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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Philippians 4.

(2013)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Philippians 4.

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### Topics.

- Stand firm in the Lord.
- Paul's joy and crown.
- The Book of Life.
- Rejoice in the Lord always.
- Do not be anxious, but by prayer let your requests be made known to God.
- I can do all things through him who strengthens me.
- God will supply every need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

**The Previous Chapter:** in the previous chapter Paul warned the Philippians to beware of dogs and those who mutilate the flesh, of enemies of the cross of Christ and spoke of being blameless under the law. He talked of Jesus being God's gift of grace, of sharing in Christ's sufferings and being perfect, forgetting past failures and moving on in the upward call in Christ Jesus. He talked of becoming like Christ in his death of attaining to the resurrection and of Christ making us his own the chapter concluded with Paul saying, "We await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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### My Brothers, My Joy and Crown, Stand Firm in the Lord.

Philip. 4:1-5 ----- <sup>1</sup>Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. <sup>2</sup>I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. <sup>3</sup>Yes, I ask you also, true companion (true yokefellows in KJV) help these women, who have laboured 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. <sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup>Let your reasonableness (moderation in KJV) be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand

Paul's statement, "Stand firm in the Lord (v1)," shows that he did not expect every Philippian brother or sister to go out and do grandiose and boundless works for the Lord, but rather that they should hold fast to their faith and be a good testimony to the Lord as they went about taking care of their responsibilities, duties, obligations of their everyday work and household tasks. Though not all are called into the ministry we are all called to be a good testimony to God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by faithfully enduring in our faith and doing what is right, honest and good while we go about our daily work, our careers and our family life.

**Euodia:** was a Christian woman, her name means; fine travelling, to help on the road, to have a prosperous journey and to succeed in business affairs.

**Syntyche:** was a Christian woman her name means; accident, to chance and to reach out and meet together.

**Clement:** was a Christian man his name means; merciful.

Euodia, Syntyche and Clement worked together helping Paul in his ministry, it is interesting to notice Paul's words, "I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord (v2) since they imply that Euodia and Syntyche had some kind of a disagreement with each other while helping Paul yet despite the contention they had with each other Paul refers to them as his true companions. This shows that even though brothers and sisters in Christ belong to the same spiritual family and

maybe faithfully serving the Lord it does not always mean that they are always going to be in harmony with each other on all matters, nevertheless each of us should do all that is in our power to maintain unity and peace within the family, thus the reason Paul encourages Euodia and Syntyche to sort out their differences in the Lord (meaning in peace, compassion, grace and mercy contrasted to quarrelling, arguing, strife and contention).

### **Paul's Joy and Crown.**

A minister who is serving the Lord from an honest heart (like Paul) gets their joy from seeing those they minister to blossoming in Christ whereas a minister serving themselves and their own selfish ambition get their joy from seeing their religious empire growing and from the power and importance they receive from it. In Paul's earlier letters he told the Jewish religious leaders that he did not need written religious certificates to prove he was called by God to minister the Gospel, but rather that his credentials could not only be seen in his own life, but also in the lives of those who he had converted to Christ.

The Philippian brothers and sisters filled Paul with joy overflowing and he saw them as his crown. This beautiful relationship the Philippians had with Paul are his credentials. During Paul's era the religious leaders, (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) had all the religious certificates any minister of God could ever wish for, yet Jesus said of them: -

- Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness" (Matt. 23:27)

Clearly showing that religious certificates are no guarantee that a minister is not serving the Lord for his own selfish ambition and gain whereas the fruits of the Spirit manifested in the minister and the fruits of the Spirit manifested in his followers are (i.e., Paul full of love, compassion, mercy and grace ministered to the Philippians spiritually and they responded in showing him kindness and sharing in his troubles (v14-15).

To Paul a minister's true credentials were not manifested with ink on paper, but by the following: -

- Their faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The love, compassion and care they showed to those they ministered to.
- The fruits of the Spirit produced in those who followed their teaching.

**NOTICE:** Paul's words "Help these women, who have laboured side by side with me in the gospel," (v3) clearly show that Paul accepted woman working alongside him.

### **The Book of Life.**

I personally do not believe the words, "Whose names are in the book of life" (v3) mean that God has a literal hard covered book with real pages in heaven, but rather that the book in this context is used as a symbol of God's eternal mind. Just as man-made computers can store billions of bits of information in a few seconds and recall it at the same speed those who are devoted to God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ are not only engraved on the eternal mind of God, but also their entire life is recorded there. Much like the global internet keeps a record of every person who uses it which can be accessed at any time by those who have the power and authority to do so.

**For further information on the Book of Life see the title: -**

- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.
- In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**Rejoice in the Lord always:** over my years in Christianity I have been asked by brothers and sisters in Christ who were suffering extreme hardships and troubles, "How can we rejoice in the Lord always?" (v4), but Paul is not saying we are to rejoice because of hardships and troubles, but because we are in Christ and forgiven and loved by God and saved by faith and God's grace to eternal life and everlasting glory where there will be no suffering and no sorrow.

It is in these things that we are to rejoice in. Paul is not saying we should never feel grief, sorrow and sadness that would be totally unrealistic while we live in our mortal bodies and this mortal world, which are both infected with a cancerous virus called sin. Thus the reason Paul twice says, "Rejoice in the Lord always.

The following heartfelt words of Paul: -

- Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker was ill, near to death, but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow (Philippians 2:27).

Show that even Paul felt grief, sadness and sorrow over the thought of losing a treasured friend.

### **Let Your Reasonableness and Moderation, be Known to Everyone.**

In the following verse the word, reasonableness (used in the ESV) means sensibleness, rationality, fairness, gentle, patient, level-headedness, balance and carries the idea of common sense while the word moderation (used in the KJV) means restraint, fairness, temperance and self-control and self-restraint which shows that when Paul told the Philippians to, "Let their reasonableness (moderation in KJV) be known to everyone" (v4), he did not have in mind brothers and sisters in Christ imposing or forcing the Good News of the Gospel onto others (especially those who are not interested) since when we do this all we achieve is turning them even further against the Christian faith.

God's call to the Kingdom of Christ is an invitation, it could be likened to sending out wedding invitations to the guests which give them the opportunity to accept or reject the invitation. The Lord Jesus Christ is in this sense God's wedding invitation, Christ through the Gospel and his death and resurrection does not impose the invitation on anyone, but by his love manifested in laying down his life for the world (John 3:16) invites the lost to the greatest wedding feast of all time.

**The Lord is at Hand:** (v5) this statement does not mean that Christ is about to return, but rather carries the following two thoughts: -

1. By faith Christ is always close by to those who faithfully follow him.
2. Christ is only a confession away from those who do not know him (i.e., if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved) (Rom. 10:9) thus in this sense Jesus is always close at hand.

### **Do not be anxious, but by prayer let your requests be made known to God.**

Philip 4:6-7 ----- <sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious (Careful in KJV) about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Supplication:** means to beseech or beg (as binding oneself to another) in this context it carries the idea of making a petition, appeal or request to God.

**Anxious:** (careful in KJV) means to be worried or fearful about something.

**NOTICE:** Paul does not say that God will answer the prayer request by removing the problem or supplying the request, but he does say if we pray the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds from anxiety and worry. This shows that praying is not always about getting material things or problems solved, but finding mental

peace while we are in troubling and difficult circumstances. Mental health is equally as important as physical health. One aspects of the biblical phrase, "Living in heavenly places" can be seen as always having a mind free from worry and stress and being mentally content.

Paul in verse eleven says: -

- He has learned to be content in whatever situation he is in.

And in the letter to Timothy he wrote: -

- There is great gain in godliness with contentment, because we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world therefore if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content (1 Tim. 6:6-8).

These verses show that there is a place in Christ in which we can have a peaceful mind and be content even though we may lack many of the things this world has. (Paul says he has found the secret to this mental and spiritual heavenly place (see notes following verse 11)

### **Think on things Excellent and Worthy of Praise.**

Philip 4:8-9 -----<sup>8</sup>Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup>What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice (Do in the KJV) these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

**Practice:** (do in the KJV) means to practise or perform repeatedly, especially to habitually commit to accomplishing or executing a thing personally.

Making it a habit to think on whatever things are good, positive and worthy of praise is not limited to religious thoughts only, but also embraces the good things of the secular world (i.e., music, art, acts of kindness, courage, self-sacrifice brilliant skills and entertaining talents etc.), when we make things that are non-offensive to God our focus it will keep our mind healthy just as a good diet keeps the body healthy.

Having a healthy mind produces mental calm and peace and mental peace strengthens the bodies' immune system and so helps the well-being of our physical body even our modern day medical doctors and scientific practitioners would agree with Paul's advice to train the mind to think on what is good.

**NOTICE:** Paul also says, "Do them" (v9) this shines a spotlight on the truth that the Christian faith is not simply about meditating on the Scriptures and living in some state of mental and spiritual euphoria in our minds, but also involves the outward practice of what we believe inwardly, which is manifested outwardly by brothers and sisters in Christ fulfilling the Royal law (Jas 2:8) which Jesus summed up in the words, "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31).

Under normal circumstances no sane person deliberately hurts or harms themselves, but instead do all they can to avoid hurting themselves. No-one wilfully tortures themselves, but they will do whatever they can to protect the body and protect self, meaning they do-good to themselves and not evil or harm.

This is exactly what Paul means when he said, "Do them" (v9) and what Jesus meant when he said, "Love your neighbour as yourself." Loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do-good to others.

It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land.

Summing it all up, no sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves therefore Paul's words "Do them" (v9) and Jesus words, "Love your Neighbour as Yourself," simply means do-good to others and not harm, speak words that heal not words that wound this is called the Royal law in the New Testament.

### **I have learned in Whatever Situation I am to be Content.**

Philip 4:10-13 ----- <sup>10</sup>I rejoiced 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. <sup>11</sup>Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. <sup>12</sup>I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. <sup>13</sup>I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Paul (in prison at this time) is full of joy because the Philippians have shown him genuine concern and kindness which not only comforts him, but evidences their sincere and authentic love for the Lord, thus the reason for Paul's great joy in them.

Paul has learned to be content whether he: -

- Has abundance or lacks.
- Is in prison or free.
- Has wealth or is poor.

**I Can do all things through him who strengthens me:** (v13) this statement of Pauls has been used by certain religious ministers to teach those in Christ that no matter what they choose to do (start a business, a church, a new career etc.,) they will succeed because they "Can do all things in Christ who strengthens them," but this is not what Paul is saying.

The focus and context the verse is in is about contentment and having a peaceful mind, thus in this context Paul is saying, "No matter whether he is rich or poor, has plenty or lacks he is content and at peace since he can cope with any situation or circumstance (good or bad) through Christ who spiritually and mentally strengthens him.

### **Christ Strengthens faithful brothers and sisters in two ways: -**

1. Their minds and hearts are strengthened by the knowledge that they are not citizens of this mortal earthly world but of the eternal heavenly Kingdom and in their awareness that the love of God and the Lord Jesus Christ is upon them not because of their self-effort to attain to the laws standard of Holiness, but because of their faith and God's grace. Added to this glory is the awe-inspiring comfort that God has promised that at the end of their mortal life with all its troubles and sorrows they will be resurrected to eternal life and everlasting glory were there will be no suffering, sorrow or sadness.
2. Their minds and hearts are strengthened supernaturally by God's Spirit that transcends their own mental strength and ability to spiritually rise above or endure whatever the troubling circumstance, hardship or sorrow maybe.

**The secret:** Paul's words, "I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need" (Philippians 4:12) implies that not every brother and sister in Christ learns this secret (maybe attain to it might be a better phrase).

Paul does not speak of this as a secret in the sense that it is hidden, but in the sense that not everyone in Christ attains to it since the power of this secret is in direct accordance to the depth of our surrender to Christ and our exaltation of him as Lord and King not only of our heart but also of our mind our passions, desires, ambitions, goals and dreams when Christ is seated as the reigning King above all these nothing can shatter our lives or bring it to ruin.

Jesus said: -

- If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (Matt. 16:24)

This means to put Christ first in our mind, heart and emotions and make him the King who is seated on the throne of our hearts. The deeper our love for the Lord and the bigger his throne is in our heart the greater the contentment we will have in our minds. The key to the secret Paul is talking about is to be far more attached to Christ than we are attached to the things of this world. The secret to attaining to contentment and peace in our minds is in direct accordance to the attachment we have to Christ in our hearts (i.e., the greater the attachment the greater the peace and contentment).

**NOTE:** this does not mean that we should not have ambitions, goals and dreams and be passionate about them, in fact quite the contrary. God gives us ambitions and dreams of all sorts and if we are not passionate about them we will never achieve them.

**Christ the exalted King:** one of the reasons (there are of course many more) God's desires that we make Christ the exalted King and Lord seated on the throne of our inner most being is so that should our goals, dreams and ambition fail or should we be struck with terminal sickness, the loss of a job, home or child though we will obviously be grieved we will not be crushed because the royal King sitting on the throne of our heart will in that crises and that sorrow stand up and comfort us with a comfort that not only transcends natural thinking, but also our own strength, in that crisis moment and experience.

#### **The Philippians Supplied Paul's Needs and Became His Partners.**

Philip 4:14-18 ----- <sup>14</sup>Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. <sup>15</sup>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. <sup>16</sup>Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. <sup>17</sup>Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. <sup>18</sup>I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

When Paul was ministering in Macedonia and Thessalonica it was the Philippians that helped him financially and also shared his troubles and had concern for him. Even though Paul appreciates the financial help and concern that the Philippians gave to him, he is far more thrilled that their gift to him will result in eternal rewards stored up for them in heaven. The Philippians giving manifested the fruit of their generosity and the desire to see the Gospel spread to others. Giving of any kind to further the Gospel of Christ, manifest the love of God in the heart.

Paul clearly understood that any form of giving is a sacrifice (i.e., giving time to others take time from self, giving money to extend Gods Kingdom or help others denies self-certain luxuries and material things) thus all giving involves a sacrifice and different levels of dying to what self wants (the greater the giving the greater the dying to self). Thus the reason Paul refers to giving as a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

#### **God will supply every Need According to His Riches in Glory in Christ Jesus.**

Philip 4:19-23 ----- <sup>19</sup>And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. <sup>20</sup>To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. <sup>21</sup>Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. <sup>22</sup>All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household (at Rome). <sup>23</sup>The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Pauls majestic words, "My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ" is most likely one of the most abused verses in the Bible since many religious leaders use it to teach their followers that God will fulfil their dreams, prosper them and fill their bank accounts to overflowing etc.

This is not only reading far more into the verse than what Paul is saying, but a good example of taking a verse out of context (mostly to entice people into the church by false promises). The glorious, royal and majestic words, "According to God's riches in glory in Christ Jesus" by far surpass anything this mortal world can offer since anything the world gives can not only be taken in a moment, but is also only temporary whereas God riches in Christ are eternal and no-one can rob them nor can anything take them from a brother or sister in Christ.

**God's riches in glory in Christ Jesus refer to those in Christ: -**

- Having their sins forgiven.
- Having favour and fellowship with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Having been adopted into the eternal family of God.
- Having been given the free gift of righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ.
- Having Gods promise of being resurrected to eternal life and everlasting glory.

**NOTE:** Paul most likely used the words, "My God" (v19) in these verses for the following three reasons: -

1. To separate his God (the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of creation and of heaven) from all other gods the pagans believed in.
2. To separate the god of this world (i.e., the god of mammon/money and materialism) from the God of heaven.
3. Because he is speaking from a personal relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Every brother and sister in the Lord should not only see God as the Almighty God and creator of the world, but also see God in the same way as Jesus and Paul viewed God, as their God.

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End