

Encouragement For Philippians

4:1-9

PHI 4:1 Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

- “Therefore” is from “hoste” [**hoh** steh] meaning “so as, wherefore, therefore.”
 - The words of this chapter are based on the grand promise to Christians that their citizenship is in heaven and they will have a glorious new body there. (Phil. 3:20, 21).
 - “beloved” describes Paul’s warm feelings for these brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - He used this word one other time in this epistle. (Phil. 2:12).
1. “Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown”
 - a. Paul had a strong desire to see these fine brothers and sisters in Christ. Imprisonment and distance prevented him from having fellowship with them.
 - b. He refers to them as “my joy [delight] and crown [wreath of victory].” “stephanos” [**steh** fa nos] - “crown, wreath.”
 - 1) Paul was so proud of this church that had given him so much joy and delight.
 - 2) Paul had written similar words to the church at Thessalonica. (1 Thess. 2:19, 20).

1TH 2:19 For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?

1TH 2:20 For you are our glory and joy.

2. “so stand firm in [the] Lord, my beloved”
 - a. They are admonished them earlier to stand firm “in one spirit.” (Phil. 1:27).
- PHI 1:27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are **standing firm in one spirit**, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;
- b. Paul had given a similar admonition to the brethren at Corinth. (1 Cor. 15:58).
 - c. It was Paul’s desire that brethren everywhere remain true and steadfast to the Lord.
 - d. Believers must please the Lord above all, and please Him even if it displeases all others.

Euodia And Syntyche

PHI 4:2 I urge [beg, beseech] Euodia and I urge [beg, beseech] Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

1. “I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche “

- “Euodia” [yoo ah **dee** ah] - “a good journey”
- “suntuche” [soon **too** kay] - “fortunate”

a. Some have erroneously taught this was a husband and wife.

1) Some have thought this might be the jailer and his wife. (Acts 16:30-34).

2) This is really a stretch and does not agree, at all, with the context.

b. The next verse reveals that these words reference two Christian sisters in Christ - “these women.” (Phil. 4:3).

c. Nothing is known about these two sisters except they were at odds with one another.

2. “to live in harmony in [the] Lord” - As Christians Paul exhorts them to solve their differences.

- Lit. “the same thing to think”

- NIV has “agree with each other.”

a. The next verse reveals the ladies had shared in his “struggle in the cause of the gospel.” (Phil. 4:3).

b. Even good women can become at odds with one another.

c. Christians do not always agree, but those in Christ should seek to resolve problems.

d. Unsolved problems are very unhealthy for individuals and the church.

e. These unsolved problems most often develop into hard feelings and splits and a diminishing of the influence of the church.

Paul’s Request

PHI 4:3 Indeed, true [loyal] comrade, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle [striven beside me] in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

- “Indeed” is from “nai” [ni] - “yes, indeed.”

“True Comrade”

1. “Indeed, true comrade” - This is an appeal to a third party to expedite the reconciliation of these two Christian ladies.

a. This person is addressed as “true [loyal] comrade.”

1) “Comrade” means “yoke-fellow, helper, teammate.” It is from “suzugos” [**soo** zoo gahs].

2) He is the “true” [genuine, loyal] “yoke-fellow, fellow-laborer, helper, teammate.”

- b. The identification of this person is not known, and all speculations are mere conjectures.
 - c. There is always a great need for “true” [loyal] comrades who work as peacemakers.
2. “I ask you also to help these women”
- a. “autois” [these] is a dative feminine plural translated “these women.”
 - b. “help” - This can be an appeal to him to help them be reconciled or an appeal to work with these two ladies who had been so helpful in the spreading of the gospel or both.
3. “who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel”
- a. These ladies had been very helpful in the spreading of the gospel.
 - b. We do not know exactly what they did, but Paul was very appreciative of their help.

Role of Women

- Women played a major role in the ministry of Jesus and the apostles. (Matt. 27:55; Mk. 15:40; Lk. 23:49, 55).
- The fact they had some limitations, on the way they served, did not lessen, for a moment, their value to Christ and the kingdom.

Clement

4. “together with Clement also” - All we know about this brother is found here in this verse.
- a. He appears to be a fellow-laborer of Paul at Philippi.
 - b. Clement was a common name in the first century.
 - c. He had helped Paul in his “struggle in the cause of Christ.”
 - d. His name, along with the two women and other fellow-workers, was “in the book of life.”

Other Fellow Workers

5. “and the rest of my fellow workers” - These valuable servants are unnamed.
- a. Some of the most valuable people in the church often remain unnamed and have little, if any, fame.
 - b. They are vital to the growth and well being of the church.

Book of Life

6. “whose names are in the book of life”
- a. “The book of life” is a special book mentioned several times in the scriptures. (Dan. 12:1; Rev. 3:5; 17:8; 20:12,15).

b. It is sometimes called “the Lamb’s book of life.” (Rev. 13:8; 21:27).

REV 13:8 And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in **the book of life of the Lamb** who has been slain.

REV 21:27 and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the **Lamb's book of life**.

c. One has his/her name written in this book by obedience to the Lamb of God. See Jn. 1:29.

d. One can have his name “blotted out” of this important book. (Rev. 3:5).

e. Those who do not have their names written in this book will be “thrown into the lake of fire.” (Rev. 20:15; Matt. 25:41).

REV 20:15 And if anyone's name was not found written in **the book of life**, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

MAT 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

PHI 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

1. “Rejoice in [the] Lord always” - They are admonished to rejoice because they are “in the Lord,” that is, they through faith have accepted Jesus as Lord and have a saving relationship with Him.

a. This fact [saving relationship] should motivate them to “always” rejoice. See 1 Thess. 5:16.

b. Being “in the Lord” meant their names were written in “the Lamb’s book of life” and Jesus would empower them. (Phil. 4:13).

c. It meant a home in heaven. (Phil. 3:20).

2. “again I will say, rejoice!”

a. This is Paul’s way of emphasizing they should be a joyful and happy people.

b. They must not let his trials or their troubles keep them from rejoicing.

PHI 4:5 Let your forbearing [gracious, gentle] spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.

- “spirit” correctly conveys the idea Paul is expressing, but it is not in the Greek and has been supplied.
- NIV has “Let your gentleness be evident to all.”
- Lit. “the forbearance of you let it be known to all men.”

1. “Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men”

a. “epieikes” [eh pee ay **kays**] - “yield, gentle, kind, gracious.”

b. This word can have a variety of meanings and all of the above meanings of this word make good sense in this context.

“The Lord Is Near”

2. “The Lord is near” - The “Lord’ is Jesus Christ. Paul does not explain in what sense the Lord was “near.”
 - a. This is usually interpreted to mean the return of the Lord was nigh, but the 2nd coming of Christ is not specifically mentioned here.
 - b. There is a sense in which the Lord’s return is always nigh.
 - 1) We do not know when He is coming. (Matt. 24:36).
 - 2) We must always be ready because He can come at any time. (Matt. 24:36; 25:12).
 - 3) There was nothing to keep Christ from coming then or now.
 - 4) Paul had mentioned the coming of Christ. (Phil. 3:20).
 - c. This statement may not have reference to Christ’s second coming though it is always “near.”
 - 1) Christ lives in the heart of the Christian. (Col. 1:27).
 - 2) He is present to dispense His spiritual blessings to those who trust in Him. (Eph. 1:3).
 - 3) He is present to comfort and strengthen. (Phil. 4:13).
 - 4) He is always working as our “Advocate with the Father” and “High Priest.” (1 Jn. 2:1,2; Heb. 7:25).
 - 5) As is His Father, He is always ready to protect and shield. (Psa. 145:18, 19).

PSA 145:18 The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth.

PSA 145:19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them.

“In Nothing Be Anxious”

PHI 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication [petition] with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

1. Be anxious for nothing” - “merimnao” [meh rim **nah** oh] - “to fret, to be anxious.”
 - Lit. “be you anxious about nothing”
 - KJV & ASV “in nothing be anxious”
 - NIV has “Do not be anxious about anything”
- a. Jesus taught Christians should not be anxious about food, clothing, etc. (Matt. 6:25-34).
 - 1) He reminded His listeners that God provides for “the birds of the air” and assured them they were much more valuable to God. (Matt. 6:26).
 - 2) He taught “worry” will not add inches to one height or time to his life. (Matt. 6:27).

MAT 6:27 "And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life's span? NASB

MAT 6:27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? NIV

Lit. "But who of you being anxious can to add to the stature of him cubit one?"

3) He also assured them that God even clothes "the lilies of the field." (Matt. 6:28, 29).

4) Jesus taught the Father is heaven wanted them "to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness" and not be anxious about tomorrow. (Matt. 6:33, 34).

b. Paul is exhorting Christians not to be anxious and live lives filled with anxiety and frustration.

c. Peter admonished Christians to cast their anxiety on the Lord. (1 Pet. 5:7).

d. These words do not mean a believer should never be concerned about anything, but mean the believer should never doubt or distrust the Lord. The believer always maintains His trust in God.

e. He is to live a day at a time. (Matt. 6:34).

f. He trusts in God knowing that God provides for those who trusts in Him. (Psa. 23:1; 84:11; Matt. 7:7-11).

2. "but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving"

a. Rather than be anxious they were to fill their prayers "with thanksgiving."

b. Christians are to be an thankful people. (Col. 3:15; 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:18).

1) When we give thanks, it requires us to remember and reflect on what God has done for us in the past as well as the present.

2) Remembering that God has always seen us through good and bad times reduces anxiety.

c. Counting blessings make a person more thankful and less anxious as one realizes all the Lord has given him.

3. "let your requests be made known to God" - Believers are expected to ask. (Matt. 6:9-13; 7:7-11; Jas. 1:5,6; 4:2,3).

a. Their requests should be "made known to God." (Matt. 6:9; Eph. 3:14).

b. God knows our need before we ask, but still expects us to ask. (Matt. 6:8).

c. He hears the prayers of the righteous (Prov. 15:8), but not the prayers of those who refuse to listen to Him. (Prov. 28:9).

d. He answers our prayers. (Jas. 5:16; Matt. 7:7-11; 1 Pet. 3:12; 1 Jn. 5:14).

PHI 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses [transcends] all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1. "And the peace of God" - God replaces anxiety with His peace.

2. "which surpasses [transcends] all comprehension" - God offers peace that surpasses our comprehension.

- “to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge.” (Eph. 3:19).
 - a. The Christian has the assurance that God is his Father.
 - b. He has the assurance that God is always present. (Psa. 46:1, 10).
 - c. He has the assurance that no external force can separate him from the love of Christ. (Rom. 8:31-39).

ROM 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

ROM 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

ROM 8:33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;

ROM 8:34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

ROM 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

ROM 8:36 Just as it is written, "For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

ROM 8:37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

ROM 8:38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

ROM 8:39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- 1) External forces can separate us from Christ and stop God from loving us. (Rom 8:35, 38-39).
- 2) This does not mean we cannot separate ourselves from God's love. (1 Cor. 9:27; 10:12; Heb. 6:4-6).
- 3) We must keep ourselves “in the love of God.” (Jude 1:21).

JUD 1:21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

4) God will help us do that if we will draw near to Him. (Jas. 4:7; 1 Cor. 10:13; Heb. 13:5).

- d. We have the peace that heaven is our home. (Phil. 3:20).
3. “shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” - God offers all these blessing through Christ.
 - a. There are no spiritual blessings outside of Christ. (Eph. 1:3).
 - b. Salvation and spiritual blessings are for those who come to Christ and obey Him. (Jn. 3:36; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Heb. 5:9).

Exhortations To Excellence

PHI 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell [think] on these things.

1. “Finally, brethren, whatever is true”
 - a. “to loipon” [tah loi **pahn**] “finally, henceforth, from now on.”

- b. “whatever is true” - “alethes” [ah lay **thays**] - “true, truth.”
 - 1) Believers are to cling to the truth. (Jn. 17:17; 8:32).
 - 2) They are to cleave to the good and true, and abhor evil and the false. (Rom. 12:9).
 - 3) Being able to distinguish requires a pure heart and maturity. (Matt. 5:8; Heb. 5:11-14; 1 Pet. 2:1,2).
- 2. “whatever is honorable, whatever is right”
 - a. “honorable” is from “semnos” [sem **nahs**]. It means “noble, honorable, dignified, worthy of reverence.”
 - b. “right” is from “dikaia” [**dee** ki ah] - “right, just.” NIV also has “whatever is right.”
 - c. God’s word is right. (Psa. 19:8; 119;128).
- 3. “whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute”
 - a. “pure” - “hagnos” [hag **nahs**] - “chase, clean, pure.”
 - b. “lovely” - “proshile” [prahs fee **lay**] - “attractive, pleasing, lovable”
 - c. “of good repute” - “euphema” [**yoo** fay mah] - “well-spoken of, things that are right”
- 4. “if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise”
 - a. “arete” [ah reh **tay**] - “virtue, excellence.”
 - b. It refers to moral excellence, that is, walking uprightly according to the instructions of God.
 - c. One who has moral excellence does not practice the works of the flesh, but fills his life with “the fruit of the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:19-23).
- 5. “let your mind [thoughts] dwell [think] on these things”
 - a. The word “dwell” is from “logizomai” [lah **gid** zah mi] - “reason, reckon, think, consider.”
 - b. They were to constantly think [meditate] on these things - not occasionally recall or consider them.
 - c. One becomes what he dwells on. (Prov. 23:7).

PRO 23:7 For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, "Eat and drink!" But his heart is not with you.

- d. See Psalm 1:2.

PHI 4:9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.

- 1. “things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me” - It is a reference back to Philippians 4:8, but it true of all the revelation of Jesus Paul and other inspired teachers had imparted to them.
- 2. “practice these things” - “prasso” [**prahs** soh] - “do, practice.”

- a. Paul spoke and wrote by revelation of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1:12).
 - b. Because of this they were to practice the instructions he had given them.
 - c. They were to model their conduct to agree with Paul's inspired teachings.
 - d. Paul was writing the commandments of the Lord. (1 Cor. 14:37).
3. "and the God of [the] peace shall be with you" - Lit. "the peace."
- a. "God of peace" is genitive of origin meaning God is the source of peace.
 - b. God is the giver of peace and only those who draw them to Him through His Son receive it.
 - c. Here are a few references to "the God of peace" or "peace from God." (Rom. 15:33; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Phil. 1:2; 4:7; 1 Thess. 5:23).
 - d. The "peace of God" is primarily an inward peace.
 - e. Christians often have enemies because of their allegiance to Christ and His teachings. (Matt. 10:35-37; Jn. 15:20-23; Matt. 5:10-12).

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