



PT Butler

Bible Study Notebooks

Study of Philippians

prepared by P. T. Butler Th.D

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These Bible study notes are provided for your use in the preparation of teaching the holy scriptures. They were meticulously prepared over many years to serve the Kingdom of God and aid in the growth of Christians of any age. Please use them in combination with prayer and diligence to promote the clear and honest declaration of God's word.

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TEACHER'S NOTES

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

Philippians 1:1-30

God is working on Christians who allow him to do so. He works through the Bible which is the final, complete, inerrant, divinely revealed word of the Holy Spirit--and through providence--either in "weal or woe," (see Isa. 45:7). God will continue working on the willing Christian until he "brings the work to completion at the day of Jesus Christ (either the Christian's death or the Second Coming of Christ--whichever comes first). God is working on Christians that "Christ may be formed in" them (Gal. 4:19; Eph. 4:13; 2 Cor. 3:18). In other words, everything that happens to the Christian is allowed and used by God to work through all things to transform him into the image of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:28-29). As Paul puts it in the context of Phil. 1:6-10, the "good" thing God is working in us is to make our "love abound more and more." Jesus stressed that love (agape/God-like love) is the essence of Christian character. Jesus became human and proved what he preached. Clearly, agape-love is something that comes by growth. Conversion, transformation, sanctification---call it what you will---comes by "maturation," by degrees, and not all at once (2 Cor. 3:18). Yes, even "saints, bishops and deacons" will have room for spiritual growth until Jesus comes.

This growth in love, this transformation into the image of Christ, is to be a knowledgeable love. The transformation Paul is talking about was to abound in knowledge and all discernment. Love without knowledge is useless sentimentality and becomes hypocritical. Without the knowledge that comes through God's divinely revealed and inerrant word (the Bible), the Christian has no way to "approve what is excellent in order to be pure and blameless." God's word is the Christian's absolute reference point. All other knowledge becomes relative to the knower (the human being). All human sciences (philosophy, psychology, biology, paleontology, chemistry, mathematics, etc., etc.) are relative, i.e., subject to the "knower's" experiences, and biases. God's word is not subject to any human's experiences or biases. It would be impossible to list all the scripture references that declare the Christian must "know" God's word, but here are a few (Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; 10:3-5; Eph. 4:11-16; Col. 3:10; 2 Tim. 2:15; Titus 1:9; Heb. 5:11-14; 2 Pet. 1:3-5; 1 Jn. 2:24; 3:24, etc.). Agape-love is not genetically inherited, and it does not grow of itself. It is learned, first from God's word, then, by being practiced (1 Cor. 13:1-7). We love God because he first loved us! (1 Jn. 4:19).

"What had happened to Paul" became known "throughout the whole praetorium, and to all the rest..." whoever "the rest" were! "What had happened" to Paul would include an account of his conversion, his conduct during all the trials he had gone through, and the miraculous events of his journey to Rome. In other words, Jesus Christ as Paul knew him had been made known throughout the whole praetorium "and all the rest." The term "praetorian guard" does not actually occur in the Scriptures, but has been implied in the statements of Paul about the "Praetorium" and "Caesar's household (Phil. 1:13; 4:22). Scholars have discovered that "Caesar's house" refers not only to soldiers but to all those in

government service. What had happened to the one-time famous Jewish rabbi was quite a story! Paul told it, and probably Julius a centurion of the Augustan Cohort (Acts 27:1) told it until 10,000 elite Roman soldiers and government officials stationed in and near Caesar's palace knew the story. It doesn't say they were all converted---simply that they knew the facts of Paul's being a prisoner there. Paul's point here is that it had been clearly perceived among this special cadre of Roman officials that Paul's circumstances were a result of his becoming a Christian. They had all heard the Gospel. We do not know whether any responded or not, or if so, how many.

Many of the Christians in Rome, now ruled by that devil's cohort, Nero, "were made confident in the Lord" because of Paul's boldness to make Jesus Christ known to "the praetorium." If Paul, the prisoner, was not afraid to speak boldly to Caesar's own elite "household" about Jesus, then those Christians living in Rome could become bold. If Paul and the Christians in Rome in A.D. 60 could be bold---what about Christian Americans in this century? Remember "the cowardly" are listed along with the "faithless, polluted, murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and liars" as having a final destiny in the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 21:8)! Pray for our Christian brethren to be "bold" all over the world, preachers in America and missionaries in the far flung regions of the globe.

Paul was never a relativist! But Paul was pragmatic about those who were envious of him, but who still preached Christ. Apparently there was nothing wrong with the content of what was being preached or Paul would have firmly, straightforwardly corrected it as is evident in all his writings! There were some who were factious and were preaching with a party-spirit, trying to belittle Paul or slander him. Even these, if what they preached about Christ was accurate, Paul pragmatically said, "Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed...in that I rejoice." Do we have any problem similar to that in the Restoration Movement? Indeed we do! What shall we do about it? We must find the "good" that "works" and use it or accept it so that the truth of the Gospel is proclaimed whether we agree with the methods or not. Of course, truth must never be sacrificed on the altar of "well, if it works it must be true."

Christians must have strong FAITH to believe that the grace of God covers their sins in the atoning death of Jesus Christ so that they can face death resolutely and joyfully (not frivolously ecstatic). For the Christian, Paul says, "to live is Christ, to die is GAIN." Paul's desire was to "depart" and be with Christ, for he says, that is very far better! Paul clearly teaches here that the Christian will be consciously aware in the very far better existence "over there." If there were there no conscious existence after death it would be foolish for Paul to desire to die and be with Christ. The doctrines of soul-sleeping and/or annihilation do not square with the apostle's teaching here. Other passages give evidence of conscious existence after death (2 Cor. 5:6,8,9; Luke 16:19ff; Acts 7:59; Matt. 17:3) and even in the Old Testament; (Gen. 25:8; Num. 21:24; Deut. 32:50; Ezek. 32:31; 2 Sam. 12:23). That "very far better" state will be ours immediately after leaving this world of woe.

I think that "measuring" progress and joy in the faith has to be basically internal and

individual. It is difficult to measure “progress and joy” outwardly. The Pharisees were experts at faking religiosity. Paul said we are not to “measure” ourselves by others (2 Cor. 10:12). He said we were not to view those in Christ by human standards (2 Cor. 5:16). We are to measure ourselves by the standard set forth in the Bible. We are to “examine” ourselves (1 Cor. 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:5), to see whether we are holding to our faith. We are to judge whether others have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and obeyed his command to be immersed for the remission of their sins or not. Otherwise we would never need to preach or send missionaries. Of course, the leadership of the church has some judgments to make about blatant sin in the lives of those who profess to be members of the church (1 Cor. 5:1-13; 6:1-11). And even that is in order to hopefully reclaim their souls for salvation, not to “get rid of them.” But beyond that, measuring “progress and joy” in the faith (i.e., in Biblical doctrine) is mostly a personal responsibility.

The Greek word, or *axios*, is the word translated “worthy.” It is the word from which we get axiom and axiomatic. It means “equal weight, or value.” So Paul is saying here, “Let the way you live your life be equal to the gospel of Christ.” Every human being “deserves” to hear and respond to the gospel. But it is the Christian who is to live his life according to the gospel of Christ. That is the goal of preaching and teaching. That is what the church gathers itself together for every Sunday. Evangelism is done almost exclusively apart from the weekly gathering of the church. The church gathers to “measure itself” (individually) from what is taught in the Bible. If the Bible is not taught---church members are not measuring themselves!

Christians are to “stand firm (fast)...in the faith of the gospel.” And, again, if they are not hearing or learning “the faith” (the doctrines about Jesus Christ and his church), they cannot stand firm! That is why the NT ministry is “proclaiming Christ, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, to present every man mature in Christ” (Col. 1:24-29, etc.). It is not an accident that preaching and teaching the gospel is emphasized on nearly every page of the N.T. It is the facts of the gospel “in which we stand, by which we are saved, if we hold them fast...” (1 Cor. 15:1ff). The gospel is of “first importance” (1 Cor. 15:3). There are lots of things in life we should have convictions about, but the most important and absolutely essential thing is trusting in (believing) the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Greek word, or *sunathlountes*, is translated “striving side by side.” It is the word from which we get “athletics” with a prepositional prefix added, *sun* which means, “together, or side by side.” In Jude 3, Jude uses the Greek word, or *epagonizesthai*, and it is translated “contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints.” It is the word from which we get “agonize,” and also a word from ancient Greek athletic “struggles.” Yes, we have to “strive” and “agonize” for the faith. We are not playing tiddly-winks here! We’re in a war (Gal. 5:16-17; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-20). We enter the kingdom “violently” Lk. 16:16-17, by death to self.. Conversion and sanctification are “violent” procedures. It is a complete rebirth of thinking, choosing, and acting. So “arm” yourself (1 Pet. 4:1-6) and get into the battle.

TEACHER'S NOTES

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

Philippians 2:1-30

Paul knows there “is encouragement” This is a rhetorical question. A rhetorical question always expects a positive answer. The Greek word translated “encouragement” (NIV & RSV) and “consolation” (KJV) is the word *parakalesis*. We get the English transliteration, Paraclete, from this word. But translated, it means literally, “called along side to assist.” It is translated Comforter in the Gospel of John where Jesus speaks of the coming of the Holy Spirit. He is to be the “Comforter, i.e., “Encourager.” Paul’s exhortation in this chapter, however, is for the Philippians to be of one mind, unified in Christ, by having the mind (the ideas and actions) of Christ. In 2:1-4 Paul lists a number of motives for them to cultivate the mind of Christ in them. (a) the consolation, encouragement, help that is in Christ; (b) the incentive of love that Christ gives through his atoning death; (c) the fellowship, or participation, we have through the Holy Spirit; (d) the mercy we feel for others, and the mercy we receive from others because of Christ. ARE ANY OF THESE MOTIVES ALIVE IN US BECAUSE OF OUR REDEMPTION BY THE VICARIOUS DEATH OF CHRIST? OF COURSE THEY ARE! Well then, we should have the “servant-mind” of Christ.

When you think how many people there are on earth at just the present moment (7 to 8 billion), you must realize there is ALWAYS someone, somewhere, who is better at any particular thing than yourself. There will always be someone better at knowing God’s word, better at loving others, better at giving one’s money, better at serving others, than yourself. So we might as well admit that others are better than ourselves. Even the apostles of Christ found this to be true. God is not impressed with our education, our wealth, our physical beauty, or our talents. He is the source of all we are and all we have. God’s standards of “better” are always different than human standards---a widow’s two mites, a cup of cold water, a visit to a prisoner. But it is not “natural” for one’s human ego to accept that all others are better than he is! Of course it isn’t “natural!” To admit that and to continually think that way demands CONVERSION! It requires that the “natural” mind (or mentality) be put to death and the mind of Christ be given free course in human beings. Christ’s love must “compel us” to see everyone no longer from a “human point of view...” (2 Cor. 5:14-21).

The NT does tell us to “...live quietly, to mind our own affairs, and work with our hands...that we may command the respect of outsiders and be dependent on nobody” (1 Thess. 4:11-12). We are forbidden to be “busybodies” in other people’s affairs (2 Thess. 3:11; 1 Pet. 4:15) as “meddlers.” But that does not relieve us from our Christian obligation to “look to the interests of others” in order to minister to them when they need help (Rom. 15:1-2); Jas. 1:26-27; 1 Pet 4:9-11. The Greek word translated “interests” is *ta* and could also be translated, “things.” That is more indefinite than “interests.” “Things” covers a broader spectrum. It would mean that we should be ready always to put our “things” second to the “things” of others when others may call upon us for help. The Greek participle translated “look” is active, therefore meaning we should continually be looking for ways to help others.

We should have come to an awareness that the human mind is incapable of solving the paradox of the “incarnation” by human experience or logic. The paradox of the “incarnation,” i.e., how Jesus of Nazareth, conceived in the womb of a woman who had never had sexual intercourse with a man, could be both human and divine at the same time, is unanswerable except by faith. We don’t even understand human nature, let alone divine nature. But we don’t give up believing that we exist because we don’t understand human nature! Now faith in the Jesus of the Scriptures, on the other hand, is something we can come to rationally, reasonably, and logically. We can believe the Scriptures are correct and truthful on the basis of the best kinds of evidence. In all the history of man on this earth, in all the experience of man on this earth, the Scriptures have never been contradicted by any scientific evidence. Wherever any archeological, historical, or scientific discovery has ever been made, not once has the Bible been contradicted. There are lots of things which man has discovered about which the Bible says nothing, but that is not a contradiction. Silence is not a contradiction---it is merely silence. The Bible’s integrity is not invalidated by its “silences” any more than the “silences” of any other book which does not deal with every infinitesimal scrap of data that may be available in a vast universe. SO, when the Bible says Jesus was God, emptying himself and taking upon himself the form of a human, we may trust the Bible to be absolutely correct---whether we are able to understand it or whether it has ever been known in the experience of human history, or not known in human history! This is the one article of the faith (i.e., the Scriptures) which every person must confess as a matter of personal faith (not understanding) to be a Christian. Any one who does not profess this by faith is not to be tolerated as a “brother in Christ” (see 1 Jn. 4:1-6; 2 Jn. 7-11).

Jesus’ obedience in death on the cross obtained our salvation. His death satisfied the wrath of God upon all sin (2 Cor. 5:21). However, God has chosen, arbitrarily, and by divine omnipotence and omniscience, that human salvation is to be available in covenant with Christ. Every covenant (even those humans make with one another) has terms that must be complied with (obeyed) in order that what is provided within the covenant may be acquired. If you want what someone else has and they offer it to you on “covenant terms.” you must fulfill the requirements of the covenant to get it. Salvation is by the grace of God but his grace is offered on covenant terms. That is the unequivocal teaching of the New Testament (New Covenant). Obedience may be a word that is out of vogue in our irresponsible society today, but it is a word that is used over and over and over in the Bible in relationship between God and man. The terms by which a sinner becomes a “covenant member with Christ” are clear enough in the N.T. for even a 12-yr-old to find and understand. Believe what Christ says, repent of sin, and be immersed in water (baptized).

The Greek word, or *katergazesthe*, means to “work unto completion” in your salvation. It does not mean that by work we may earn our salvation. That would contradict the Scriptures. Some of the Philippian Christians were having difficulty remaining loyal to the faith. Paul states that he expects them to be faithful while he is absent just as readily as they were when he was present. We must be faithful to Christ when no one else is present or watching us. God is ALWAYS PRESENT AND WANTING TO WORK IN US. The exhortation to the 7 churches of Asia Minor is “be faithful unto death and I will give you the

crown of life.” Remember, Jesus said that believing in him was doing the work of God! (Jn. 6:29). We must subjugate our mind and will to Christ’s mind and will revealed in the Scriptures and that is faith and that is how we “work out our own salvation.” Jesus called “believing” “work” (Jn. 6:29).

The Greek word translated “murmur” is, or gongusmon. W. E Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, says gonguzo is an “onomatopoeic word, i.e., representing the significance by the sound of the word, as in the English word murmur itself.” We get the English word “gong” from the Greek word gonguzo. It means to mutter, grumble, say anything in a low tone. The Greek word is used of the laborers in the parable of the householder Matt. 20:11; of the scribes and Pharisees against Christ, Luke 5:30; of the Jews, John 6:41,43; of the disciples John 6:61; of the people, John 7:32; of the Israelites, 1 Cor. 10:10 (twice). In the papyri it is used of the murmuring of a gang of workmen. God’s people are forbidden to murmur against Him in both the Old and New Testaments (1 Pet. 4:9; 1 Cor. 10:20; Num. 11:1-3). Murmuring is a disobedient way of questioning God’s reality, his power, and his care over us. Murmuring “tempts” God or “puts God to the test” to challenge him or dare him to do what he has threatened to do. But that does not mean we are to quit complaining against the crime, violence, indecency, corruption, illogical thinking and acting of our society (including government, religious, and business people who are guilty). If you think we should not speak out against sin anywhere we find it you haven’t really read the OT Prophets or the Gospels, or the rest of the NT. Remember, Paul spoke face to face with people in high places about righteousness, justice and the judgment to come (Acts 24:24). And don’t forget Jesus with the rulers (Matt. 23), and John the Baptist, (Matt. 3:7-12), etc.

On Paul’s 2nd missionary journey, Timothy joined him and ministered to Paul and others until Paul’s death. Timothy was a loyal, constant, beloved, and effective helper to Paul. Paul sent Timothy several times to visit churches that needed some personal guidance. To Thessalonica, 1 Thess. 3:1-2; to Macedonia from Ephesus, Acts 19:22; Paul left Timothy at Ephesus to nurture the church, 1 Tim. 1:3, 1 Cor. 16:10. Many a preacher and missionary has produced fruit in Christ’s kingdom only because they have had a faithful “Timothy” to help them. Now in prison, faced with the possibility of death, Paul plans to send Timothy to Philippi to nurture them. Paul wrote the Philippians that he had no one like Timothy. That indicates how much Timothy was worth to Paul and the churches in Europe. What are we worth to those who devote their whole lives to preaching the gospel? How much are we worth to the churches?

Epaphroditus had been so sick that he was near death. He recovered but there is no indication that Paul performed any miraculous healing on him. Being a Christian and involved full-time in preaching and missions does not guarantee that we shall never have sickness or injury or death. Paul went off and left Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20). Another case where Paul did not use his miraculous powers to heal a co-worker. But then, Paul himself had to bear some kind of sickness or physical impairment all his life (his “thorn in the flesh”) to keep him humble (2 Cor. 12:7-9). Epaphroditus was the recipient of God’s “mercy” and he recovered. But the Bible is clear that it is wrong to allege that we can receive

miraculous healing of all sicknesses---and that only a lack of faith keeps us from being healed miraculously of any and all diseases. Neither Jesus nor Paul healed every sick person with whom they came in contact. Neither is it true that those they did not heal had no faith. That does not restrict us from praying for healing!

There are times when Christians must be willing to lay down their lives that others may be saved and served, Acts 15:26; 20:24. And in many places in the world today, just as in the 1st century, it is a risk just to become a Christian or to be known as a Christian. If you want to read about modern-day "Christian martyrs," get the book, *By Their Blood*, by James & Marti Hefley, pub. 2nd ed. 1988, Baker Book House. It is possible, you know, that America could become so thoroughly secular that Christians might be put to death here for their faith!! IT COULD HAPPEN HERE! On the other hand, it is the clear teaching of Christ to his apostles (e.g., Matt. 10) that the Lord does not want Christian workers to "risk" their lives in some fool-hardy, unnecessary way. Christians never need to blatantly invite the world to persecute them---all Christians have to do is let the world know they belong totally to Jesus and it will hate them (Jn. 15:18-25).

TEACHER'S NOTES

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

Philippians 3:1-21

The Bible certainly uses metaphors from the world of animals to describe certain types of human behavior. Paul called the Judaizers “dogs” and “evil workers” in this text. The word “dog” had an ugly connotation to ancient peoples. Dogs were not house-pets to most people in those days. They couldn’t afford the “upkeep.” Dogs mostly roamed the countryside in packs or as individuals, unclean, half-wild, scavenging and attacking farmers herds of sheep and goats, and sometimes even the farmers. “Dog” stands for homosexual in Deut. 23:18; they are banished from heaven, Rev. 22:15; and Jesus warned, “give not that which is holy to the dogs,” Matt. 7:5. Gentiles were called “dogs” Matt. 15:27 by many Jews. Judaizers were “dogs” because they behaved like the half-wild, preying, scavenging dogs of ancient times. Jesus referred to Herod as a “fox.” Jesus called some Jews, “vipers,” as did John the Baptist. Isaiah said people in his day were as dumb as oxen and donkeys, Isa. 1:3. Peter called those who “indulged in the flesh and its corrupt desires, who despised authority, and who were self-willed,” as, “unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed...” 2 Pet. 2:10-12. Friend, there are still “dogs” roaming in packs today, stalking and attacking the innocent sheep of our society (even the sheep-fold of Christ). Among these “dogs” would be those who would try to bind us to the law of Moses (7th Day Adventists, Jews, etc., etc.). Since the Bible (God’s word) calls some “dogs” we must agree with God’s assessment and act accordingly. It might save a sheep here and there!

“Circumcision” was the fundamental ritual which made a person one of God’s “Chosen people” in the OT. Christians are now the real “circumcision.” It remains so in modern Judaism. “Jewishness, or chosen-ness” is now inward, and not outward (Rom. 2:28-29). The church of Christ is the real “Israel” of God (Gal. 6:15-16; Col. 2:11-13). Those who “worship by the Spirit of God” are the “true circumcision.” Worshiping by the Spirit of God would necessitate worshiping according to the New Covenant revelation of the Spirit of God. The Bible is the church’s only rule of faith and practice in worship, evangelism, stewardship, etc. God’s only chosen today is the church of Jesus Christ. It is the church Jesus “purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).” Anyone wishing to be “chosen” by God, must come into the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no such thing as salvation without becoming a member of the church of Christ. Being a Christian requires church membership!

Paul sacrificed his ancestral religion and culture, his educational standing, many of his Jewish friends and relatives, his job, and his safety. All these he “wrote-off” as “loss” for the sake of knowing Christ, the power of Christ’s resurrection and participating in Christ’s sufferings. If Christ spoke audibly to anyone today and asked him/her to give up all that, would they? CHRIST SPOKE AUDIBLY TO HIS APOSTLES AND THROUGH THEM ASKED US IN THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES TO BELIEVE (TRUST) HIM EVEN IF WE CANNOT “SEE HIM NOW” (1 Pet. 1:8-9).

Yes, a person can “know” Jesus in a saving, covenant relationship without losing everything. A person can “know” Jesus, personally, to the extent Jesus has promised to “know” any and all true believers. But that will require “keeping his commandments.” It is the loss of self-centeredness that counts with Christ. I refer you to words of Jesus in John’s Gospel, especially John 14:23; 15:14, etc. Did you know that you can often “know” someone better through reading what they write than by sitting next to them or looking at them? Think about it! My wife and I got to know one another through months correspondence before ever meeting face to face. And that was enough that we could pledge ourselves to marriage. And that marriage has lasted 66 years to the day of November 20, 2014!

I doubt that Paul meant the physical method of death by crucifixion. Paul was probably beheaded when he was executed. He was a Roman citizen and Romans usually did not crucify “citizens.” Paul meant he wanted to “become like” Jesus when Jesus gave himself up to do the Father’s will (cf. Jn. 12:23-27; Matt. 26:38-39, et. al). That is, Paul wanted to lay down his ego, his self-will for the will of God---Paul wanted to “die to self” (cf. Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; 5:25; 6:14 Rom. 8:10). Actually, Paul wanted to live like Christ until his physical body was put to death.

Paul gave up his own self-will in order to gain what Christ promised for such a “death”---eternal life. There’s nothing venal or selfish in submitting to Christ as Lord. There’s nothing selfish in acknowledging that one is an “unprofitable servant” or slave of Christ (Luke 17:10). There’s nothing selfish in sacrificing whatever one is asked to sacrifice in order to receive whatever one’s Lord chooses to give him---even if it is just the “crumbs from the Master’s table” (Mt. 15:1-28).

Paul’s desire to “press on” was not some self-righteous attitude of believing he could finally reach sinlessness and thus earn his salvation. Anyone who thinks that is what Paul meant has not read all the things Paul wrote about his own dependence upon the grace of God for his salvation. Paul is simply stating that he wants to keep pressing on in faithfulness to his commitment to Jesus. Paul knew that he had not reached the quality of faith he wanted to reach. Who doesn’t know that!??? Paul was a struggling Christian just like the rest of us (read again, Rom. 7:15-25). Paul used the Greek games to illustrate what he meant (1 Cor. 9:24-27); 1 Tim. 2:1-7).

The NIV translates Phil. 3:15, “All of us who are mature should take such a view of things.” The Greek word translated “mature” is *teleioi* and often translated “perfect” but means “to have reached a goal.” The “such a view...” is what he had said in Phil. 3:12-14! Let anyone who thinks he stands beware lest he fall! We hear almost every day of some “great” servant (minister, elder, deacon, singer, writer) of God who has “fallen.” We know of two of Jesus’s original 12 apostles who “fell” (Judas & Peter). And, while Peter adamantly vowed he would never betray Christ, even if he had to die, he did! Maturation (growth) in the faith is a goal that the Christian must keep reaching and stretching out for until he dies. And to mature in the faith demands “feeding” on the words of Jesus (John 6:63). That means Bible study! It means practicing Bible doctrines! Robert Browning (1812-1889), poet &

husband of Elizabeth Barrett Browning said is succinctly, “Ah, but a man’s reach (goal) should exceed his grasp, or what’s a heaven for?” God’s heaven is there motivating us to “grasp” at it every day of life on this earth!

Any thing or any thinking that so thoroughly occupies our thoughts and actions that we can’t think and do what Jesus commands us to do in the NT, becomes a “god” to us. If we can’t make our possessions or our families second to Jesus’ demands, then we are “minding earthly things.” Christians must focus their lives completely upon the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelation (2nd coming) of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:13). Christians should be laying up treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21). Some unbelievers and even some church members will “bad-mouth” Christians who “set their minds on things above” as being “too other-worldly” or being “irrelevant” in our modern world. But the fact remains that the people who are most interested in the life to come live the present life in the most blessed way. “Every one who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he (Christ) is pure.” 1 Jn. 3:3

Our citizenship is (present tense) heaven---NOW! The word politeuma in Greek (or “citizenship”) means a system of laws governing a state, or the state or commonwealth itself. When we were immersed into Christ our names were (past tense) recorded on the Lamb’s book of life. Our “citizenship” is not to be in heaven in the future; it’s here and now! We should be living by the laws of the kingdom of heaven NOW (those “laws” may be found in Christ’s commandments, especially the Sermon on the Mount). Yes! There is a LAW OF CHRIST (1 Cor. 9:21). Remember, Jesus taught his disciples (and that’s what Christians are) to pray, “....Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

The Greek word translated “vile” in KJV, Phil. 3:21, is tapeinoseos. It does not have the connotation “evil” as it does today. The Greek word would be better translated, “lowly” (as in the NIV & RSV). When God made the first human body he pronounced it “very good.” But when man sinned, God “subjected the whole creation (including the human body) to futility and decay” (Rom. 8:20-21). Our bodies are certainly bodies of “humiliation.” The human body is subject to all kinds of limitations and humiliations even when it is “young.” And when it begins to age, the person inside the body begins to realize just how humble and lowly it is. It becomes subject to disease, atrophy, and eventually to death and decay. As Paul says in 1 Cor. 15, it is “sown (buried) in corruption...in dishonor...weakness....and naturalness....but it is to be raised in incorruption....glory....power....and spirituality.”

TEACHER'S NOTES

Prepared by Paul T. Butler

Philippians 4:1-23

The word "virtue" in Phil. 4:8 is from the Greek arete which means that whatever produces the absolute best, the most morally excellence for a person is virtuous. Paul had already exhorted the Philippians to "stand firm" (1:27) "striving for the faith (i.e. apostolic word) of the gospel." Steadfastness, firmness, stability in the gospel of Christ produces the "most excellent" life possible here on earth. We must not allow our faith in Christ to waver with the circumstances of life here. Paul wrote the Romans, "...I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Unbelievers, have no "anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:19) sure and steadfast" which gives us "strong encouragement and hope." So they are mentally and spiritually tossed about like a floundering ship at sea. Their lives are emotional and psychological roller-coasters----up and down, up and down, up and down according to the circumstances. The Christian is the only one in the world who is able to maintain emotional stability, day in and day out in spite of the circumstances. And that certainly is a "virtue" and a blessing in life.

Women in the first century, as now, sometimes played a prominent part in the activities of the churches! But then, as now, they sometimes had disagreements which were troubling the congregation! So Paul exhorted these two women, Euodia and Syntyche, to "think" (Gr. phronein) the same about the matter over which they disagreed. Yes! There are times and circumstances and matters which dictate, whether they are matters of doctrine or not, that Christians have to lay aside their opinions and "think the same." Opinions certainly must not be causes for division in the body of Christ. Paul also called upon his "true yokefellow," probably the local minister or evangelist or leading elder of the church, to help mend the quarrel. Clearly, there were then, as now, serious disagreements among brethren that needed settling, and the church was the place where such discontents should be resolved (not in civil courts) see 1 Cor. 6:1-8. The Restoration Movement has "restored" much of N.T. Christianity, but it has not restored this. This is a "virtue" (matter of moral excellence) the church should be seeking. The Lord's church of the 21st century is very weak on self-discipline.

William Barclay says Phil. 4:4-5 contain the "Marks of the Christian Life." Joy and considerateness. The Greek word Chairete (pronounced, ky-ray-tay) translated, "Rejoice" is a present tense verb which means, "continually be rejoicing." The Greek word epiekes translated "gentleness" means "equitable, fair, forbearing, considerateness, humaneness." The Christian is exhorted to show his "considerateness" to all men! The Lord is always near at hand, and sees whether we are grumbling or rejoicing, and whether we are being considerate with all people or not. Being considerate, however, does not permit the Christian to compromise any part of the clear doctrines of the NT. The Christian must always stand for the truth while being "considerate" of those who do not acknowledge the truth of the gospel. As Paul says in Rom. 12:18, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all

men.” Some people just will not accept that a Christian is being considerate while standing for the truth of the Scripture (for example, the Christian must stand for what the Bible both OT and NT says about homosexual behavior, while being “considerate” of all men----see how far that gets you with the “gay-activists”!). If there are those who will not permit a Christian to be at peace he can do nothing more but allow an unpeaceful person alone.

Over half of all illnesses are the result of anxiety! That is a medically documented fact! And every other illness not the result of anxiety is exacerbated by it. Paul’s admonition here sounds exactly like Jesus’ description of a “kingdom citizen’s” character in the Sermon on the Mount. The Greek word translated “anxious” is *merimnate*. It is in the imperative mood meaning it is a command. Significantly, Matthew recorded Jesus’s statement in Matt. 6:25 in the imperative mood also! Do Jesus and Paul mean the Christian is really to have anxiety about nothing?! Weelllll, neither of them used figurative or symbolic language when they said it! The Greek word means literally, “divided-mindedness.” “Christians are expected to live above emotional tension, nervous breakdowns, mental illness, and anxiety symptoms.” (Wilbur Fields in *Philippians*, College Press, pg. 101). I’m sure Wilbur Fields would not expect Christians to “live above” mental illnesses caused by chemical imbalances or congenital causes. However, both Jesus and Paul plainly command Christians to rid themselves of anxiety by faith and prayer. Peter advises, “Cast all your anxieties upon him (Christ) for he cares about you.” 1 Pet. 5:7 What an invitation! The English word “worry” is derived from the old German word *wurgen* meaning, “to choke.” Somehow, the term came to denote “mental strangulation,” and then, to describe the condition of being harassed with anxiety or care. If Christians are to be without anxiety, why do we have so many “Christian counselors”? If human beings would accept the Bible as God’s word to them, individually, anxiety would be greatly reduced, perhaps even go away completely!!! I don’t know about you, dear reader, but I verbally, in prayer, every night “cast all my (cares) anxieties” on Jesus! Believe me, I have plenty I could “worry” about. But, I can’t change one hair of my head by “worry” so I let Jesus take care of “worry.”

Faith and prayer are the virtues that produce “the peace of God which passes all understanding” and which “will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” That is a peace or tranquility that transcends the power of the human mind to understand! All the psychologists and psychiatrists in the world, Christian or not Christian, cannot possibly give that! Faith comes from knowing and trusting the word of God, Rom. 10:17 that transforms the mind, Rom. 12:1-2. Prayer verbalizes the act of “casting every care upon Christ.” There you have it! God’s peace (not prayer) guards our hearts and thoughts (all the inward feeling and thinking). We obtain the peace of God by believing! We pray to thank God we are given the opportunity to believe! When the heart and thoughts are protected the Christian’s whole being is safe. Safe from lies and doubts and deceptions. Safe from distracted-mindedness. Safe from fretfulness. Safe from worry. The world of unbelief does not understand such peace in the inner person, and in its pride and arrogance (which is usually more bravado than brains) dismisses Christians who do so as naive, illiterate, dumb-dumb’s.

Every human mind sets itself upon or “thinks” upon something. When the mind has

dwelt long enough in any line of thinking, it can almost never get out of it. The human eyes and ears are the “windows” of the mind. What the eye sees and what the ear hears, is what the mind thinks upon. Therefore, it is absolutely important as to what the human allows the eyes to see and the ears to hear. Every human has the power to direct his/her eyes and ears away from that which is bad, and toward that which is good (virtuous). Paul wrote that Christians must “bring every thought into captivity to obedience to Christ” (2 Cor. 10:3-5). The Bible has spoken! Men and women can “set their minds” either on things on the earth or things that are of heaven (Col. 3:1-3). Of course, a Christian is going to be tempted, every day. However, Christians do not have the luxury of irrationally claiming that they “can’t help everything they see and hear.” Only unbelievers are allowed to deceive themselves with that big lie. Since the word “virtue” means “the most excellent, the best,” it is not difficult to see Paul is admonishing the Christian here that the “venerable, dignified, respectable” things or the “true, noble, honorable, upright, lawful, pure, untainted” things is what the Christian should see and hear and as a result, think upon!

Needless to say, almost anyone would agree that contentment is an “excellent” (i.e., virtuous) attitude to have. If you were to ask almost anyone in the world if they are trying to “find” contentment, they would probably say “Yes!” However, most people in the world are seeking contentment in the wrong places! Most people are seeking contentment in having more money (“if I could only win the lottery I’d have contentment”). Contentment is not “found”----it is learned. Just as Paul said it here in Phil. 4:11-13. And every human being learns either to be content, or not content, through their “faith system.” That is, they come to, or don’t come to contentment through what they “believe in.” If they believe in themselves, in their government, in other human beings, in possessions, in fate, in luck, in health, in science----you name it----they are never going to be content, because none of those are ABSOLUTE! They are all transient, temporary, dying, and actually doomed. And worldly people should see this from the fact that this present cosmos and every bit of matter in it has been subjected to futility and decay (Rom. 8:20-21). Paul learned to be content in any and all circumstances because he had thrown himself completely upon the grace of God by faith and commitment to obedience of the word of God. THAT’S HOW CONTENTMENT IS LEARNED. Not from experience, but from faith and trust in God to keep his word!

Yes! Anyone who gives money which supports any kind of gospel-ministry, shares or fellowships with the work of that ministry. Whether it be foreign missions, home missions, the benevolent work of the church, the evangelistic work of the church, the Biblical-education work of the church and anyone who gives participates in the work of that ministry. Money honestly earned is an “exchange” for the investment of a person’s time, energy, and life given to earn that money. When one gives his money to gospel works he is giving his life. Money is not the only way a Christian may “give” his life in gospel ministry, but it certainly is a very significant way to offer one’s life to Christ. That is why Paul (in 2 Cor. 8-9) makes it clear that what one gives should not be out of coercion, necessity, or intimidation. Christ does not want our lives unless we are willing to give them----the same with money. Christ doesn’t have to have our money in order for the church to survive. He offers us the opportunity to participate in the greatest, most important, everlasting work going on in the world today. Whatever is

done in the halls of the U.S. Congress, whatever is done in the “Space program,” whatever is done in medicine, science, psychology, education, CAN NEVER “HOLD A CANDLE,” TO WHAT IS BEING DONE IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES, RIGHT NOW! All that is of this world is doomed to perish! Only what’s done for Christ will last forever! The safest investment you will ever make of your money is investing it in heaven’s work! The late Harold W. Ford once wrote, “The preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ remains, yet the single most important task to which a Christian human being can commit himself and his talents...It is time to call for a return to preaching as public oratory...it must also be characterized by intelligent Christian truth and scriptural soundness...Academically speaking, because our world is now embroiled in a war of ideas, the idea that it is only through Jesus Christ that the world can be reconciled to God must ring through the din of battle with enthusiasm and clarity. This calls for preaching!”

Not only is gospel ministry your safest investment, it produces the greatest returns! 2 Cor. 9:6---”He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” Now there is no promise in the NT that the “reaping” will take place here, in this world, in this world’s goods. In fact, there is some indication that those who really follow the urging of Christ and the apostles about giving their money to gospel work may live their lives on the edge of “want” on many occasions. Not that the Lord would ever let a Christian starve to death from giving, or deprive his family of essential needs, but the Lord never promised that Christians would live lives of luxury! “We brought nothing into this world, and we shall not take anything out of it, but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content.” 1 Tim. 6:6-8 BUT WE CAN SEND IT ON AHEAD BY INVESTING IT IN THE HELP OF OTHERS IN THE NAME OF CHRIST (cf. Luke 16:8-9). We are promised that we shall “always have enough of everything” (2 Cor. 9:8) and be supplied to give much (2 Cor. 9:8-10), and we shall reap the fruit of other’s thanksgivings (2 Cor. 9:12), and the knowledge that our hearts are set on the right place---heaven (Matt. 6:19-21).

SAFELY THROUGH ANOTHER WEEK

By John Newton author of "Amazing Grace"

Safely through another week
God has brought us on our way;
Let us now a blessing seek,
waiting in His courts today;
Day of all the week the best,
emblem of eternal rest,
Day of all the week the best,
emblem of eternal rest.

Mercies multiplied each hour
through the week our praise demand;
Guarded by almighty power,
fed and guided by His hand;
How ungrateful we have been
in repaying love with sin!

While we pray for pardoning grace,
through the dear Redeemer's Name,
Show Thy reconciled face,
take away our sin and shame;
From our worldly cares set free,
may we rest this night with Thee,
From our worldly cares set free,
may we rest this night with Thee.

Here we come Thy Name to praise,
Let us feel Thy presence near:
May Thy glory meet our eyes,
while we in Thy house appear:
Here afford us, Lord, a taste
of our everlasting feast,
Here afford us, Lord, a taste
of our everlasting feast.

When the morn shall bid us rise,
may we feel Thy presence near:
May Thy glory meet our eyes,
when we in Thy house appear:
There afford us, Lord a taste
of our everlasting feast,

May Thy Gospel's joyful sound
conquer sinners, comfort saints;
May the fruits of grace abound,
bring relief for all complaints;
Thus may all our Sabbaths prove
till we join the church above,
Thus may all our Sabbaths prove
till we join the church above!

Introduction to Paul T. Butler Th.D

Paul was born in Springfield Missouri and graduated from Conway High School prior to enlistment in the US Navy. He began serious bible study with correspondence courses from San Jose Bible College. He later enrolled in Ozark Bible College and acquired his Bachelor of Theology degree June of 1961. He received a Master of Biblical Literature degree from Ozark in May of 1973. He received a Doctorate of Theology from The Theological University of America in October of 1990.

Paul taught at Ozark Christian College from 1960 to 1997. He also served many years as registrar for the college.

Introduction to the Sound Bible Study project.

The Sound Bible Study project is a cooperative effort of Christian educators and Jordan Media Enterprises LLC to provide the serious examination of the Scriptures for the conscientious student. All the teachers are experienced educators who have spent countless hours in the classroom on both sides of the lectern. The audio recordings and written notes are made available for those who wish to learn God's Word at a collegiate level but have been unable to matriculate. There is no intention to compete with the many faithful Bible schools, but rather to serve along side and strengthen both the student and the teacher for a stronger and more effective Kingdom of God that knows how to properly divide the Word of God.

