

## Paul's Admonitions

**PHI 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;**

1. "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed" - They had "always" been obedience to the instructions of God that he had proclaimed to them.
  - a. Paul had been careful to give them the Lord's instructions.
    - 1) He spoke and wrote the commandments of the Lord.
    - 2) He occasionally expressed an opinion, but made it clear that such was his opinion. (1 Cor. 7:25, 40; 2 Cor. 8:10).
  - b. He calls them "beloved" and uses this word of affection as the basis of his appeal to them. He will again use this term in Philippians 4:1.
2. "not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence"
  - a. This obedience was a sincere obedience that came from the heart - not just when he was present with them.
  - b. Our obedience should come from the heart - not coming just when some we deem important are watching.
  - c. Others may or may not see what we do, but God is always watching. (Prov. 15:3; Heb. 4:13).
3. "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" - This means to comply with the conditions that God has promised to save. He used this expression 3 other times. (1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 7:15; Eph. 6:15).
  - a. This does not mean each could have salvation according to his own thinking or man made plan. (Prov. 14:12; Isa. 55:8, 9; Matt. 15:9).
  - b. It denotes that diligent and sincere effort was to be made to follow the will of God.
  - c. One is only saved by doing "the will of God." (Matt. 7:21).
  - d. The Bible teaches that though a man cannot earn his salvation that effort must be made. (Lk. 6:46; Jn. 14:15; 15:14; Acts 2:40; Heb. 2:1-3; 2 Pet. 1:5-11).
    - 1) It is certain we cannot earn salvation. (Rom. 6:23, Eph. 2:8, 9).
    - 2) It is false to conclude that God does not require works of faith. (Rom. 1:5; 16:26; Jas. 2:14-26; Heb. 11).
    - 3) Works of faith are required by God, but even these works do not merit salvation.
    - 4) On the other hand, God will not save those who have a dead faith and refuse to bear fruit for God.
  - e. "with reverence and awe make every effort to insure your salvation" - Gspd.

- 1) “fear” has the idea of “reverence.”
  - 2) We must have a great reverence [respect ] for God.
  - 3) We serve God out of reverence and love for Him.
  - 4) We also serve God “trembling” knowing the seriousness of rejecting and disobeying Him. (2 Thess. 1:8,9).
    - “Trembling” is from “tromos” [**trah mahs**] meaning “trembling, quivering.”
    - God can be merciful, but He can also be harsh. (Rom. 11:22; Heb. 10:31).
4. This verse has the same meaning as Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

ECC 12:13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.

ECC 12:14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

5. We will give account for the things done in the body. (2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 12:36, 37; 25:31-46).

**PHI 2:13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure [satisfaction, delight].**

1. “for it is God who is at work in you” - He wants them to remember that God was at work in them.
  - a. This is true collectively as the church. The church collectively can do great things through the power and inspiration of God.
  - b. This is true individually. As individuals we can accomplish much through God’s help.
2. “both to will and to work for His good pleasure” - God, if they permitted, was inspiring them to please Him.
  - a. God’s “good pleasure” is that we love Him and bring His glory.
    - 1) God does not want to hurt us.
    - 2) He wants everyone to come to Him and enjoy His blessings.
  - b. He will draw near to help us and empower us to do His will if we draw near to Him. (Jas. 4:7).
  - c. **We often have a desire to do to better and accomplish more for Christ, but then fall back into our old habits letting the devil snatch those good desires away.**
  - d. **It is vital that we let God work in us for good.**

**PHI 2:14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing;**

1. “Do all things” - God desires that we live without the negative things enumerated here.
2. “without grumbling” - Without complaining. “goggusmos” [gahg goo **smahs**] - “complaint, grumbling.”
  - a. This was a great sin of Israel. (1 Cor. 10:10). See Num. 11:1; 16:41.

- b. It has also been a great sin of many Christians. They constantly murmur and complain to others and about others and sometimes even directly to God.
  - c. Christians are not to be grumblers, but are to be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving.
3. “or disputing” - Without arguing. “dialogismos” [dee ah lah gee **smos**] - “thought, opinion, reasoning, doubt, dispute.”
- a. Christians [at times] disagree, but bitter arguments with one another are not healthy and do great harm to the body [the church].
    - 1) The world observes the disputes of the church and the harsh, mean, cruel conduct that most often attend it.
    - 2) It is unrealistic to believe we will never have differences, but it is most important that we settle them in a way that does not bring reproach on the Lord and the church.
    - 3) We must not display our dirty laundry for the world to see.
  - b. Christians most often argue over their likes and dislikes that have nothing to do with God’s will.
  - c. This is destructive and must be avoided.
  - d. We must be easily entreated in matters of opinion. (Jas. 3:17).

**PHI 2:15 that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,**

- 1. “that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent” - These words may be synonyms in this verse. It is hard to clearly distinguish the meaning of the two words.
  - a. “blameless and innocent” does not mean sinless. (1 Jn. 1:8, 10).
  - b. It refers to those who are striving to please God, and confess their sins when they sin. (1 Jn. 1:7, 9).
  - c. It refers to those who are seeking to live pure and righteous lives to please their Lord.
- 2. “children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” - See Acts 2:40.
  - a. They lived in a very evil, warped, sinful, diseased world.
  - b. They were not to conform to “a crooked and perverse generation,” but were to transform it. (Rom. 12:1,2).
  - c. Men should not be able to say of God’s children that they are hypocrites though they are not blind to our weaknesses and sins.
  - d. They should see a people humbly seeking to please God, and who are willing to confess their sins and seek to do good.
- 3. “among whom you appear as lights in the world” - They were lights in the world.
  - The world of darkness was made better by their presence.

- Imagine what this world of darkness would belike without Christian light.
- a. Paul had admonished the Christians he wrote in Ephesians 5:8 to “walk as children of light.”
- b. Jesus had taught His disciples to be the light of the world. (Matt. 5:14-16).
- c. John indicated Christians are to “walk in the light.” (1 Jn. 1:7).
- d. See Rom. 13:11-14; Rev. 2:1,5.

ROM 13:11 And this do, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed.

ROM 13:12 The night is almost gone, and the day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

ROM 13:13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.

REV 2:1 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

REV 2:5 'Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place-- unless you repent.

**PHI 2:16 holding fast the word [message] of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.**

1. “holding fast the word of life” - The word [message] of life is the gospel. See Rom. 1:16.
  - a. They were to cling to it, that is, hold fast to it.
  - b. They were to obey the message and faithfully present it to others.
  - c. They were not admonished to hold fast to their own words or human opinions and traditions.
2. “so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain” - See Phil. 1:6.
  - a. “the day of Christ” refers to His coming and His judgment of all mankind. (2 Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:30, 31).
    - 1) These great events are sometimes simply called “that day.” (1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:10; 2 Tim. 1:2; 4:8; Heb. 10:25).
    - 2) Jesus taught us to be ready for that day. (Matt. 25:13).
  - b. Paul knew if they held fast to God’s word that his labor would not be vain.
  - c. He did not want to go to heaven alone, but wanted these Christians and all others to be saved.
  - d. No one wants his labor to be in vain.
  - e. This is a possibility, but the Christian has an intense desire to lead others to Lord and eternal life with Him.
  - f. We should do what we can to encourage and strengthen others in their walk with Christ.

**PHI 2:17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all.**

1. “But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith”
  - a. These words are difficult and have been understood in different ways.
  - b. TCNT may have the basic idea “And yet, even if, when your faith is offered as a sacrifice to God, my lifeblood must be poured out in addition.”
  - c. Paul’s death would be like a drink offering poured on the altar.
  - d. His death may be viewed as the completion of the sacrificial offering of their faith.
  - e. We are to present our lives “a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God.” (Rom. 12:1).
2. “I rejoice and share my joy with you all” - He counted it a joy to be “counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” (Acts 5:41).
  - a. We should count it joy to suffer for Christ.
  - b. Trials and persecutions make us stronger. (Jas. 1:2).
  - c. Trials and persecutions must not intimidate us and make us sad and fearful of living the Christian life and doing God’s will.

**PHI 2:18 And you too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.**

1. “And you too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way”
  - a. Once again Paul is calling upon these brothers to rejoice.
  - b. Jesus taught His disciples should rejoice even in times of persecution. (Matt. 5:10-12).
  - c. James, his brother, also taught the same thing in regard to trials. (Jas. 1:2-4).
2. “and share your joy with me”
  - a. It is uplifting to hear Christian share their joys and blessings. Joyous news would be a great delight to Paul in prison.
  - b. We need to hear the good news about the work of the Lord.

**PHI 2:19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition.**

1. “But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly” - The word “I hope” shows the plans are not certain, but tentative.
  - a. This faithful servant of the Lord was in Rome with Paul, but he was not a prisoner.
  - b. He was like the ones Jesus will bless in the judgment, that is, he visited Paul in prison. (Matt. 25:37-40).

2. “so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition” - He anticipated that he would be encouraged by the good news of their spiritual state.

**PHI 2:20 For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare.**

1. “For I have no one else of kindred spirit” - Timothy was an exceptional Christian.
  - a. Paul had the highest confidence in this faithful evangelist. (2 Tim. 4:5).
  - b. Paul wrote two epistles to Timothy - 1 & 2 Timothy.
  - c. Timothy had a very important role in the early church. (Rom. 16:21; 1 Cor. 16:10; 2 Cor. 1:1, 16; 1 Thess. 3:2; 1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 2 Tim. 1:2).
  - d. He had been with Paul when the Philippian church was established. (Acts 16:1; 17:14, 15).
  - e. He had visited them at least once according to 1 Corinthians . (1 Cor.16:10, 11).
2. “who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare” - Timothy would not fake interest in them, but he would be genuinely concerned for their spiritual condition.

**PHI 2:21 For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.**

1. “For they all seek after their own interests”
  - a. Paul does not define “they all.”
  - b. It seems to mean that everyone else seems to be interested or worried about his own plans and concerns.
  - c. The “all” seems to be used in the sense of “most.”
  - d. In this very chapter he mentions another exception. (Phil. 2:25-30).
  - e. Such people as Luke and Silas were with him at Philippi. Surely they were exceptions as well as Barnabas and Titus.
  - f. This could refer to the false teachers described in the Roman epistle and to those troubling the Philippian church. (Rom. 16:17,18; Phil. 3:19).
2. “not those of Christ Jesus” - Most were more interested in their own interests than those of Christ’s.

**PHI 2:22 But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.**

- 1 “But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel”
  - a. Timothy had worked diligently to proclaim the gospel.
  - b. He was faithful even in times of danger and persecution.
2. “like a child serving his father” - 1 Tim. 1:2,18; 2 Tim. 1:2.

- a. Timothy was not the actual physical son of Paul. (Acts 16:1-3).
- b. He was one who had been greatly influenced by Paul and had been a tremendous help to him.

**PHI 2:23 Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; See Phil. 2:19.**

1. “Therefore I hope to send him immediately” - Timothy was with Paul. (Phil. 1:1).
  - a. He was not in prison with him, but had not abandoned Paul as many had done.
  - b. It took courage to be associated with Paul and the gospel.
2. “as soon as I see how things go with me”
  - a. Paul had optimism he would be released, but he could not be absolutely sure how quickly this would occur.
  - b. Once he knew how things would go with him he wanted to send Timothy to them.

**PHI 2:24 and I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall be coming shortly.**

1. After Paul’s first Roman imprisonment in Rome he was at liberty at Ephesus. (1 Tim. 1:3).
2. He was also in Crete (Tit. 1:5), Macedonia (1 Tim. 1:3), Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20), and Nicopolis. (Tit. 3:12).

### **The Return of Epaphroditus 2:25-30**

**PHI 2:25 But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need;**

- He is mentioned again in Philippians 4:18.
  - Epaphroditus was a common name coming from the name of the Greek goddess Aphrodite.
1. “But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus” - He was evidently now free.
    - a. Philemon 1:23 indicates that he [Epaphras] had been a prisoner in Rome during Paul’s imprisonment. This suggests this letter was written after the book of Philemon. This assumes he is the same as Epaphras that may not be the case. See later notes about this person playing such a significant role in two churches.
    - b. See Col. 1:7; 4:12; Phile. 23.

COL 1:7 just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf,

COL 4:12 Epaphras, **who is one of your number**, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.

PHM 1:23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you,

- c. Some believe these references refer to another person who had a shortened form of the same name. They think it is unlikely that a person could have played such a significant role in two churches that were separated by

such a distance. He is said of him “who is one of your number.” (Col. 4:12). It is hard to be sure, but these may be different men.

2. “my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier” - The words “brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier, messenger, and minister” are used to describe this fine Christian man.
3. “who is also your messenger [apostle] and minister to my need”
  - a. The church at Philippi had sent him to minister to Paul’s needs.
  - b. They never forgot Paul in prison.
  - c. It is interesting that the word “apostle” is used of Epaphroditus and is translated “messenger.”
    - 1) The word “apostle” most often is used to designate those who were appointed apostles by the Lord, such as, the twelve, Paul and James the Lord’s brother. See Gal. 1:19; Gal. 1:1; 2 Cor. 12:12.
    - 2) There were also apostles of the church, that is, messengers. (Acts 14:14; Rom. 16:7; 2 Cor. 8:23).

**PHI 2:26 because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.**

1. “because he was longing for you all” - It sounds like Epaphroditus became home sick.
2. “and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick”- It troubled him that the church was worried about him.
3. Though unspoken Paul may have felt Epaphroditus was needed back home.
4. This might be unspoken to spare feelings.
5. There were some problems in this church.

**PHI 2:27 For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.**

1. “For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him” - We do not know the nature of his illness, but only that it was very serious and nearly ended his life. See Phil. 2:30.
  - a. Paul did not use miraculous power to heal him.
  - b. Healing was most often used to confirm the word of God. (Mk. 16:20; Heb. 2:4).
  - c. Jesus did not heal all the sick neither did Paul or the other apostles.
  - d. Peter did for a time heal extensively. (Acts 5:15, 16).

ACT 5:15 to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets, and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on any one of them.

ACT 5:16 And also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits; and they were all being healed.

- e. Some were miraculously healed by the apostles and by those who had the gift of healing. (1 Cor. 12:9).

- f. Some elders had the gift of healing. (Jas. 5:14, 15), but it uncertain that all elders had this gift.
  - g. Early Christians could become sick and die as Christians all through the ages.
2. “and not on him only but also on me” - God had been merciful to Epaphroditus and Paul.
  3. “lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow”
    - a. Paul’s sorrow would have been great if Epaphroditus had not recovered.
    - b. He had been already grieved over his friend’s illness.

**PHI 2:28 Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly in order that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned about you.**

1. “Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly” - Epaphroditus did not desert Paul, but was sent home by Paul.
2. “in order that when you see him again you may rejoice” - His return would bring great joy to the church.
3. “and I may be less concerned about you” - Paul’s stress would be less when he knew the brethren at Philippi were joyful.
4. His return to Philippi would bring happiness to Paul, Epaphroditus, and the Philippians.

**PHI 2:29 Therefore receive him in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard;**

1. “Therefore receive him in the Lord with all joy” - Joyfully receive him as a Christian brother.
2. “and hold men like him in high regard”
  - a. Epaphroditus was an exceptional servant that should be held “in high regard.”
  - b. The language here indicates their were others who should be held in high esteem.
  - c. This faithful brother had nothing of which to be ashamed.
3. It seems strange that Paul gave these instructions unless there was a possibility the Philippian church would not joyfully receive him “with all joy” and with “high regard.”
  - a. False teachers would have much to do with a less than joyful reception.
  - b. Some might charge he was sent home because he did not do his job well and Paul was not pleased with him.
  - c. Some might charge he had not fulfilled his duty because he had not remained with Paul, but let home sickness motivate his return.
  - d. Paul dismisses all that nonsense.

**PHI 2:30 because he came close [near] to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient [lacking because of the circumstances] in your service to me.**

1. “because he came close to death for the work of Christ” - He had come close to death because of his devotion to

“the work of Christ.”

2. “risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me”
  - a. “deficient” is not a criticism, but it is a reference to what they lacked the opportunity to do.
  - b. He did for me in person what distance prevented you from doing for me.

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