



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Blessings and Provisions of God (Phil 4:1-23)

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Bible studies for legislators are held Tuesday mornings at 8:30-9:00am in 514 CLOB. All Senate and House Members, all Democrats and all Republicans, are invited for a time of study and prayer on Tuesday mornings. The weekly Bible study is nonpartisan and non-denominational.

The current study for the 2010 General Assembly is the Book of Philippians. The previous weekly study examined the upward call of God in relation to three areas: (1) being discerning and strengthened; (2) being mature and watchful; and, (3) being hopeful and eagerly waiting for the return of the Lord. I pray that this new study will be invigorating to you. I am here to serve you and to be a resource for prayer and counsel. Please accept my study in the Word of God, as an evidence of my desire to serve you.

With the Bible as our foundation and authority, the mission of Capitol Commission is obedience to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) within the Capitol communities of the world. We are not a lobbying group attempting to garner votes or reform society. Our mandate is to see the hearts and lives of elected officials transformed with the Word of God. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message, and to help believers mature through the verse-by-verse teaching of Scripture. In the Bible, we see God's great love for the world, especially for those who have been placed in authority. This is the foundation for our ministry to you.

At the very beginning of these Bible studies in the Capitol for the 2010 General Assembly, I would like to communicate the biblical goals of my ministry service to you and with you. The Apostle Paul articulated several of these goals as he petitioned God on behalf of the church. He was thankful for their Christian life, fellowship in the gospel, and confidence in the sovereign work of God in their lives. He then prayed that their love would abound "still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment" so that the people of God would approve the best things of life from the many good things in life, for the purpose of being "sincere and blameless until the day of Christ," and to be fruitful in righteousness "to the glory and praise of God."

Introduction

Philippians 4 begins a new section with the general theme being "rejoicing in all things." The word, "therefore," beginning Philippians 4 would seem to indicate conclusion of the points made in the previous chapter. It would be best to regard Philippians 4:1 as rightly belonging to the end of chapter 3. Paul exhorted his readers to "stand firm," which

would indicate that the primary subject of the epistle is reaching a conclusion. The primary reason for this epistle is to encourage the readers to rejoice in the Lord, and also to reassure the church with regard to God's sovereign will. The believers also needed to be warned regarding false teaching both among and beyond the church.

STAND FIRM

(4:1) The relationship of this verse to the previous chapter demonstrates the expectation and reality of the Lord's return as motivation to live in a manner worthy of Him. Scripture contains many exhortations to "stand firm" and "stand fast" (e.g. 1 Cor 16:13; Gal 5:1; Eph 6:13-14; Col 4:12). The Epistle to the Philippians contains a threefold responsibility: (1) "press on" (3:13-14); (2) "walk" (3:17); and, "stand" (4:1).

COMMAND	IMPLICATION
"press on"	know the goal
"walk"	know the Lord
"stand"	know the provision

The believers' relationship with the Lord forms true strength, which the Holy Spirit uses beyond one's ability. Moreover, as a result of the truth that the Lord will return, the church is to stand together (cf. "my joy and crown" with 1 Thess 2:19). The Apostle's description of the church as his "joy and crown" is certainly not flattery for they had faithfully supported his ministry (4:15-16). The chapter will continue to indicate the best things in life that God has for those who trust in Him.

STAND TOGETHER

(4:2-23) Five blessings are indicated in Philippians 4 as being received by believers, and for use in living the Christian life and for working together by God's grace to His glory. The *first blessing* is peace in the church when believers stand together. There were two individuals, Euodia and Syntyche, in the church who were not living "in harmony in the Lord" (4:2). The issues may have been personal or doctrinal,¹ but regardless the entire church is urged "to help these women" (4:3). The church is to have the attitude of Christ Jesus (2:5) in all things because the life and testimony of the entire church is always of utmost importance. Scripture often employs the

metaphorical use of head and body (Eph 1:20-23). The head of the body is Christ, and every individual believer is a member of the body. The “head” works through the “body” to strengthen it for the purpose of edifying itself in love (4:15-16). In the physical realm, if the head is incapacitated, the body will experience paralysis. Therefore, the absolute necessity of depending upon Christ is evident. It is also true in the physical realm that all members of the body must work together in synergy (with the mental processes), or disorganization will result.

Whenever there is conflict among God’s people, it is difficult to function as a healthy body of believers. A shared faith in Jesus Christ and even a similar desire to serve Him does not always result in the unification of the church. Peace will be reality when believers share the attitude “which was also in Christ Jesus.” Having peace in one’s mind, “maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose” (Phil 2:2) will produce peace among the church. Peace of mind is the result of correct thinking. Wrongly focusing upon actions or words that result in strife must be resisted adamantly (2:4-5).

FIVE BLESSINGS ARE INDICATED IN PHILIPPIANS 4 AS BEING RECEIVED BY BELIEVERS, AND FOR USE IN LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AND FOR WORKING TOGETHER BY GOD’S GRACE TO HIS GLORY.

The *second blessing* is contentment. “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (4:6). Prayer and the word of God is the source of true strength and the means to success. Contentment resides in the power of God, as believers adjust to circumstances. Paul said he knew how to adjust his life when he had little and when he had much. Employing military language (“God . . . will guard”), Scripture reminds believers that the Lord will have His peace take possession of their hearts and minds “in Christ Jesus” (4:7). If there is any doubt with regard to pursuing the best things in life, verses 8-9 give instruction for regulating one’s life.

How to be Content in Life
1) Be anxious for nothing
2) Be prayerful for everything
3) Be thankful for anything

The *third blessing* is power to complete responsibilities (2:10-14). Believers do not have the prerogative to claim inadequacy to complete responsibilities. The objective is to accept responsibility, and rejoice in the Lord by trusting in Him to provide the strength needed to accomplish the responsibilities in life. Verse 13 does not

teach that one can do anything desired; rather, strength comes from doing the things that Paul discussed in his epistle. In the immediate context, this would include the instruction of verses 8-9. God provides strength through the belief and practice of biblical truth.

The *fourth blessing* is giving to support others in the ministry that God has provided. The church at Philippi sent gifts to Paul and he thanked them for their contribution to his ministry (4:15-16). Paul’s primary concern was not for himself, but for the believer’s “profit which increases” to their account (4:17). Believers may have confidence that God will supply all their needs “according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” because He knows His people better than they know themselves (4:18-19). Paul stated that his provisions were “in the Lord” (4:10), “through Him” (4:13), and “in Christ Jesus” (4:19, 21). All the blessings received are worthless without Christ as the focus of life and reason for work.

“DO NOT STORE UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES ON EARTH, WHERE MOTH AND RUST DESTROY, AND WHERE THIEVES BREAK IN AND STEAL. “BUT STORE UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN, WHERE NEITHER MOTH NOR RUST DESTROYS, AND WHERE THIEVES DO NOT BREAK IN OR STEAL; FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE ALSO (MATT 6:19-21).

The *fifth blessing* is fellow believers. Paul wrote affectionately with regard to greeting “every saint in Christ Jesus” (4:21). Believers are to be a joy to one another. The church is not only to stand firm, but also to stand together in living the Christian life and seeking to glorify God by His grace. True unity and peace is possible for sinful beings. However, most importantly, one must have peace and fellowship with God. As believers avail themselves of God’s provisions, they are able to triumph in life and in working together.

God has promised provision beyond calculation. The resources available to the child of God are according to His riches in glory. Every believer should know the experience of relying upon the promises of God for every need supplied. Not to prove God faithful of His promises and provisions is to impoverish one’s self. As needs are often in the physical realm, believers may be convinced that God delights to manifest His power and riches in everyday life. Believers may also be confident that the grace of God received by faith and repentance will result in overabundant provision in the higher realm of spiritual need. God is to be the joy and boast of every believer for He is their very life. I pray this study has been a blessing to you, and that the teaching of God’s Word will be the source of your strength and means to your success, until the day when you will know the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as perfectly as He knows you.

¹ If the issue were the latter, Paul would have likely addressed the issue himself, as he was resolute against false teachers..