

SIX LESSONS ON PHILIPPIANS

Lesson Six (4:1-23)

Rejoice In The Lord (4:1-9)

1 Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

2 I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. 3 And I ask you also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say Rejoice. 5 Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. 6 Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.

V. 1 Therefore, My Brethren – Because they have a home in heaven and because they were soon to be rescued by their Savior, the Philippians were to stand fast.

Whom I Love And Long For – As in 1:8, Paul “yearned” for these special brethren who were so dear to his heart.

My Joy And Crown – The word for “crown” is not the royal diadem, but the woven crown or wreath placed on the head of the winner of an athletic contest. If the Philippians held fast to the gospel (2:16) and stood firm in the Lord, then Paul had his victory. He had not run in vain.

Stand Firm Thus In The Lord, My Beloved – The present tense of this imperative verb indicates that standing firm must be a continuing action. It was not a single battle the Philippians faced, but a war of attrition. They had to “stand firm and keep on standing firm.”

V. 2 I Entreat Euodia And I Entreat Syntyche – These are feminine names, evidently referring to two of the women in the Philippian church. If Paul had not cared so much for these people, he might well have “minded his own business.” But his love for them made it his business!

To Agree In The Lord – Literally “to set the minds on the same thing” as in 2:2. While one can only speculate as to the source or nature of their squabble, the remedy for it is plain. They must both set their minds on the same thing in the Lord. They must have the mind of Christ and deny self. Perhaps they could not ever agree on everything, but they could agree to love one another.

V. 3 And I Ask You Also, True Yokefellow, Help These Women – Paul also dared to involve another person in this dispute. Various of Paul’s co-workers have been suggested as the “yokefellow,” but it seems likely that “yokefellow” (Gk. *Syzygus*) was simply the person’s name. Thus, “genuine yokefellow” would mean “Syzygus, rightly so named.”

For They Have Labored Side By Side With Me In The Gospel – These women labored (“contended together”) with Paul, and their work is described by the same word used in 1:27. From the very first day in Philippi, Paul and his team were joined by devout women in the team effort of spreading the gospel.

Together With Clement And The Rest Of My Fellow Workers, Whose Names Are In The Book Of Life – Clement and the others are unknown to us, but they are well known to God. Their names are recorded in heaven where they would dwell with God (Luke 10:20; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 21:27).

V. 4 Rejoice In The Lord Always; Again I Will Say Rejoice – This is the keynote of the epistle. The words “joy” and “rejoice” are used eighteen times. Despite imprisonment or suffering, the command is the same: “Rejoice”! Even when it is not possible to rejoice in the situation, it is still possible to rejoice in the Lord . . . always!

V. 5 Let All Men Know Your Forbearance – Forbearance is the willingness to temper legal justice with mercy, to show gentle consideration. One very effective witness to non-Christians is the kind of patience and forbearance that comes as a fruit of the Spirit.

The Lord Is At Hand – The Lord is “near” in two ways. His presence is always with us and his second coming is only a trumpet blast away. Either of these facts should cause us to be more forbearing toward people.

V. 6 Have No Anxiety About Anything – “Worry is an insult to God.” Christians must learn to turn over their cares and anxieties to God. They must not “be anxious for the morrow” (Matt. 6:34) but must trust God for their daily needs. (Note the use of “anxious” in a positive way in 2:20.)

But In Everything By Prayer And Supplication With Thanksgiving Let Your Requests Be Made

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Known To God —A talk with God will relieve anxiety. Four different words are used here to describe the kind of communication we make to God. “Prayer” is the general word for a message addressed to God.

“Supplication” is a more specific word for a petition or entreaty, often in behalf of someone else. It beseeches God to do something. “Thanksgiving” is gratitude expressed to God for his goodness and grace. In this sense, thanksgiving can be offered “in everything,” no matter how tragic the circumstances. “Requests” are the specific things we desire of God.

V. 7 And The Peace Of God, Which Passes All Understanding – Notice how the peace of God in this verse is sandwiched between right praying (v. 6) and right thinking (v. 8). This peace of God surpasses and “rises above” all human thought. Whenever we are distraught and cannot think of any possible solution, we must turn the matter over to God.

Will Keep Your Hearts And Your Minds In Christ Jesus – “Keep” is a military word meaning “to stand guard over.” Our security and peace of mind does not depend upon our own watchfulness, but on the sovereign providence of God.

The “hearts” and “minds” should not be understood as totally separate parts of a man, such as “emotion” and “intelligence.” Throughout the scriptures, “heart” includes willing, feeling, and thinking. It is the center of man’s being.

V. 8 Finally, Brethren, Whatever Is True – Notice that the right thinking of this verse is sandwiched between the “peace of God” in verse seven and the “God of peace” in verse nine.

Things that are “true” conform to reality. The ultimate norm of truth is the Lord himself (John 14:6) and his Word (John 17:17).

Whatever Is Honorable – This means things that are noble, dignified, serious, and worthy of reverence. They have the dignity which grows out of moral excellence.

Whatever Is Just – Things that are right, fair, and in accordance with God’s commandments are “just.”

Whatever Is Pure – This moral purity is undefiled by contamination with sin. This word was frequently used to describe the “chastity” of a virgin.

Whatever Is Lovely – The Christian’s thoughts are not all stern and sober. His thoughts also include what is “attractive and pleasing” and whatever “calls forth love.”

Whatever Is Gracious – Literally, “well-sounding.” This includes things that are attractive, appealing, and praise-worthy. This word also softens the serious tone of the first words in this series.

If There Is Any Excellence – This is the comprehensive classical Greek word for “virtue.” It points to what is brave, beautiful, and morally upright. This kind of virtue is held in honor by all men.

If There Is Anything Worthy Of Praise – Simply, that which is approved and praiseworthy.

Think About These Things – The Greek word for “think” can be understood in two different ways, both of which are applicable here. First, it means to compute the worth of. Christians should evaluate these virtues and choose them instead of evil. Second, it means to let the mind dwell on. This kind of right thinking promotes peace of mind.

V. 9 What You Have Learned And Received And Heard And Seen In Me, Do – The first two words point to Paul’s teaching and the other two point to his personal example (as in 3:17).

And The God Of Peace Will Be With You – Real inner peace does not come from mystical meditation, but from God, the source and giver of peace.

Thank You For The Gifts (4:10-23)

10 I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me; you were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. 11 Not that I complain of want; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. 13 I can do all things in him who strengthens me.

14 Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. 15 And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only; 16 for even in Thessalonica you sent me to help once and again. 17 Not that I seek the gift; but I seek the fruit which increases to your credit. 18 I have received full payment, and more; I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. 19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

V. 10 I Rejoice In The Lord Greatly That Now At Length You Have Revived Your Concern For Me

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– After an indefinite interval of delay, the Philippians had “caused their concern to bloom again,” sending gifts to Paul in Rome. The emphasis is not on the delay, but on rejoicing in the present concern.

You Were Indeed Concerned For Me, But You Had No Opportunity – Paul used the imperfect tense, saying in effect, “You were caring all along.” He was careful to remove any possible tone of reproach for the tardiness of their support.

V. 11 Not That I Complain Of Want – Paul did not “speak according to his lack.” He was in want, but that was not what prompted these words.

For I Have Learned, In Whatever State I Am, To Be Content –The word “content” was a popular word with Stoic philosophers to describe the “self-sufficient” man. He was totally independent of everybody and everything, and nothing could affect him. It is clear, however, that Paul was not “self-sufficient” but “God-sufficient” (v. 6, 13, 19).

V. 12 I Know How To Be Abased, And I Know How To Abound – To be “abased” meant to experience humiliation and poverty. To “abound meant to have an over-flowing abundance and have all one’s needs supplied. Paul could face deprivation without complaint and could face affluence without over-exultation.

I Have Learned The Secret Of Facing Plenty And Hunger, Abundance And Want – Whether stuffed or starving, Paul was not unduly concerned, for his belly was not his god (3:19). Paul had come to grips with the fact that either too much or too little material wealth can often turn a man against God.

“Give me neither poverty nor riches . . . lest I be full and deny Thee and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ or lest I be poor, and steal, and profane the name of my God.” (Proverbs 30:8, 9)

V. 13 I Can Do All Things In Him Who Strengthens Me – In context, this means the ability to face any circumstance without despair. Paul could not always get food (II Cor. 11:27), but he could face hunger victoriously. He could not always escape his enemies, but he could face prison triumphantly. He could not always get the financial support he needed, but he could face poverty and win.

Who was the One who strengthened Paul? After the sixth century, most manuscripts added the word “Christ.” In other places in this epistle, the one who supplies strength is:

<u>Christ</u>	<u>(either)</u>	<u>God</u>
1:11	1:6	2:13
1:19	1:10	4:6
1:21		4:9
3:21		4:19

V. 14 Yet It Was Kind Of You To Share My Trouble – Literally, “you did nobly, being partners (as in 1:7) in my affliction.”

V. 15 In The Beginning Of The Gospel, When I Left Macedonia – See notes on 1:5, 6.

No Church Entered Into Partnership With Me In Giving And Receiving Except You Only – Paul was glad to make the gospel available free of charge (I Cor. 9:6-18) wherever he preached. Only the church in Philippi was allowed to support Paul in a continuing “partnership” in the gospel.

V. 16 Even In Thessalonica You Sent Me Help – Thessalonica was another city of Macedonia, and was Paul’s next stop after Philippi on the second missionary journey (Acts 17:1).

V. 17 Not That I Seek The Gift – As in verse 11, Paul was eager to get finances into the proper perspective.

I Seek The Fruit Which Increases To Your Credit – It was not that Paul—much less the Lord—needed their money. They needed to experience the blessing of giving. By investing in evangelism, they were putting money in their own account (thus, “to your credit”) in heaven. (See Matt. 6:20.)

V. 18 I Have Received Full Payment – These words were the first century equivalent of “paid in full.” Paul had received full payment—and more! He considered himself overpaid!

A Fragrant Offering, A Sacrifice Acceptable And Pleasing To God –Just as Paul saw his own ministry as a sacrifice, he also saw the financial support of the Philippians as a sacrifice. Strong imagery from the Old Testament temple sacrifices is present here.

V. 19 And My God Will Supply Every Need Of Yours According To His Riches In Glory In Christ Jesus – The extent to which God is prepared to provide our needs is inexhaustible. The only limitation lies in the word “need.” God has not promised to supply everything we may think we want.

V. 20 To Our God And Father Be Glory For Ever And Ever – All the activity of the kingdom—even the adoration of the Son—must resound to the glory of the Father (1:11; 2:11).

Amen – From the Aramaic language, meaning “it is firm, so be it.”

V. 21 Greet Every Saint In Christ Jesus – As at the beginning (1:1), all God’s “set-apart” people are included.

V. 22 All The Saints Greet You, Especially Those Of Caesar's Household – Included among the ranks of the Christians in Rome were members of Caesar’s household! This did not necessarily mean his

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own family, but included all those associated with the imperial palace: slaves, freedmen, household servants, and others. Paul was in chains, but the gospel was not! (See 1:12-14.)

V. 23 The Grace Of The Lord Jesus Christ Be With Your Spirit – As always, Paul closed with a note of grace (1:2).

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of crown was Paul talking about in verse one? How was this connected to the Philippian brethren?
2. Why did Paul intrude into a private squabble between two women in Philippi?
3. How is it possible to rejoice always? Isn't there a time to weep and a time to laugh (Eccl. 3:4)?
4. What is forbearance?
5. What is the specific meaning of each of the four words dealing with prayer in verse six?
6. What is the connection between prayer, the peace of God; right thinking, and the God of peace? (See v. 6-9)
7. Which is a greater threat to one's faith: poverty or wealth?

8. If we "can do all things in him who strengthens" us, will we always be healthy, wealthy, and successful? Was Paul?
9. Why did Paul allow the Philippians to give him money when he allowed no other church to do so?
10. How could the gospel have reached inside the very household of Caesar?
11. What have you learned from the study of Philippians? In what specific ways will this study change the way you think and the way you live?

A.B.A. REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning of the word "crown" in verse 1?
2. What is indicated by the "present tense" of the imperative verb "stand firm" in verse 1?
3. Are "Euodia" and "Syntyche" masculine or feminine names? Who are these people?
4. What was the remedy for the squabble between Euodia and Syntyche?
5. Explain the meaning of "yokefellow" and "Syzygus."
6. Summarize what Rev. 3:5, 13:8, and 21:27 teach about the "book of life."
7. What is "forbearance"?

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8. List 2 ways in which the Lord is “near.”
9. “_____ is an _____ to God. Christians must learn to turn over their _____ and _____ to God.”
10. Provide a brief definition of the following words: prayer, supplication, thanksgiving, and requests.
11. Define the word “keep” in verse 7.
12. What is the proper understanding of the words “hearts” and “minds” in verse 7?
13. “Things that are ‘_____’ conform to reality. The ultimate norm of _____ is the _____ and _____.”
14. What is meant by “whatever is honorable”?
15. What is the meaning of “whatever is just”?
16. Define “whatever is pure.”
17. How does this lesson describe “whatever is lovely”?
18. Provide a definition of “whatever is gracious.”
19. Explain “if there is any excellence.”
20. Explain 2 ways in which the Greek word for “think” can be understood.
21. What are some things that others have learned, received, heard, or seen in you that you would like them to practice in their own lives?
22. What are some things that others have learned, received, heard, or seen in you that you do not want to become incorporated into their lives? What steps will you take to overcome these areas in your own life?
23. How did Stoic philosophers use the word “content”?
24. Explain these words: “Paul was not ‘self-sufficient’ but ‘God-sufficient.’” How can Christians become more “God-sufficient”?
25. What does it mean to be “abased”?
26. Explain the teaching of Proverbs 30:8-9.
27. In its proper context, what is the meaning of Phil. 4:13?
28. How many churches entered into a continuing partnership to support the work of Paul?
29. “_____ was another city of _____, and was Paul’s next stop after Philippi on the _____ missionary journey.”

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30. What did the words “full payment” mean in the First Century, and what did they mean to Paul?
31. What is significant about the word “need” in verse 19?
32. The word “amen” comes from the _____ language. What does “amen” mean?
33. What is the meaning of “Caesar’s household” in verse 22?
34. Why do you think Paul always closed his letters with a note of grace?
35. What is the most meaningful lesson that you have learned from this section, and how will it change your life and improve your relationship with Jesus?
36. What specific blessings have you gained from this course on Philippians? What can you do to promote the “joy” that Paul felt in his life? Take a moment to ask God to use *your life* to spread the love, joy, peace, and message of Jesus with those around you and lead them into a saving relationship with Christ!