

## Paul's Thanks and Prayer for Philippi

### Philippians 1:3-11

Online Sermon:

[http://www.mckeefamily.com/?page\\_id=3567](http://www.mckeefamily.com/?page_id=3567)

"An older couple had trouble remembering common, day-to-day things. They both decided that they would write down requests the other had, and so try to avoid forgetting. One evening the wife asked if the husband would like anything. He replied, *"Yes. I'd like a large ice-cream sundae with chocolate ice cream, whipped cream and a cherry on top."*

The wife started off for the kitchen and the husband shouted after her, *"Aren't you going to write it down?"* *"Don't be silly,"* she hollered back, *"I'm going to fix it right now. I won't forget."* She was gone for quite some time. When she finally returned, she set down in front of him a large plate of hash browns, eggs, bacon, and a glass of orange juice. He took a look and

said *"I knew you should have written it down! You forgot the toast!"*<sup>1</sup>

From a dreary prison shackled to soldiers in Rome Paul waits for his likely execution<sup>2</sup> at the hands of Emperor Nero. As he sits there his mind takes a journey "across Italy and the Adriatic to Macedonia and over the Via Egnatia to the Roman colony of Philippi."<sup>3</sup> Though



memory can be a fickle beast that often swims in an ocean of forgetfulness or worst yet a fictitious world of the imaginary, Paul was determined to write to his "joy and crown" (4:1) a personal letter filled with wisdom that only comes from discerning and addressing the truth concerning both the holy

victories and sinful pitfalls that the Philippians were currently experiencing. Like most ancient letters<sup>4</sup> and all his epistles except Galatians, 1 Timothy, and Titus, Paul began his letter

<sup>1</sup> Alan Carr, ["Thanks for the Memories \(Philippians 1:1-3\),"](#) in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2961.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Carr, ["Thanks for the Memories \(Philippians 1:1-3\),"](#) in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2961.

<sup>3</sup> R. Kent Hughes, ["Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel,"](#) Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 24.

<sup>4</sup> Craig S. Keener, ["The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament"](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Php 1:3-11.

with thanksgiving.<sup>5</sup> The opening of his letter was “no stereotyped formula,”<sup>6</sup> though but one with praise and adoration towards God whose light found its way to an unlikely place that was often called “miniature Rome!” Paul thanked God that despite the societal pressure to worship the emperor and a corpus of Roman gods, despite disunity inside the church and opposition from the “dogs, evil doers, and mutilators of the flesh” (3:2); miraculously some people in Philippi became born again masterpieces of God’s grace and as such citizens of heaven (3:20)!

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*It was not that “every single memory of them was good”<sup>7</sup> but that despite their failings Paul had the utmost confidence<sup>8</sup> that if they made their requests to God with prayer, petition, and thanksgiving the Lord would continue to “guard their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (4:4-7)!*

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It was not just Lydia his first convert or her family or the jailer and his family who were the reasons for his thanking God; it was due to his remembering all the saints (1:1)<sup>9</sup> in Christ Jesus in

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<sup>5</sup> H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Philippians*, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 2.

<sup>6</sup> Homer A. Kent Jr., “*Philippians*,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians through Philemon*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 105.

<sup>7</sup> Homer A. Kent Jr., “*Philippians*,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians through Philemon*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 11 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 105.

Philippi that this aging apostle in his dreary prison felt friendship, warmth, and unspeakable joy! In the opening part of his letter Paul told the church of Philippi of his prayers of joy, confidence in the completion of their good work, longing to see them with the affection of Christ, and concluded with a heartfelt, wisdom filled prayer of blessings for his friends and co-workers in Christ Jesus.

**Reflection.** When you as one of the Lord’s saints’ sins and fall short of His glory are you remembering rightly that while the sin is detestable to God you are still created in His image and being born again you are truly one amazing miracle? When is the last time you thanked God for another saint and have you told them how precious and loved he/she is in the sight of their Creator?

## Remembering With Joy in Partnership

When Paul prayed for all the saints of Philippi he did so with unspeakable joy. Despite being shackled to a Roman guard<sup>10</sup> in a dreary prison in Rome, Paul was not depressed and feeling sorry for himself like most of us would but instead in

<sup>8</sup> H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *Philippians*, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Barnett, *Philippians & Philemon: Joy in the Lord*, ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2016), 17.

<sup>10</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, *Exalting Jesus in Philippians*, ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 20.

remembering the “goodness and grace of God”<sup>11</sup> towards the Philippians such thoughts “evoked thanksgiving and prayer and joy in his soul!”<sup>12</sup> This would be the first of fourteen times that Paul used the word “joy” making it one of his major themes.<sup>13</sup>

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*Joy is “quiet, confident inner attitude that is not dependent on life’s circumstances”<sup>14</sup> but is found purely in basking in the grace, love, and mercy of our Lord.<sup>15</sup>*

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Because Paul was reflecting on the “well-being of the Philippians whom God entrusted in his care (2:2, 27–29; 4:1)”<sup>16</sup> his joy overflowed and he gave much encouragement to a church experiencing many difficulties. Ancient Rome with all its “games, sexual pleasures, lavish parties, theatre, and more;”

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<sup>11</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 23.

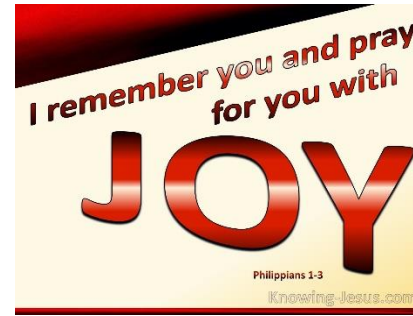
<sup>12</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 25.

<sup>13</sup> G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 47.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Barnett, [Philippians & Philemon: Joy in the Lord](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2016), 17.

<sup>15</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 25.

could not compare to Paul’s joy in the Philippians that was a thousand times better!”<sup>17</sup> One of the primary reasons that Paul remembered the Philippians with joy is due to “their



partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now” (1:5).

“The word “participation” (*koinōnia*) for Paul is a word denoting intimate fellowship”<sup>18</sup> which involves “mutual interests and sharing”<sup>19</sup> of a common

vision which in the Philippians case was to advance the Gospel message in a variety of ways. First, when Paul referred to his “partnership” with the church of Philippi he was speaking of the “hospitality and the material help that the Philippians gave him ever since they met.”<sup>20</sup> Though Paul preferred to earn rather

<sup>16</sup> Daniel M. Gurtner, [“Philippians.”](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Acts–Philemon*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2004), 574.

<sup>17</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 19.

<sup>18</sup> Daniel M. Gurtner, [“Philippians.”](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Acts–Philemon*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2004), 575.

<sup>19</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 24.

<sup>20</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Romans to Philemon.](#), vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 349.

than depend on the church for his livelihood,<sup>21</sup> due to his close friendship and mutual love with the Philippians he allowed them to financially support him (4:15), “first in Thessalonica (4:16), then in Corinth (Acts 18:5; 2 Corinthians 11:9), and now most recently in Rome.”<sup>22</sup> Second, partnership with the Philippians for Paul meant they shared joint responsibility to proclaim the Gospel message. The church at Philippi were to be “lights in the world” (2:14-15)<sup>23</sup> sharing the Lord’s words concerning “sin, repentance, reconciliation, forgiveness, and service.”<sup>24</sup> And finally partnership meant coming alongside, encouraging, and praying for those who suffer for Christ’s name’s sake!<sup>25</sup>

### Reflection

Have you taken the time lately to say thanks to the Lord for every spiritual blessing He has given you or because you are His child have you remained silent due to a sense of entitlement? Do the specks in your brothers and sisters eyes keep you from rejoicing in their hospitality, warmth and the fact as saved

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<sup>21</sup> Paul Barnett, [Philippians & Philemon: Joy in the Lord](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2016), 18.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Barnett, [Philippians & Philemon: Joy in the Lord](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2016), 18.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Barnett, [Philippians & Philemon: Joy in the Lord](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2016), 18.

<sup>24</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 25.

people they are masterpieces of God’s grace? Do you see yourself as a partner with the church leadership in proclaiming the Gospel message and if so have you embraced the divine role God has assigned you in His kingdom?

## Remembering With Confidence in the Completion of Good Work

The main source of Paul’s unspeakable joy comes from his confidence that God who began a good work in them will be “carried out to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (1:6)! When Paul used the phrase “good work” some of the Philippians would have readily understood this Old Testament phrase<sup>26</sup> to mean “God bringing something to completion as an act of His sovereignty.”<sup>27</sup> Paul’s confidence that his partnership with the Philippians would stand the “test of time was due to his confidence in the creative power of God.”<sup>28</sup> Salvation

<sup>25</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 27.

<sup>26</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Romans to Philemon](#), vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 349.

<sup>27</sup> Daniel M. Gurtner, “Philippians,” in [The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Acts–Philemon](#), ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2004), 575.

<sup>28</sup> G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 50.

cannot be earned but is a product of grace, a work that is begun by God in eternity past (Ephesians 1:4-6; Revelation 13:8, 17:8).<sup>29</sup> It is God who opens one's heart to hear, understand and accept the "word of truth," the Gospel of our salvation.<sup>30</sup> It is by God's will and grace and through our faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Son that one is born-again not of flesh and blood but by His Spirit, forever sealed until the day of redemption (1:6).<sup>31</sup> This is why Paul is confident that the work God began in Lydia and the jailer and all the other saints in Philippi would continue forever.

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*When the "day of Jesus Christ that is fixed in the Father's diary"<sup>32</sup> comes Paul was confident that the Philippians would bow low to Christ not just out of reverence alone but also due to their being accepted by the Father who will find their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life proving they truly are His children and rightful citizens of heaven (3:20).<sup>33</sup>*

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<sup>29</sup> Alan Carr, "[Can We Be Sure Salvation Will Last? \(Philippians 1:6\)](#)," in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2967.

<sup>30</sup> J. A. Motyer, [The Message of Philippians](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 43–44.

<sup>31</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 28.

<sup>32</sup> J. A. Motyer, [The Message of Philippians](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 45.

Though Paul told the Philippians he was confident they could "enjoy absolute assurance of salvation"<sup>34</sup> they remained a "work in progress" for what God began in their lives was not yet finished.<sup>35</sup> They were to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (2:12)<sup>36</sup> and with the assurance that those who press on (3:12-14) through submission to God's will continue to experience His "unstoppable work of



grace" in their lives and will be "filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Christ Jesus" (1:11). While they might not always be confident in their goodness, character, or even history; Paul told the Philippians to be confident in God that the good work in their lives will one day be finished for His honor and glory!

<sup>33</sup> G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 50.

<sup>34</sup> Alan Carr, "[Can We Be Sure Salvation Will Last? \(Philippians 1:6\)](#)," in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 2967.

<sup>35</sup> Paul Barnett, [Philippians & Philemon: Joy in the Lord](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2016), 19–20.

<sup>36</sup> Paul Barnett, [Philippians & Philemon: Joy in the Lord](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2016), 20.

## Reflection

Are you assured of your salvation? When the Devil whispers in your ears the words “you are not saved and are not going to heaven” do you believe him or at minimum doubt your salvation? Though we are not saved by works the fruit in our lives proves that we are indeed children of God. To produce fruit in the vine requires submission to the Lord. Are you submitting your entire life and are you running the race to win the prize for which God has called you heavenward in Christ Jesus? Do you believe that you are already a citizen of heaven and do you live in realization of this glorious truth?

## With the Affection of Christ Jesus

With an intensely personal<sup>37</sup> and genuine heart of sympathy and love Paul stated that it was right for him to have joy and confidence in the church of Philippi. With pastoral love<sup>38</sup> Paul has “all of them in the very center of his being, the

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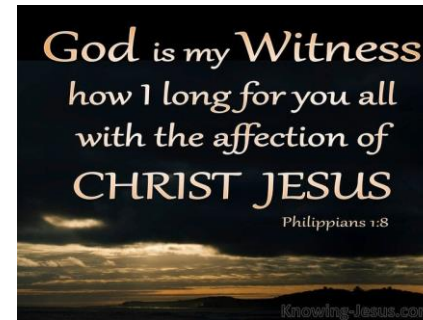
<sup>37</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 33.

<sup>38</sup> Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 11, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 68.

<sup>39</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 33.

<sup>40</sup> G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 51–52.

source of his physical and inner life – his thoughts processes and emotions and will – truly the center of his consciousness.”<sup>39</sup> Paul’s warm and genuine affection for everyone in the church “contrasted the negative attitude some in the church who were



experiencing of envy, rivalry, and selfish ambition (1:15-17; 2:3-4).”<sup>40</sup> His joyful thanksgiving of every believer at Philippi also provided an excellent appeal for a positive attitude towards all and a sense of

unity!<sup>41</sup> Whether defending or confirming the Gospel Paul stated another source of church unity was found in the fact that they all shared in God’s grace.<sup>42</sup> Paul was in a Roman prison under house arrest with two guards chained on either side of him<sup>43</sup> and he was about to be called to a courtroom to defend the Gospel message. Paul was affectionate for the Philippians

<sup>41</sup> G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 52.

<sup>42</sup> G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 54.

<sup>43</sup> G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 53.

during his imprisonment and defense<sup>44</sup> because due to their gifts, prayers, and partnership in sharing the Gospel message they “demonstrated they had an unwavering devotion to Christ in the face of common adversaries (1:28-30).”<sup>45</sup> Both Paul and the Philippians were co-partners in God’s saving grace for both were divinely enabled to endure tremendous suffering and persecution.<sup>46</sup>

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*Ironically it would be through Paul’s chains and their suffering that the power of the Gospel was being released both in Rome and its miniature, Philippi!*<sup>47</sup>

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Paul finished this section of his letter by stating that his desire to be with his “joy and crown” (4:1) is “so strong that it could be described as yearning with the heart of the Lord Himself!”<sup>48</sup> Paul was not embarrassed to express these deep, inner feelings

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<sup>44</sup> H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., [Philippians](#), The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 3.

<sup>45</sup> Ralph P. Martin, [Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 11, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 69.

<sup>46</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 34.

<sup>47</sup> G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 54.

<sup>48</sup> Ralph P. Martin, [Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 11, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 70.

for the Philippians<sup>49</sup> for God as his witness his love and partnership with this struggling church was that of a pastor deeply in love and praying for those entrusted in his care!

## Remembering the Philippians in Prayer

Paul finished the opening of his letter with a heart-felt prayer for the church of Philippi broken into three sections: the petition, purpose, and praise.<sup>50</sup> Paul’s petition to the Lord for the Philippians was that their “love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight” (1:9). While most ancient letters of Paul’s day focused on “praying for prosperity and health of the recipient,”<sup>51</sup> Paul prayed that their love for God and one another as evident in their giving<sup>52</sup> and sacrificial spreading of the Gospel message might not be static<sup>53</sup> but continue to grow! To truly love one another, Paul stated does not come from

<sup>49</sup> G. Walter Hansen, [The Letter to the Philippians](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 55–56.

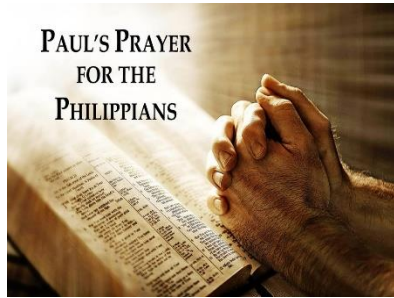
<sup>50</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 38.

<sup>51</sup> Clinton E. Arnold, [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Romans to Philemon](#), vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 349.

<sup>52</sup> Paul Barnett, [Philippians & Philemon: Joy in the Lord](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2016), 23.

<sup>53</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 38.

increasing personal sentiment for others but from the “work of the Holy Spirit to bring the revelation of Christ through the Word of God.”<sup>54</sup> Biblical or agape love is not based on doing things



to please the culture<sup>55</sup> but comes from knowing and apply God’s word to one’s relationships.<sup>56</sup> The purpose of knowing the Word of God was not to amass information but to discern and apply God’s will in their lives so that they might

be “pure and blameless for the day of Christ” (1:10).<sup>57</sup> The Philippians were to remain pure or “unmixed”<sup>58</sup> with the Roman culture of many gods and self-glorifying motives by becoming fully devoted to blamelessly serving God for His honor and glory. This meant replacing their “inner sins of envy,

pride, jealousy, selfish ambition, complaining, and arguing”<sup>59</sup> with praying to God for what was the best way for them to love others based on what God’s holy Word says?<sup>60</sup> Our relationship with God and others is only complex when one fails to know and submit to the Word and will of God which He has generously has given to us (James 1:5).<sup>61</sup> Paul prayed that the Philippians might know and live for Christ so that when He returns He might find them of one mind, deeply in love with God and each other!<sup>62</sup> Paul finished his prayer with a promise to Philippi: if they “plant their roots in the streams of Christ Jesus”<sup>63</sup> and learn from Him how to love and live rightly then then will be filled with the fruit of righteousness for the glory and praise of God” (10). **“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name”** (Matthew 6:9)!

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<sup>54</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 41.

<sup>55</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 41.

<sup>56</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 41.

<sup>57</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 42.

<sup>58</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Philippians: The Fellowship of the Gospel](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 43.

<sup>59</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 45.

<sup>60</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 42.

<sup>61</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 42.

<sup>62</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 44.

<sup>63</sup> Tony Merida and Francis Chan, [Exalting Jesus in Philippians](#), ed. David Platt, Daniel L. Akin, and Tony Merida, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 46.



## Reflection

Do you have a zeal to learn more about God's word so that with the aid of the Holy Spirit you might live a pure and blameless life? Do you hold up your relationships to the word and will of God? Do you believe the overarching purpose of your life is to honor God and if so are you living as citizens of heaven in full realization that Christ could return any moment?

## Conclusion

How do you thank God for the relationships you have in the Lord Jesus Christ? With a genuine desire to remember rightly, from his prison in Rome Paul picked up his pen and began to write to the Philippian people who were his joy and crown. The source of his joy for his brothers and sisters was that despite societal pressures to worship the emperor and a corpus of Roman gods through their faith in Christ they were born against masterpieces of God's grace and were true partners in sharing the Gospel message! He who truly had learned to be content in all situations was not feeling sorry for himself in the Roman prison but was confidently praising God that the good work that was started in Philippi would carry on to completion until the day Christ returned. As Paul put pen to paper he wrote



a prayer of encouragement that while meant for the believers at Philippi the modern day church desperately needs to hear and put into practice! The inner sins of envy, pride, jealousy, selfish ambition, complaining, and arguing that has infiltrated our churches has left them barren of fruit and starving at the Lord's table.<sup>64</sup> If we are to be filled with the fruit of righteousness then we simply must get into the practice of studying and applying the word of God to our relationships. This means not putting "self" but God and others first when we prioritize the many choices we have to make in our lives! We simply cannot be a light unto the nations and a unified body of Christ without meditation and prayer so that we might be granted discernment and depth of insight into how God wants us to not only treat Him but other believers. If we are to be found pure and blameless, albeit not sinless, and filled with righteousness upon Christ's return then it is imperative that we live in the present as citizens of heaven for the glory and praise of God our Father in heaven!

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<sup>64</sup> Not my quote but I believe it was A.W. Tozer who stated this in one of his books.