

- v11 fruits of righteousness:  
if so, we are filled with God's love  
Gal 5:22-23 vs. Gal 5:19-21

Living in continually greater love, trust, and submission in the Lord is the most wonderful way to live, the way of joy and peace and contentment...in a world that knows none of those things...  
...possible only by leading a genuine, Spirit-filled life...a life of an obedient servant

the victorious Christian walk glorifies God, not the Christian.

Paul's intercessory prayer for them...and for us:

1. our love may abound
2. our knowledge and discernment will increase
3. approve/adopt Godly things and Godly ways
4. be genuine (the real deal) and blameless/holy
5. be Spirit-filled

v12-14 in all the palace:

Paul had longed to preach in Rome...he did not envision that it would be this way

but rather than witnessing in small home groups, the entire Roman power base is hearing about the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

the Lord is using Paul to create quite a stir in Rome, the capital of the world...Satan's HQ

And because this is so, many others also get boldness to witness

in all circumstances, even those meant for evil, God is always on the throne in complete control

Gen 50:19-21

Rom 8:28

bonds...bold:

this is before Nero hunted Christians

so what is going on now?

God loves Nero, too, and has brought the Apostle Paul right into his house to preach the Gospel to him!

Paul was chained...The Gospel was not chained.

Results of Paul's imprisonment

- the encouraging Epistle to the Philippians is written
- the Gospel is proclaimed to the Roman soldiers in Rome
- seeds planted in Rome are carried all over the Empire
- Christians watching Paul are encouraged and emboldened
- Jesus is magnified

the persecuted Church thrives by the mighty hand of God in these times

...when they knowingly put on the whole armor of God and

...when their faith is razor-sharp

Why is the Church persecuted? When we open our mouth

- Call sin, sin...and evil, evil (vs Is 5:20)  
NYC: Gay marriages acceptable, equality  
Church: Homosexuality is sin, perversion
- Preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified
- Be salty
- Stand uncompromisingly on absolute truth  
Franklin Graham statement

God's way are always superior to our ways...and...  
All things considered, which only He can do, God's work progresses and  
is never stalled by the enemy.  
So, do you trust Him?

comfort breeds complacency, so

- get out of your comfort zone
- get on the offensive
- get a sense of urgency and boldness!

v15-18 some indeed preach...of envy and strife...some also of good will:  
because of Paul's witness as a missionary in Caesar's palace, many others  
have been emboldened to go out into the city and preach the  
Gospel

- some are doing militantly, looking for a fight, with a  
"James Conrad Go-ahead-knock-it-off-my-shoulder"  
attitude
- Some from a legalistic, works-orientation (the Judaizers)
- Some out of wrong motives...to fleece the flock
- While others are preaching in love with the broken heart of the  
Good Shepherd.

Regardless, Paul is thrilled that the name of Jesus Christ is being  
proclaimed and exalted  
"The motives of many are wrong, but who cares? The Gospel is being  
preached."

The power is in The Message...not the messenger  
The Word of God transcends the motives of man  
Is 55:9-10 goes forth, will not return void  
if the soil is the good soil, there will be a harvest, regardless of the  
sower's intent, because to God goes the increase.

Note: if the James Conrads were attacking the good shepherds, he would  
not be thrilled (division). But both are preaching to the lost



v19-20 my earnest expectation:

here Paul clearly states the purpose of his life: to bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ and that God would be magnified thru his life...  
whatever God's plan is (John 3:30)  
He does not know if he will lose his head or be set free...either way...  
Jesus has already secured the victory.

Considering the death of His saints...(Ps 116:15)

- A faithful...watchful...occupying...saint  
His name will be magnified by the death of such a servant

1. Stephen in Acts 6-7...witnessed by Paul, the Porter  
Acts 6:5, 9-15  
After a "killer" Bible study, Acts 7:55-60  
We are here today because Stephen's death  
magnified the name of the Lord

2. Olga Graca this past Tuesday  
Daughter: took her to ICU..."Be sure to tell Doug"  
"She always prayed for you, your church.  
You have done so much for our family" (!)  
Paul: "She went to be with the Lord this afternoon  
at 2:15. She was so peaceful. She  
loved your radio program...so many  
churches are filled with people trying  
to earn there salvation...but it is  
Only By Grace."  
He was celebrating...even having lost his  
wife of so many years (he is 85 yrs  
old). "I know where she is and I  
know I will see her soon."

3. Kathy's sister Thursday  
Lived fast and hard...without peace...but died in  
peace, a daughter of the King, a saint...to  
give her family peace and comfort  
Kathy, KNOW that you are going to a celebration!

- An unfaithful...lukewarm...self-centered...saint  
His name is blasphemed by such a testimony  
Rick Chance, Mr. Empire Glass  
Forced "subservience" of 1<sup>st</sup> wife  
Extreme materialism  
Dated women on the Internet  
Last seen alive with a topless dancer...with whom  
he has been involved for over a year

Live a good life...die a good death...

Walk with the Lord every day...magnify His name when you  
“move out”

do not be ashamed on the day of Jesus Christ (1:6)

may Jesus be magnified and glorified in my life and in all circumstances,  
regardless of the impact to my physical (temporary) body

v21 live is Christ and to die is gain

a win-win situation for Paul

- if lives, more time to serve the Lord
- if dies, present with the Lord

[ Repeat the verse ] Can I say this? Can you?

Nathan could say this...his dream Wednesday

- driving with me and Chris
- something happened to the car or we were in an accident
- bright light, and I was in heaven
- no one else was there from our family
- later we arrived – me, Mom, K, M, C, H...but not B, B
- tried to cry but could not – no tears in heaven
- saw Joseph, Mom + husband + 2 kids
- saw Joey, Michael, parents

our reaction: tears, pleading...and a vow to not go back to CA!

Nathan's reaction: the next night at prayer time, “Thank you.  
Lord, for the dream.”

Can I say this? Can you?

Only if we are filled by the Holy Spirit

Do not fear death. Christ has won the victory over death, it has no sting.

Death is nothing but a gateway to Christ...a “moving on up”

the things of the world are not suited for the kingdom of God, including  
these bodies...to get to the kingdom of God we gotta lose these  
bodies

I will lose this body of death (Rom 7:24-25) in God's perfect timing (v6)

Heb 9:27 appointed unto man once to die...

I will die precisely on time!

Olga did...Kathy's sister did...we all do

Until then, how do we apply this truth to our every day lives?  
By faith we have invited Jesus into our hearts...  
Now we have two Christians in one body, right?  
But what do we do once Jesus moves in?  
We say to Him, "Please sit down and watch me be a  
Christian!"  
How foolish!  
What we need to do is...die...and let the Lord live in us  
We cannot reform the flesh (sinful nature), we must kill it!  
Rom 6:6 old man is crucified with Him  
Let the world see and hear Jesus in us...right up to the moment we  
move out of these bodies!

Another thought...imagine what the Roman soldier is thinking...  
as he hears Paul's voice and his tone of voice...  
and as he watches the joy on Paul's face  
What "Roman guard" do you have "chained to you?"  
What kind of a witness of Jesus Christ are you?

v22-24 if I live...for I am in a strait:  
now this is a life completely sold-out for Jesus!  
"To stay would be better for you...but to go would be far better for  
me! What is better for me? Whatever the Lord wills."

Paul has no disillusion about the cost of serving the Lord...he has paid!  
he thinks the price is small potatoes compared to the price Jesus  
paid to buy him for all eternity.  
And Paul can see clearly the rewards of serving the Lord  
Phil 3:7-11  
Because he is not his own (1 Cor 6:19-20), Paul the servant leaves all the  
choices to our loving, all-powerful Lord...  
Understanding that his life is and always has been in the Lord's hands,  
Paul is cool with whatever the Lord has planned for him.

We all have a drive/desire to live in this body...to be with loved ones and  
to serve the Lord here.  
Yet the next eternal, glorified life in the presence of the Lord...which is  
not as "real" to "sensory" us...is incomparably better.  
1 Cor 2:9 eye, ear, heart...things God has prepared  
With spiritual senses we know that to be with Christ, which currently  
requires separation from this body, is better than this life.

But in the meantime, I am to let the Vine bear fruit in my life  
I will be here until God is done in me and thru me

v25-26 having this confidence...I shall abide and continue:

Paul expects to return to minister to this church, to help them grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and to continue to teach them how to live a joyful Christian life...

Paul knows that a man of God in the will of God is immortal until His work is done...and that his work was not yet done on the other hand, during his 2<sup>nd</sup> imprisonment, Paul would write in his last letter 2 Tim 4:5-8

v27 let your conversation:

conversation = "lifestyle"

"Let your walk reflect your talk, displaying a heavenly citizenship. Whether I come back bodily or not, behave like God's children while you live in this dark and profane place... and faithfully, diligently be about the Lord's business until your day of Jesus Christ."

the lifestyle of Christianity:

- to be a doer of the Word (loving God is doing ...)
- to be a servant of God and of others
- to live in purity and holiness in a corrupt place...by putting on Jesus Christ
- to be a witness of Jesus in every circumstance and situation... walking in victory

v28 in nothing terrified by your adversaries:

Caesar worship is just starting to be enforced vigorously by Nero  
God's admonition thru Paul: "Do not fear man, fear Me."

A timely admonition for us today...as persecution of the Church is  
mounting world-wide  
Fed Gov't meeting on "in-house terrorists": Bible-believing Christians  
(surprised? Eph 6:12)

Fear is diametrically opposed to faith...

"Do you trust me? Am I bigger than your problems and your  
circumstances?"

"Do not be terrified or intimidated by Satan and his gang...they may try to  
run and hide but they know they are condemned and headed for  
destruction (Mark 5:1-13). And you must know that you are  
saved, not condemned (Rom 8:1)."

In a confrontation between a child of God and God's enemies, who is the  
fearful party? The enemy

a mild, every day example: at work, I have a gift for changing  
conversations...by engaging in their conversations!

e.g. debate of Iraq situation...conflict between Israel and PLO

- the basic tenets of Islam  
convert or death  
to lie to the heathen  
do not want peace, want the world
- I've read the book, I know who wins...and how
- Man's complete inability to govern himself
- Man is NOT just an animal

The conversation...

- Changes to a different topic – office politics or the  
stock market
- Downshifts from loud to soft tones...to exclude me

The unbeliever, in his rebellion, is fearful of what I say

v29-30 also to suffer for His sake:

“But until the Lord sets up His kingdom on earth...and as long as we have breath...Matt 16:24.”

The Cross is a one-way ticket to suffering and death...the way to victory paved by the Lord Himself.

Being a follower of Jesus Christ, being bought by His blood, includes suffering because the world and the prince of this world hate Jesus and all those who follow Him...

...suffering for His sake and for His name is a promise of God to the Christian

Matt 5:10-12

because of righteousness, because of Jesus...not because we do something stupid or weird or obnoxious

Acts 5:40-42

Can I say that? Can you? Only by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The individual believer and the Church always grow stronger in times of persecution, as the Body is refined and becomes more dependent upon the Lord

2 Cor 4:17

for example...Heb 11:24-29

so perspective is key!

v12, 20-21

Are you suffering for Christ? No? What is wrong with that picture?

Perhaps you are

- too comfortable
- complacent
- “defensive”
- lukewarm
- fearful

the disciple is not above his master (Matt 10:24)

Repent! Get right...get urgent...be bold

Don't go looking for persecution...if you are following Jesus, it will find you!

do not be an ostrich with its head in the sand when it comes to the obvious linkage of the 2 words “given” and “suffer”

2 Tim 2:12

2 Tim 3:12

Rom 8:18 sufferings of this life cannot compare to the glory

## Philippians 2

v1-4 If there be therefore any:

since we have...

1. Consolation (“comfort”) in Jesus
2. Comfort of God’s unconditional, sacrificial love (2 Cor 1:3)
3. fellowship (“communion”) of the Spirit
4. bowels (“sympathy, tenderness”)
5. mercy

...how do we express our faith practically day-to-day? How do we put into practice the things we believe?

v2 Fulfill ye:

since you are born-again, be Spirit-filled and Spirit-led...be like-minded like-mindedness, unity does not mean we are all the same.

We are all unique individuals, uniquely gifted and uniquely called to serve the Lord Who loves us individually and corporately.

But we are all one in Christ...e.g.

- cereal – but they are all my kids
  - Matthew – dry only
  - Kathryn – every piece dunked in milk, then sugared
  - Nathan – sugar...with a wet spoon
  - Hayley – only if chocolate
  - Christian – not at all
  - Brett – whatever
  - Brian – if sweetened
- Oreo cookies – all agree it is a great cookie
  - Twist and scrape
  - Dunk or no dunk
  - Bite or whole

Unique people become one in Christ thru a supernatural transformation (Rom 12:1-2) by the sovereign will of the all-powerful God as evidenced by

- getting along with each other!
- not striving within the Body of Christ (“church” is not a human competition, It is a family)
- living in unity ala Eph 4:3-6, Ch 1:27
- being single-minded (Jesus), not double-minded (Jesus + the world)  
James 1:8

When the Church is divided and squabbling, we make ourselves ineffective and un-salty in the world that needs Jesus Christ

v3 Let nothing be done through:  
 so contrary to the ways of the world!!!  
 Christianity is a counter-culture lifestyle

nothing = All less All  
 there are no exceptions in “nothing”  
 nothing said, done, thought...

strife = “contention”  
 the opposite of peace

vainglory = “conceit, empty glorying in one’s self” i.e. pride  
 seeking to draw attention to yourself...to win the admiration of  
 others  
 pure self-centeredness

but in lowliness in mind:  
 “humility, modesty, meekness”  
 the absence of pride (remember Prov 6:16-19 reading last week)  
 pure God-centeredness and others-centeredness

esteem other better than themselves:  
 Matt 22:37-40  
 Matt 16:24 is to die to self...put yourself dead last

natural man “keeps score” (values) with

- skin pigmentation
- money (economic/financial)
- material things
- power...

all those ways are faulty, divisive ways to keep score  
 God’s love is the only valid, unifying measure

v4 his own things:  
 “self” i.e. my own welfare  
 we are naturally inclined to think of ourselves...Amen?

but every man:  
 “Bear one another’s burdens” (Gal 6:2) vs “looking out for #1”  
 Supernaturally, we think of others...part of the work God started in Ch 1:6



v5-8 Let this mind be in you:  
“Think this way...”  
the ultimate example of that admonition from God is...God’s Son  
we need a complete make-over in our thought processes to make  
Matt 22:37-40 how we live our lives  
God’s Son performs that make-over so we can have His mindset

the mind of Christ:  
the emptying of self, as demonstrated to the max by Him...  
a willing decrease from the very Highest...via compounding  
downgrades...to the very lowest

from: He is God Almighty, Creator (v6)  
the pre-existent God  
everything God is, Jesus is  
Jesus did not think He was robbing God the Father of His  
glory by being equal with Him...Jesus is God also  
John 5:15-18  
Luke 5:20-21 Who can forgive sins but God alone?

Jesus emptied the expression of being God, not the nature  
and possession of being God  
i.e. Jesus did not cease to be God, He set aside the outward  
manifestation of His glory  
(Matt 17:1-8 gives us a glimpse)

to: no reputation – a nobody from nowhere, nothing “puffy”

- a newborn infant...utterly helpless and defenseless
- in a cave...with its other occupants...outside an obscure little town
- to very ordinary, non-descript “parents”
- announced to shepherds  
nothing to look at (Is 53:2, no form or comeliness...no beauty that we should desire him)
- grew up in a place that was considered “no good” (John 1:46)

likeness of man:  
John 1:14 the Word became flesh  
1 John 1:1-2 we saw, we handled the Word of life  
Jesus restricted His existence to a body like one of  
His creatures...the all-powerful God  
submitted Himself to human limitations

servant: no will, no rights, no possessions

(Ps 24:1 less Ps 24:1)

this includes time, which He also created  
of all that He has given us, I think He values  
time far more than things or money

Jesus did not initially come to rule and reign...but

- to seek and save the lost
- to heal the broken-hearted
- to preach Good News to the poor
- to comfort those who mourn
- to give sight to the blind
- to proclaim liberty to the captives  
(of sin)
- to preach that today is the acceptable day  
of salvation

death: and He came to die...to give His life a ransom for  
many

to suffer in our place even the humiliation of a  
public execution on the Cross

from almighty power and glory...to faithful, humble, submissive,  
obedient servant...even to the depths of Sheol via creature-  
inflicted torture and shame

taking human form meant to Jesus:

- humility
- submission
- obedience
- death

such was the Lamb of God...the ONLY acceptable sacrifice for  
our sin...Jesus willing became the scapegoat

we have life only because of His death as our substitute

we have life Only By Grace...

2 Cor 8:9 tho He was rich, for our sakes He became poor...  
that we might be rich

Heb 2:9 Jesus was made a little lower than the angels for the  
suffering of death...that He by the grace of  
God should taste death for every man

servant...humbled...obedient:

what does it mean to be a Christian?

to be like Jesus...a servant...humble...obedient

Paul could say Ch 1:20-21 because that was Jesus' perspective...

that is what Jesus did

The Holy Spirit thru Paul is exhorting us to downgrade ourselves...

from prideful self-centeredness to humble others-centeredness...

from independence to greater and great dependence

John 3:30

in John 13, Jesus taught us, as usual by example, that the path to glory starts on the knees of the lowest servant

This is what my attitude must be!

Meditate on the enormity of this voluntary act of humility and submission given Is 40:12

Satan would not do this...he would not lower himself to serve a "lesser being"...he would not decrease so Jesus would increase

instead he wanted to increase to be higher than God (Is 14:12-14)

Satan fell because he would not stoop to serve lowly mankind

Pride leads to a fall

to make matters worse, he tempted Adam and Eve to not do this...he infected man with his pride

we naturally do not lower ourselves...we want to increase and lord over others...

but to follow Jesus we must decrease ourselves...

Would I stoop to serve bacteria if God asked me to?

Let the mind of Christ be manifested in our lives...His mind directing our bodies

This is far greater than self-discipline or self-denial...it is abject denial of self

This is not natural, it is supernatural

v9-11 Wherefore God:

“Because this is so...”

from the very highest...to the very lowest...and back to the very highest

As a result of the humility and obedience of Jesus, God

- highly exalted Him...placing Him at His right hand, the position of power and authority  
Mark 16:19, Acts 2:33-34, Acts 7:56, Rom 8:34,  
Eph 1:20, Col 3:1, Heb 1:3, 13, Heb 10:12  
James 4:10
- has given Him a Name higher than every name, a name that demands and commands the bowing of every knee and the confession of every tongue  
Acts 4:12                    THE Name...singular and unique  
   There is no other name under heaven whereby we  
   must be saved  
Matt 1:20-21  
   Jesus (Gr.) = Joshua (Heb.)  
   Contraction of Jehovah Shuwa  
   “The LORD our salvation”  
   or  
   “Jehovah, our salvation”

in heaven: angels, saints that have “moved out”

on earth: believers, unbelievers

under the earth: demons, dead unbelievers in the  
bottomless pit

Is 45:15-23

Ps 22:27, 29

Ps 148:13            Praise the name...his glory is above all  
   heaven & earth

Is 52:13            my servant shall be exalted very high

Rev 5:13

Ps 8:1, 9

to the glory of God the Father:

Jesus came to do the Father’s will and to glorify His name.

The Lord’s obedience and humility did that and still does that

## ALTAR CALL

every knee, every tongue

this is not a simple majority or a consensus, this is absolute every

Imagine: how your heart races when a cop pulls you over for speeding...  
how a law-breaker's (if you reject Jesus you get Moses)  
heart will race when called before his Creator!

Rom 14:12 says every man will give an account of himself to God

You will bend you knee to Jesus, you will confess He is God and Savior.  
You have no choice in that matter.

But you do have a choice as to the conditions in which you do it - before  
Jesus your King or before Jesus your Judge.

If confess now, are given salvation and eternal life in God's Kingdom

If do not confess now, will be forced to on your way to the Lake of Fire

Last time...the mind of Christ...what it means to be a Christian

- servant...humbled...obedient  
Rehoboam refused to...and it was a monumental, tragic mistake...  
it divided the nation from that point forward (1 K 12:1-14, 19)  
an essential lesson for every minister...each of us!
- John 3:30  
ESPN Sports Century Friday night  
Don't sleep well when Monica gone...  
Subject: LT  
"I can help...I know the problem...and The Truth that will set him  
free."  
Fantasy of LT speaking of important person – me  
Sudden realization – vain glory! (v3)  
What is needed – to be invisible and all glory to Jesus  
Transformation...from seeking our selfish advantage in every situation...  
to selflessly seeking the advantage of others...for God's glory

v12 ye have always obeyed:

“Always be obedient, just as Jesus was always obedient.  
Don’t be a Christian for show, walking and talking like a follower  
of Jesus only when someone else is watching.  
Be a faithful child of God when no one is around!”

working out your own salvation:

work out = “to accomplish, to finish”

How do I “work out” that which I have been given only by grace?  
Did Jesus just start the work and I have to complete it or I’m lost?  
How does this reconcile with Ch 1:6?  
What “peace” is there in fear and trembling?

[portions of Hayley autobio: don’t listen for academic quality...  
listen for her heart ]

=====

Hayley Branch  
American Studies  
Aug. 19, 2002

### What Identifies Me

**People describe me as a “religious girl”.** I am very unique and interesting in so many different ways and have strong values and beliefs. I feel I am easy to get along with and love to help other people. **My personality with my beliefs makes up my outlook up on life. I am responsible and take the Bible seriously. In the Bible it is the way God says how to live. I am sure you are thinking, “she is not a normal teen”. Well, just like anyone else, life is a struggle for me, and in certain decisions, I struggle with making the right ones. Like hanging out with the right people or even dating the right guys. My belief reflects on the way I live, and just saying you believe in God is not enough. It is a personal relationship I have and living and walking the walk everyday.** I go to church four times a week and really like going, and learning more. **My dad is a Pastor so I do feel the pressure but without that I would be worse. In my family there are high expectations,** but of course I am not forced to believe its something I want to do. God makes my life easier and worth living, it is the answer to everything. Church is great way to make friends too. In my youth group we are very close and do a lot of fun stuff together. Its not like I don’t know what its like outside of the Christian world, and what they say about PK’s (pastors kids) are the rebellious ones. All that I have been through is definitely a learning experience. **Each person leaves a reputation, and I don’t want to be thought of in how much I have drank, or how many guys I have been with.** I do consider my life normal, but very busy. I work, do sports medicine, involved in church, and keep up my schoolwork. **I just know where my priorities lie in life.**

=====

my buttons are popping...

can you sense her victory? Can you also sense her frustration?  
What is she trying to do? "Work out" her salvation  
Can you relate?  
What does Hayley need to do? What do we need to do?  
Read the next verse!

v13 For it is God which worketh in you  
my desire to obey God...and my actually doing what the Lord wants me to  
do...is God's work in me!  
Who does the "working out?" God...just as the Holy Spirit said in Ch 1:6.  
v12 is a "proof text" for the salvation-by-works people.  
Only one problem...they stop one verse too soon!  
John 8:32 you shall know Truth and Truth shall set you free

Where does my desire to do good come from? God  
Ps 37:4 delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you  
the desires of your heart

Who directs my feet to walk by faith? God  
Prov 3:6 in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will  
direct your path  
Prov 16:9 a man's heart devises his way but the Lord directs  
his steps

Who gives me the ability to do good? God  
Acts 1:8 you shall receive power...Holy Spirit upon you...to  
be witnesses  
Phil 4:13 I can do all things thru Christ who strengthens me

work out = God will "accomplish, finish"...what He has worked in

- faithfulness
- fruitfulness
- obedience
- submission

"work out" your salvation...in the sense of "works" in James 2:14-26.

- Let your light shine, don't cover it with a bushel of hay  
Matt 5:15
- Bear fruit to be shared, not hoarded
- Display the evidence of your faith, not to boast in your good  
works but to boast in the Lord's work thru you.

We need to examine our lives...

- Are we being led by Him Who dwells in us?
- Are we lovingly, boldly witnessing of Jesus Christ in word and in deed?
- Are we using the gifts God has given us?
- Are we faithful to the calling He has appointed us?
- Are we sharing what He has invested in us?
- Are we using the resources He has given us for His glory?

Each day, all day, we must give ourselves over to His work

The Lord works in us to want to, and then to actually do, His will.  
...even when we are resistant or hesitant to His will

e.g. Jonah in Jonah Ch 3:1-2

everything begins the moment God decides to choose...when He chooses a man to do a chosen work according to His sovereign will

Jonah was chosen to take a message from God to a cruel, wicked, evil people...for 2 Peter 3:9

So...Jonah gets a 2nd chance

God did not compel Jonah to go against his will, but He did make Jonah willing to go!

Jonah put himself on the shelf...God made the shelf such that he was willing to jump off it and go God's way

example of a dynamic truth – God respects the free will choices of man...yet The Word of God never fails to take effect

If God chooses a man to do a specific work...it's going to happen

In Jonah we have a wonderful example of God's patience and longsuffering

God's patience with us is not inaction, it is active...working circumstances in order to advance man toward His will

He gives every man enough time...in refining circumstances...to choose to follow His will

Fear and trembling (v12):

- Fear...follow Christ in reverence...in awe...in obedience  
Prov 1:7 the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge  
Revere God's Word so we do not engage in destructive behaviors
- and trembling  
to be occupying with a sense of urgency for the Lord is coming soon...the fields are white with harvest but the harvesters are few (John 4:35, Matt 9:37)

Ex. when there should have been fear and trembling – Northridge earthquake...95% of USA porno industry was wrecked!



v14 Do all things without:  
a practical application of v12-13  
complaining and fighting are in our hearts...not in the heart of God

God does not like

- murmuring, which is a sign of apostasy...unbelief
- fighting, which is a sign of self-will and rebellion...  
disobedience

God's kids need not complain and fight

- God is in absolute control (even tho it seems like the world is spinning out of control)...we are MORE THAN conquerors!  
Rom 8:37-39
- Our "mood" should reflect Jesus and the victory He has given us, not the gloom and desperation of a lost world.  
Our mood is to transcend our circumstances

Jesus said, "If you love me, do what I command."

Now the Holy Spirit thru Paul exhorts to not only do, but to do without complaining and arguing

Parents of teenagers who have had them complain and/or argue with you about something you asked them to do, remember how irritating and infuriating that is?

Now, let's try that scene with you as the teenager and God as the Parent...

A great example of working out...exercising...what God has worked in

v15-16a That ye may be blameless and harmless:  
blameless: “beyond reproach”  
harmless: “innocent”

The Holy Spirit is exhorting us to have the right attitude...the mind of  
Christ...as we walk in this strange land  
Why?

being lights in the world:

God puts us on display like a jeweler puts diamonds on black velvet...so  
we shine!

We are bright reflections of His Light against the dark backdrop of this  
evil and corrupt world

during WW II when Nazi Germany was bombing London unmercifully,  
Churchill mandated widespread blackouts...so evil would not be  
guided to life by lights

They discovered that the lighting of a match could be seen from 11 miles

Such is the contrast between light and darkness...

just think of the spiritual impact we can have when we, with the mind of  
Christ

- let Christ live in us (Ch 1:21)
- let His Light shine!
- Speak His name
- Hold forth the Word of Life...properly using our Sword  
2 Tim 2:15 rightly dividing the Word of Truth

v16b that I may rejoice...not...labored in vain:

“I have given you the whole counsel of God (ala Acts 20:27).

Now use the Sword (Heb 4:12) effectively that my work with you  
will not be for nought...but for the great glory of Jesus Christ.”

v17-18 if I be offered upon:

“If I am persecuted, even killed, for the work of the ministry, PTL!

I rejoice that I was able to minister to you and fellowship with  
you!”

Acts 5:40-42...because they had the mind of Christ

“And if I am killed for my faith in Jesus Christ, rejoice with me!”

Ch 1:21

It is natural to mourn when a loved one dies.

Do not deny your sorrow

But, if we stop and think about the “moving out” of this container  
by a child of God, I cannot possibly be mourning for  
them...for they are with the Lord!

I am mourning for myself...left behind

- v19 I trust in the Lord to send Timothy  
 Paul is far more concerned with their spiritual health and welfare than his physical health and welfare.  
 And regardless of what may happen to Paul, he will be encouraged if they are spiritually strong and faithful
- v20 I have no man like-minded:  
 “There is no one with me but my son in the faith who will genuinely, selflessly care for your spiritual well being and growth.”
- Paul, undoubtedly would love to have Timothy by his side to minister to him.  
 But Paul thinks first of God’s will, not his own...he thinks first of serving others before being served himself.
- v21 For all seek their own:  
 a sad...undeniable...testimony of man
- Man, the fallen image of God, is naturally selfish  
 People think first of their own interests...the creature cares more about himself than he does the Creator.
- In order to follow Jesus, we need a supernatural touch...we need God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves
- salvation...then...
  - walking with Christ with the mind of Christ
  - servant...humble...obedient
- v22 the proof of him:  
 “But Timothy is not selfish! He has proven to be trustworthy, faithful, obedient, selfless...he has the mind of Christ.”
- v23-24 I hope to send presently...that I also myself shall come:  
 “I’ll send him to you as soon as my case is heard by the Emperor. I expect to follow Timothy out there post haste.”

- v25-27 I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus...your messenger:  
the character and ministry of Epaphroditus
- brother in the Lord
  - co-worker in Christ's work of seeking and saving the lost
  - "roomie" in Paul's foxhole
  - caregiver (Gal 6:2)
  - the pastor of the church at Philippi
  - intensely compassionate and sensitive to the needs of others
  - a highly effective, behind-the-scenes aspect of Paul's ministry

he got sick...and the Lord healed him  
now he is homesick and wants to go home

- v28 that I may be:  
"I'll be relieved when he gets there safely."

when they are joyful, Paul is joyful.  
When they are distressed, Paul is distressed

- v29 hold such in reputation:  
"He is coming, he will be blessed and so will you. Receive him with  
delight and hold him dearly and worthy of honor."

- v30 he was nigh unto death:  
the mind of Christ was seen in the life of Epaphroditus

would I do as Epaphroditus...would I offer my life to do God's work?  
Matt 10:39 he that finds his life shall lose it, he that loses his  
life for My sake shall find it

## Philippians 3

Theme: Count as loss everything in the world, press on to things of Home

Commands to obey:

- Rejoice in the Lord (v1)
- Beware of false teachers (v2)
- Put no confidence in the flesh (v3)
- Count the things of the world as loss for Jesus (v7-8)
- Forget the past, reach for the future (v13-14)

v1 Rejoice in the Lord:

remember, this is written in prison

we can rejoice in all of our circumstances...if we look on Jesus rather than  
on our circumstances

He is bigger and greater than any problem we could ever face

Write the same things:

Paul taught them about the poison of the Judaizers while he was with  
them...now he is writing to them about those same things. Why?

The Philippians...and we...need to be reminded of even the basic truths

- God is on the throne
- God is in complete control
- I need not fear
- I am more than a conqueror

By writing these things down, they can be reminded long after Paul  
“moves out” of this tabernacle

2 Peter 1:12-15

warnings of danger are not grievous, they are for our safety

Does anybody get upset with “High Voltage” warnings on electric  
utility equipment in your side yard?

Terror Alert warnings are for our safety, not our inconvenience

v2      Beware:

Paul has just written that he was sending their pastor home and they should receive him with rejoicing.

Epaphroditus was a man of God, a servant of the Lord, a believer with the mind of Christ.

Using this man as a contrast, Paul warns this church about the false teachers that “dogged” him wherever he went – the Judaizers... who fought to put born again believers under a legal relationship with God rather than the loving relationship in which they flourished

Paul minces no words so as to leave no doubt about the poison they were dispensing

- Dogs (wild, scavenging dogs ala coyotes)  
Dangerous, always attacking the gospel and those who preach it
- Evil (depraved and worthless)
- concision (“mutilation”, mutilators of the body)

We, too, must beware of

- Any means of salvation that brings something else alongside Jesus
- Any teaching that leaves you feeling like a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> class Christian (e.g. “You must be baptized in this Church...”)
- Any lie that would deceive us or take our eyes off of Jesus (the Friendly Note”)

Specifically, Paul is referring to the Judaizers and their legal baggage  
Biblical Christianity is not about my perfected performance...it is all about a perfected relationship

receive the true Gospel from the Word of God – God’s grace, love, faithfulness – and it will draw you to holiness and liberty  
reject all false gospels, which drive you to condemnation and bondage

the Holy Spirit is warning us because we so easily slide into legalism and condemnation

v3 worship God in spirit:

born-again Christians:

1. worship God in Spirit (John 4:24)
2. rejoice in Christ Jesus (trust in what He has done on our behalf)
3. do not trust in their flesh...for circumcision is
  - of the heart
    - Deut 10:16   circumcise the foreskin of your heart  
and be no more stiff-necked
    - Deut 30:1-6   a surgery performed by God,  
required for us to love God
    - Rom 2:27-28   it is of the heart and the spirit
  - a spiritual condition, not a physical condition

Christianity is not a religious experience...it is a relationship with the Living God

v4-6 no confidence in the flesh:

if the flesh counted for something, Saul of Tarsus would have been home-free!

Saul's "bragging rights" were greater than any Judaizer!

- Circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day...the covenant day (Gen 17:12), not in say the 34<sup>th</sup> year
- Tribe of Benjamin...from Jacob's favorite wife, the only tribe to stick with Judah, and a "pureblood"...a Hebrew of 2 Hebrew parents
- In the Law (Jewish culture)...a Pharisee, the strictest sect of Judaism
- Zealous...persecuted the Church, cutting off their lives not just their foreskins
- Righteous by the Law...blameless
- From Tarsus...a very wealthy city from very wealthy parents

But human pedigrees...even Paul's...are worthless in God's eyes!

Works-based gospels are based on the performance of man to achieve the acceptance of God.

But God's standard of acceptability is perfection (Matt 5:48, James 2:10). No person would dare claim to be perfect...so every person who places his faith in his own performance will lose.

We must make sure we are comparing ourselves and our performance to God's standards and not our own (each other)

We rejoice in Jesus Christ and what He has done because we have learned to have no confidence in our flesh (circumcision...water baptism)

Rom 7:18, 24-25   in my flesh is no good thing...who can deliver me?

v7 were gain...counted loss:  
“All the things that were profitable in my life “BC” (v4-6) were baggage  
in my relationship with Jesus.  
My passions for those things were barriers against an intimate  
relationship with God.  
Which makes everything the world has to offer me...worthless.”  
John 2:15-17  
James 4:4 friendship with the world is hostility toward God

“My bragging rights...were my shame.  
My assets...were my liabilities...I was spiritually bankrupt.  
My ‘punched ticket’...was my baggage holding me back.”

man and all his measures of success fall short of the glory of God  
The things of the world and the flesh produce pride...not the humility of  
an obedient servant...not the mid of Christ

v8 all things but loss...do count them but dung:  
“All those thing I bragged about stink! All those things are a detriment  
when it comes to a personal, living relationship with the Lord Jesus  
Christ. I am counting...still counting...them as refuse.”

what inhibits an intimate relationship with Jesus?  
A passion for ALL things not of Him.  
All worldly things (possessions, reputations, pedigrees, ambitions,  
pleasures, etc) are dung compared to a relationship with Jesus  
Don't place high value in things that have no eternal value.  
May our grip on the things of the world not hold us back from  
being useful in God's hands  
drop the baggage...reach for Jesus

and religion is eternally worthless, even deadly  
Paul threw away the legal relationship he had with God in favor of a  
loving relationship being offered in Christ Jesus...at a time when  
he was a much respected, even admired, member of the Jewish  
community

Our relationship with God is a present tense thing  
His name is “I AM”, not “I WAS”  
It is a real time video, not a “Kodak moment”  
So don't glory in what the Lord did for you back then...but in what He is  
doing right now!  
Tony Avila and Dolores help on Thursday nights



v9 not having my own righteousness:  
my righteousness...my ability to be perfect...= Is 64:6  
those things in v5-6 have nothing to do with salvation

the Law justified no man but condemns every man  
flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God  
man is “just as if it never happened” before God ONLY by faith in His  
Promised Messiah and His righteousness  
Gen 15:6  
Gal 3:22-26  
Heb 11:6

God has given every man a measure of faith (even that is not ours!)  
the question is, where do you put your faith – in yourself or in Jesus?  
how can we improve upon the righteousness of Christ given to us by the  
Father?

We can't! So don't try.  
Put your complete faith and trust in Him

Hab 2:4

Paul's Trilogy

1. The just (Rom 1:17)
2. shall live (Gal 3:11)
3. by faith (Heb 10:38)

v10 that I may know him:

The Holy Spirit wants us all to know by personal experience Jesus

- His Person
- His presence
- His power in my life
- His power over death
- His working in me (Ch 2:13)
- His suffering (emotionally – humiliation, rejection, mocked;  
physically – in death)...in order to be worthy of eternal life

Is my desire the same as Paul's?

To be worthy of eternal life? Yes!

To suffer for Jesus? Jack Benny: “This is a stick up!”

2 Cor 11:22-27 chronicle just how willing Paul was to share in the Lord's  
suffering...but, in reality, Paul does not even approach the  
suffering of Christ Who suffered the wrath of the Father for our  
sin...how much less does our suffering...

but to know his resurrection, I must know His suffering!!!

Matt 5:10-12

This can only be a supernatural desire...not worldly thinking!

v11 might attain:  
a confident expectation, not a wishful wondering, of the Ultimate Reward Paul knew he attained...he just didn't know HOW or WHEN it was going to happen

our worthiness of the Ultimate Reward is Jesus Christ and Him crucified...NOT the worldly things like those of v4-6

cling to Jesus, not to anything this world has to offer.  
Acts 20:18-19a, 22-24

v12 already attained...perfect:

"I will never

- attain the resurrection of the dead by my own effort.
- 'arrive'
- be complete this side of the kingdom of God.
- be fully mature in the Lord.

I can only 'take eagerly' what is offered to me by Jesus Christ, Who has 'taken me eagerly'".

Quite a statement by this Hebrew of Hebrews blameless in the Law!

Jesus personally appeared to Paul on multiple occasions...the Holy Spirit worked many miracles thru Paul...yet Paul realizes:

- the more he knows Jesus, the more there is to know
- the closer he gets to Jesus, the bigger Jesus gets
- the more he knows himself, the more wonderful Jesus becomes
- the more he knows, the less he knows

"I have not yet captured that for which I have been captured.

I still don't know why Jesus loves me...Why me?"

We can all relate to Paul!

Why would God offer up His Son...for me?

What is it about me that God would....nothing. It's not about me.

It is all about God. He loves me because

- He is love
- He is God

When the Lord captured me, He had a plan and a purpose for my life

What about you...why did the Lord save you?

He has a plan and a purpose for your life!

Do you know what that is?

Learning and accomplishing His purpose for your life should be the passion of your life!

v13 count not myself apprehended:

“I have not yet completed His purpose for my life...”

How does Paul know that?

Otherwise he would not be there!

God loves us too much to leave us here in this corrupt world any longer than absolutely necessary!

So the passion of our lives should be that His purpose for my life be accomplished...so we can be with Him!”

The words I long to hear more than any others: “Well done, good and faithful servant!”

Matt 25:21

forgetting...reaching:

“One thing I have learned – the things behind me on this earth are gone... so I reach ahead to the eternal things of the kingdom of God.”

forgetting...not just a one-time event, it is something I must do every day when I look back, what do I remember? My failures

satan uses that to condemn me

Condemnation rules our past...don't live there says I AM

Instead, continually reach forth...every day

both are choices I must make every day...forgetting and reaching

given 2 Cor 5:17, forget the past and press forward in Christ

I cannot perfect my faith, my walk, or anything else about me, only Jesus can.

I must persist and persevere in my reaching for Him.

v14 I press toward the mark for the prize  
mark: “target” (resurrection of the dead, the Ultimate Reward, v7-11)  
press: “pursue”  
just like the runner and the final kick toward the finish line, our  
heart yearns to go home and races to get there  
calling: “invitation”  
“Come, just as you are. Come believe, come receive, come and  
live forever.”

we cannot

- plow (Luke 9:59-62)
- run fast...run straight...or run safely
- drive a car

when we are looking back

“press” is continually in the present tense  
We live in the present, not the past  
Lamenting past mistakes is a clever tactic of the enemy...because it is a  
consuming, destructive, condemning exercise.  
Satan would have us looking over our shoulders in guilt at all our  
failures...when God has forgiven and forgotten all our failures

contrary to what the world tells me, my life is not a product of my past...  
my life is my next step toward my future, which is a glorious hope  
guaranteed by Jesus Christ  
my past is hopeless...my future is glorious  
my “looking back” interferes with my present and distorts the view of my  
future...

the past is gone, never to be retrieved and re-lived...  
life does not have an “Undo” key...but...  
The Life has a “Recreate” key  
The past is baggage! So drop it! Look forward!

We remember things we need to forget and we forget things we need to  
remember  
e.g. I put things in places so I won’t lose them...and then forget  
where I put them...so I lose them!

What do I need to forget?

- The failures in my past

What do I need to remember?

- The Cross...where I was delivered from my past  
“Do this in remembrance of Me...”
- My future...which has been given to me by Jesus  
Titus 2:11-14

v15 as many as be perfect:  
perfect: “spiritually mature”

“If you are spiritually mature, think this way. If you do not understand this forgetting and reaching and pressing, God will reveal it to you.”

Just as Paul said he was not fully mature (v12) and still learning about Jesus and His love and grace, so are all of us  
As we walk with the Lord, our understanding of the spiritual truths in the Word of God increases

“Just as physical growth takes many years and much struggle, spiritual maturity comes hard as well. It takes time to grow, time to learn and mature. And the process isn’t as simple in reality as it appears on paper.”

Penelope Stokes in *Grace under Pressure*

The point: there are no shortcuts to spiritual maturity.

The maturation process is

- facilitated by faith...surrender in the midst of trials
- accomplished by the disciplined study of God’s Word, the entire counsel of God
- the work of the Potter with His vessel...let Him work!  
He will not be rushed.

v16 attained:

“Those of us who are letting the Lord do His work, we must continue to

- be humble
- surrender our will
- obey the Lord
- put feet to our faith.”

With thinking like that, we will grow in Christ.

v17 be followers together of me:

“Imitate me and consider those who also walk this way.

We are examples...models...patterns...of a walk with Jesus!”

The Christian walk is:

- striving to be a nobody (Ch 2:5-8)...while religious people and social Christians strive to be somebody
- learning from the saints that have gone before us
- learning from the more mature Christians around us  
Christianity is not a seniority system...not how long Jesus has been your Lord...but how yielded is your life to Him
- being ever mindful that we are being watched and living a life that honors our Lord  
If it cannot be observed...if it's in the closet...it's not a Christian life
- being disciplined (“learner”)...and discipling
- a life of victory...thru surrender

v18 enemies of the cross of Christ:

“Many people claim to be Christians...but they do not walk like Jesus.”

speaking of the false teachers, Paul refers again to the Judaizers and to them as enemies of the Cross

at the Cross, God paid the cost for everything

when I come to the Cross, I bear no cost...I add nothing to the transaction

Any thing or anyone who seeks to step between me and Jesus and sell me part of the cost is an enemy of the Cross

Paul repeatedly raises this issue...because we, in our pride, easily lapse into legalism

“I am a good Christian and I think this and do this. If that person were a good Christian they would think and do the same.”

the delicate line (needing God's wisdom) is that of doctrine vs personal conviction

- Any doctrine of personal gain (v5-8) vs personal sacrifice is an enemy of the cross
- personal conviction is the Holy Spirit working in the life of an individual believer

on doctrine, be uncompromising...for Truth is absolute

on conviction, be gracious...for the Potter works us all differently

Satan is an enemy of the Cross. He knows “X marks the spot” of his defeat.

So he works tirelessly against the necessity...and the sufficiency...of the Cross

- Eve (Gen 3)
- Jesus (Matt 4)
- us

religious people are deceived by the enemy, who has sold them on the insufficiency of the Cross and of the blood of God Himself

because of the Cross, men reject God’s way...saved by grace thru faith, a gift, not of works so no man can boast

the religious heart breaks Paul’s heart...because he had one!

My heart breaks whenever

- I am at the Western Wailing Wall
- I speak with a Mormon...a JW...anyone with good intentions trying to make themselves acceptable to God by their own good works

all of them are deceived by satan

v19 end is destruction, whose God is their belly:

Our hearts must break for the religious if we are to reach out to them and keep them from self-destruction.

false teachers, and those that follow them, are on a wide road to hell

Matt 7:13-14

And this also calls for us to continually examine our own hearts...

1. On what do you meditate...The Word of God...or how to “get ahead” in this world?
2. How do you see every situation...
  - what you can get out of it...or...
  - how you can help someone else?
3. Do you want material things or spiritual things to abound in your life?
  - Things do not make life worth living...they break, wear out, rust, get stolen, become boring
  - A career does not make life worth living...on the death bed it means nothing
  - Physical pleasures do not make life worth living...they are only “instant-aneous”...and insatiable
  - Jesus makes life worth living...a personal relationship with God

in Is 38, Hezekiah did not desire to leave his temporary address and go to his eternal address (Phil 1:21-23) and the consequences for this “short-sighted” choice were devastating

- shows off the national wealth to Babylonian ambassadors... who will come back later with many thousands of their friends (Ch 39)
- a son named Manassah is born, the most evil king Judah ever had

Hezekiah just could not let go of the things of the world...at such a terrible cost

but Jesus Christ makes life wonderful

Is 9:6            For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.  
                         And the government shall be upon His shoulder  
                         And His name shall be called  
                         Wonderful  
                         Counsellor  
                         The mighty God  
                         The everlasting Father  
                         The Prince of Peace

v20    our conversation is in heaven:

Born-again believers, those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and have a personal heart-level relationship with Him, have dual citizenships

- an eternal one in heaven
- a temporary “Green Card” in this world

look: continuously and expectantly

v14 as opposed to v18-19

- my home is heaven and my Savior is from there.
- I am just an ambassador of Christ’s here.

We look for Jesus not wishing Him to come but knowing that He is coming



v21 who shall change our vile body:

vile body: regardless of how many hours we spend at the gym...  
the gym is where you work on your carcass

change: “transform” as a caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly  
Change...fashion

The same Gr. words as “form...fashion” in Ch 2:7-8

Power to subdue all things...takes us back to Ch 2:9-11

Luke 17:33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it  
and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it  
the best trade you will ever make!

- Forgetting and reaching
- Pressing toward
- Walking like Jesus Christ

1 Peter 1:1-4

What a glorious day that will be! It is a certainty!  
Why Paul wrote Ch 1:20-23

## Philippians 4

v1 Therefore:

“Since all those things I just mentioned are true...”

- human pedigrees...human performance...are worth nothing
- everything the world has to offer is like dung compared to the riches we have in Christ Jesus
- God loves us...to the very max when we deserve absolutely nothing (Life is Not Fair)
- The past is baggage that needs to be dropped as we reach forward to Jesus
- Our citizenship is in heaven...we are in actuality strangers in this land
- Jesus is coming soon and He is going to give us a glorified body when He comes....

dearly beloved and longed for...dearly beloved  
to Paul, the Philippians are

1. brethren
2. dearly beloved (twice)
3. longed for
4. his joy
5. his crown

he intimately communicates his love for them and his joy in their relationship

the grammar indicates feelings for individual vs corporate Body

since all Scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit...this reflects God's feelings toward me...and you

Jer 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end

Ps 40:5 Many, O LORD my God, *are* thy wonderful works *which* thou hast done, and thy thoughts *which are* to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: *if* I would declare and speak *of them*, they are more than can be numbered

Ps 139:17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

Paul not only has the mind of Christ he has the heart of God

v2 I beseech Euodias and Syntyche...same mind in the Lord  
Two women who fellowshiped at this church at Philippi, and who seem to have been at variance with either

- each other and it became a very difficult task to reconcile...or
- the church, perhaps having been drawn aside by the false teachers from the simplicity of the Gospel

in either event, a reconciliation is needed and Paul is urging for unity.  
“Get along. Set aside your differences. Focus on the unity we have in Jesus Christ.”  
“Do what I wrote in Ch 2:14-15 and demonstrate the mind of Christ.”

The bummer about this...they seemingly cannot identify the real enemy!  
These Christian sisters are getting ripped off!

v3 I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women  
“Our sisters are getting ripped off. I beseech that someone, anyone with a heart for the Lord, help them resolve this issue.”  
yokefellow: “colleague”, anyone who co-labored alongside Paul

Matt 11:28-30 come all who labor and are heavy laden, take my yoke and learn of me

We are yokefellows...we are all in this work of the Lord together  
Therefore, we help (“to clasp onto, to seize”) each other  
we all need help sometime...we need each other...none of us are alone or can go it alone

Don't let satan, thru your pride, rip you off of the help that is all around you

they are having differences...but their salvation is not questioned...their names are in the Book of Life.

But it's time for Gal 6:1-2 and the ministry of reconciliation  
at sometime or another, we need to help a Christian brother/sister, to get a hold of and set them straight, being ripped off  
key: that it is done tenderly in love, not harshly in condemnation

with the dispute between 2 Christian sisters as a springboard, Paul gives us some practical exhortations...listen carefully

v4 Rejoice in the Lord always:  
Exhortation #1

Paul wrote this from a Roman prison...so...is rejoicing...

- dependent upon circumstances? No
- a part-time job, a Sunday morning only thing? No

Rejoice always? But I don't always feel like it.

Joy is a choice...between self-centeredness and God-centeredness

Joy is a function of focus...my circumstances or my Lord

Rejoice in our suffering, too? Yes

In this fallen world, all men suffer...none escape

But with God's peace the believer can we rejoice in the midst of suffering

Christ does not take us out of this suffering world (yet), He leads us thru it.

John 14:1, 27 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also **in me**...Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that **in me** ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

we cannot always rejoice in our circumstances...but we can always rejoice in the Lord!

Rom 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Of all the people in the world, born-again believers should be the most joyful...because we have the most to rejoice in!

we alone have the choice...to keep our eyes on the King of kings and the Lord of lords who is bigger than any circumstance we face...

it's all a matter of faith

v5 Let your moderation be known to all men:  
Exhortation #2

moderation = “gentleness, mercy, patience”  
does not mean a measure of consumption  
context: a life yielded to God and to others

The Lord is at hand:

- be gracious and gentle with each other
- be generous with your forgiveness
- keep your priorities in line with the Lord’s
- Keep God’s perspective

“Many things we think are so important are meaningless in the light of  
Jesus’ Christ imminent return....  
So let’s not over-react...we don’t have time for petty differences.”

The Lord is at hand...is this an important doctrine? A practical doctrine?  
Paul was in Thessalonica for only three weeks, planting a church,  
before he was run out of town  
to this church he wrote 2 letters to remind them of things he had  
taught them while he was there...including

- the Rapture...the snatching away of the Body of Christ  
before the wrath of God falls on an unbelieving  
world
- the “Antichrist”

God intended us to live in a constant state of expectancy of the immediate  
return of Jesus...

1. gives us a sense of urgency to share the Gospel
2. sets our priorities on the things of the Spirit rather than on the  
material things of the world
3. causes us to lead lives of purity...without compromise...  
impervious to ridicule...so we are not ashamed when Jesus  
comes for us

every generation has rightly believed they were the last generation before  
the return of Jesus Christ...but no other generation has lived when

- Israel was a nation
- Jerusalem was their capital
- The Roman Empire is re-emerging...etc

Live like you expect Jesus to come back TODAY!

The time of day dictates our behavior...the day is about done  
What are you doing with your most valuable commodity...time?  
Are you focused on...things seen...or on things not seen?

v6a Be careful for nothing:

Exhortation #3: Do not worry about anything

do not worry (be anxious)...

why does the Holy Spirit tell us to stop worrying?

Because we ARE right now or WILL BE very soon!

...about anything

Nothing: All less All...leaving nothing

Condemnation rules our past...don't live there says I AM

Worry rules our future...don't live there says I AM

we worry about things in the future, not in the past or in the present

We get bound up in "What if"s that never happen.

Talk about wasted energy!

Anxiety chokes out the Word of God in our hearts and minds

Matt 13:7 the Seed that falls among the thorns, choking out anxiety and worry stand opposed to faith...are fear in disguise

when we worry, we think our circumstances are bigger than our God

rather, we need to think on our God who is bigger than our circumstances

Matt 6:25-34

Matt 10:29-31

1 Peter 5:6-7 worry-free life requires humility

We hold onto things in the past...and feel condemned

We borrow things from the future...and worry

Drop all of that and cling to Jesus...today

v6b But in everything by prayer...known unto God:  
instead of worrying, pray!  
Worry never solves any problem...it is never gives the answer you need.  
God has all the answers  
Prayer is the answer to worry...prayer leads us to the answers of God

Pray about...

- everything  
All less nothing...leaving All  
Take everything to the Lord
- to Him who knows everything!  
Peace, joy, contentment are choices realized thru prayer

Pray

- like Nehemiah...
- like David (in the Psalms)...
- like Paul...
- with the mind of Christ and the heart of God

Prayer is not getting my will done in heaven, it is God's will being done on earth

Prayer starts in the heart of God...flows to the heart of man...is offered back to the heart of God...and is done

Ps 37:4-5 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass.

A note about prayer...

Prayer is the answer to anxiety, it is not meant to be a source of anxiety!

“My prayer life should be so much better!!!”

Note: that will always be true

“I need to pray this way...at these times...and I'm not!!!”

Relax!

- Prayer is not a formula or a schedule
- It is running to embrace Dad!
- It is born out of love (Neh's prayer was one of love)...not duty
- It is intimate action...not legal action

v7 the peace of God...shall keep  
our circumstances are not always pleasant...in fact we are promised to  
have tribulation and suffering in this world  
but Jesus promised to never leave us nor forsake us, even to the end of the  
age  
so, in whatever the circumstance, the Lord WILL take care of us...  
He WILL provide for us  
And FAITH in the promises of God brings peace of mind

Peace...a distinctive mark of a born-again believer  
since the peace of God surpasses understanding, it involves faith  
peace and worry cannot co-exist  
one is a manifestation of faith in God...the other of the absence of  
faith in God

So don't worry, pray. By faith, commit all things to the Lord.  
In return, He gives us peace that cannot be understood by natural man

nothing is as peaceful as prayer!  
If we pray, God says He will give us His peace  
the peace of God is the most beautiful experience on this earth...it is more  
valuable than knowledge  
thru prayer I come to the place where I can say, "I don't know why these  
things are happening, but I do know Who is in control!"

"Peace is not dependant on the ending of the storm. It is determined by  
our awareness of the presence of Jesus Christ. He is our comfort.  
And no storm can drive away His presence."  
Charles Stanley

keep:

as a guard in a guardhouse to protect against invaders and thieves

if I take everything in prayer to God, He will guard my heart and my mind  
in Jesus

2 Thes 3:16 Lord of peace will give you peace, always, by all means

Ps 29:11 The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD  
will bless his people with peace.

Is 26:3 Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is* stayed  
(to lean on, to hold onto)*on thee*: because he trusteth in  
thee.

Satan is a thief...Jesus is the Prince of Peace who protects our hearts and  
our minds, the two things Satan wishes to destroy.



v8      whatsoever things:  
            Exhortation #4

our thought life is vital to our walk with the Lord  
sin starts in our mind, sprouts in our hearts  
            our minds also need God's touch

Rom 12:1-2    I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,  
                    that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,  
                    acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.  
                    And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed  
                    by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is*  
                    that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

the cure for bitterness...anger...strife...worry...is to think about God and  
                    His love for us.  
His love transcends circumstances.

So think upon the things of God...for only God is:

1. true ("not concealing", nothing hidden)  
            Matt 22:16, John 3:33, John 8:14-17
2. honest (honorable")
3. just ("equitable, right")  
            Matt 13:49, Matt 27:19-24, John 5:30, Acts 3:14, Acts 7:52
4. pure ("clean, innocent")  
            1 Tim 5:22, James 3:17, 1 John 3:3, Prov 15:26
5. lovely ("friendly towards")
6. good report ("well spoken of, reputable")
7. virtue ("valor, excellence")  
            2 Peter 1:3-5
8. praise (commendable")  
            Rom 2:29, 1 Cor 4:5, Eph 1:6, 14-14, Phil 1:11, 1 Peter 1:7

Thinking is a choice!

- To think or not to think
- To think right or to think evil

Animals are programmed (migratory animals on land sea, air) but man  
was given choice

right thinking determines right behavior ...and vice versa!

            If we think right we will act right...then we will feel right  
Ps 19:7-12

this cannot be done sitting front of the TV...or inside a movie theatre.  
This CAN be done only in the Word of God

v9 learned and received...heard and seen in me...do:  
“Catch all” Exhortation #5: “Do!”

all that Paul taught and modeled for the Philippian church they...and we...  
are to do

1. learned and received  
learn: understood  
receive: “associated with oneself” i.e. made it ours
2. heard and seen  
spoken  
modeled

“Following Jesus” is

1. learned
2. received
3. heard
4. seen
5. done

Paul taught and modeled the Gospel to the Philippians...and my calling  
here in Ahwatukee...heavy!

Because the toughest word in the Bible: “do”

requires: humility...surrender...submission...dying to self  
doing what the Word of God says is obeying the will of God...now  
When we obey

- we know “Immanuel...God with us”  
we know Jesus by obeying Him
- We have the peace of God  
the peace of God is linked with our obedience to the God of  
peace...the God of v6-7...as we James 1:22

Tragically, unbelievers...who do not obey God...go thru the pain of life  
alone...without God

v10 your care of me has flourished again:

“I rejoice that your support for me has blossomed again. I know you have  
always cared for me and wanted to support me, but there have been  
times when you could not.”

flourished: “revived:

like trees in the winter that look dead but flourish/blossom in the  
springtime

the church at Philipi loved Paul and faithfully provided for his needs  
whenever they could

v11 I have learned...to be content:

contentment is learned...and it is a choice

as we learn about God as revealed in His Word, we choose

- joy (v4)
- peace (v6-7)
- how to think (v8)
- how to live a life that transcends our circumstances (v9)
- contentment

contentment is a very scarce commodity in a community like Ahwatukee  
that exudes the spiritual opposites of covetousness and materialism  
Covetousness is a very oppressive burden and insatiable taskmaster.

1 Tim 6:6-12

Eccl 5:10-15

Job 1:21 Naked I came, and naked shall I return

When we truly grasp Ps 24:1 and that we are just caretakers of someone  
else's stuff, we get the freedom of owning nothing, regardless of  
how many material things the Lord has entrusted to us.

Whether you struggling to live paycheck to paycheck...or you never do  
that...money is not the issue...learning to depend upon the Lord is  
the issue to be learned

### Gen 13

v1-9 Abraham and Lot...after coming out of Egypt with great wealth  
and settling back in the land God promised him, Abraham  
demonstrated that his contentment was in the Lord.

In spite of his wealth, Abraham was content to live in a tent and  
commune with God.

v10-11 But Lot had a taste of Egypt and liked it!

He wanted more of what the world had to offer.

When given a choice by Abraham, he lifted his eyes and beheld  
what the world had to offer...and he was ensnared

v12-16 Abraham did not lift his eyes until...post-Lot, the Lord instructs  
him to look up

the Lord finally has Abraham as He called him – alone...no father,  
no nephew...and He directs his eyes not to this world but to  
the promises of eternity

contentment is not

- Cash flow...can change quickly
- Creature comfort...changes
- what you have...here today gone tomorrow

contentment is

- Who you have...NEVER changes
- An inward condition...established and protected by God
- Learned...a choice to let go of the things of the world

Parents, what are you teaching your kids: contentment or discontentment?

The world is teaching them discontentment

God, thru a Godly parent, will teach them contentment

v12 I know how to:

Paul learned...by firsthand, personal experience...how to:

- be humble
- have an exceeding abundance
- have more than enough food
- have no food
- have every need met in overflowing measure
- go completely without

in every circumstance and in everything

Paul learned contentment...with whatever God provided...via his many trials...as his faith was perfected (James 1:2-4)

we can learn by seeing...we learn more by doing (v6)

trials are “teaching moments” for us to learn by doing that which we have seen

in every circumstance God is teaching us something wonderful.

Be an Honors student!

Our life is in God’s hands...when we give our lives over to the Prince of Peace we learn contentment as we learn to trust in His faithfulness

Note: Where does the Health and Wealth Prosperity doctrine fit in this?

v13 I can do all things through Christ, which strengthens me:  
The toughest word in the Bible...“do”...is possible by the strength of  
Jesus  
John 15:5

Doing God’s work is not a function of my strength but a function of the  
Lord’s strength in me empowering me  
I can do nothing without Him, I can do anything with Him, in accordance  
with His will

Zech 4:6 Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit,  
saith the LORD of hosts.

1 Sam 2:9 for by strength shall no man prevail.

Eph 6:10 be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Jesus gives me strength to be

1. content
2. abased
3. abound
4. full
5. hungry
6. suffer need
7. a Doer of the Word

Doing means getting out of the way and letting Him do it thru us!

v14 ye did communicate:  
“Thank you for participating in my ministry.”

v15-16 in the beginning...for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again:  
“When I started in my ministry in Europe, no church but you shared their  
material blessings to support me.”  
“I mean, I was in Thessalonica only three weeks but during that brief stay  
there you sent support to me twice!”

- v17 Not because I desire a gift but I desire fruit...you account  
“I mention this not because I am soliciting a gift from you, but because I shout for joy about the heavenly account you are building!”  
Paul is excited for them...not for their support
- NEVER allow another man to pressure you to give to the Lord...  
Giving is a very personal matter between you and God  
Satan appeals to the covetousness in man’s heart and teaches “Give to get”  
But God’s Word teaches “Get to give”
- Whatever you give, realize that you are investing in the kingdom of God –  
and with His method of bookkeeping, the ROI boggles the mind!  
Those who financially support a ministry are credited with the fruit of the  
ministry in an account in the kingdom of God  
you cannot take your money with you...so send it on ahead!
- On a personal level, I do not have an overflowing bank account...  
I don’t care to have one.  
I want an account in heaven that is overflowing!
- So I invest time, energy, resources into the work of God...which as we  
learned in Nehemiah, is the rebuilding of in the lives of people
- Teach
  - Equip
  - Stretch
  - Send
- v18 I have all...I am full:  
“No, I don’t want a gift from you...I just got one from you via your pastor  
Epaphroditus.  
I have everything I need and want. I am chock full with blessings from  
you.  
Your willing and cheerful giving reflects your heart, which honors and  
pleases God.”

v19 God shall supply all your need:  
“In turn, God will provide all that you need...because no one can out-give God!”

NOTE: He did not say “want”

What a beautiful promise from our Provider  
my Father provides for me, I need but the faith of a child  
He has already given us His very best in His Son, why would He deny us  
lesser blessings?

we have freely received, so freely give.  
Then freely receive the “re-supply” God is faithful to provide...  
to give again...  
we get to give

v20 Now unto God and our Father be glory forever:  
it all starts with God, it all ends with God.  
All glory belongs to Him, now and forever.

v21 Salute every saint:  
“embrace”, not a military salute among men of rank

the supernatural bond we have in Jesus Christ

v22 they that are of the Caesar’s household:  
This is so cool! This is so God!

Paul is a prisoner awaiting audience with Caesar.  
He is chained to a Roman soldier at all times, members of the elite  
forces assigned to Caesar’s palace.  
They are chained to Paul... and getting saved!  
And they are taking the Gospel into the Palace!  
The empress was saved as were most of Caesar’s personal servants  
  
Truly, Rome was a prisoner of Paul...Paul was not a prisoner of Rome!

The Holy Spirit is sweeping thru Caesar's own house...because a faithful and humble servant

1. denied himself
2. spoke the truths of God boldly
3. knew to live is Christ and to die is gain
4. had the mind of Christ
5. never murmured or complained
6. Counted all things of the world as dung compared to attaining the resurrection of Christ
7. Forgot the things behind and reached toward the ultimate prize of the resurrection
8. Rejoiced always
9. Let his gentleness and mercy be seen by all men...because he knew the Lord was coming back soon
10. Did not worry about anything but prayed about everything
11. Was awash in the peace of God that goes beyond human Understanding
12. Thought continually about God and not about his Circumstances
13. Was content in his circumstances
14. Had the strength of Jesus Christ

God had His people in the very lair of the enemy!  
His people are everywhere.  
Do you know who they are?  
Do they know who you are?

v23    the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
          the end of the matter: the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
          Grace changes everything