



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

PHILIPPIANS REVIEW CHAPTER 4: 1-8

WYOMING

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2013

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Philippians is a very practical book where Paul constantly focuses on central issues of our faith, giving sound instructions for living. He emphasizes the fact that we can expect hardship, as he also endured, when we are faithful and the gospel is proclaimed. Paul wants us to "Stand Firm".

I. STAND FIRM IN HIS WAY+ PHILIPPIANS 4

A. STAND FIRM+ PHILIPPIANS 4:1

"Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved." Philippians 4:1

Paul obviously did not receive his joy from circumstances but rather through the people God had placed in his life. They were his joy, his "crown". These believers were the fruit of his ministry, the validation of his life seen through their faithfulness and proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Paul was concerned for their spiritual welfare and desiring for them not to be shaken in any way by the hardships they faced, Paul commands them to stand firm and continue in their faith and us as well.

stand firm+ Greek word **steko,** is a military term meaning to stand your ground, be immovable, hold your position on the front line, done while under a heavy assault or attack during battle.

Paul chose this term because he knew the Philippians were and would be under heavy attack. The same is true for us as well as we live this life in service to our Lord. Paul knew that Jesus Christ is all-sufficient to meet our needs not just in His provision for salvation, but also in His provision for life. Paul was imprisoned at the time of writing this book. His life was an example of having to endure hardship for the sake of the gospel. And he was an example to the Philippians of standing firm and immovable through those hardships *because* of God's faithfulness and constant provision. We must submit our life to God, finding our joy and life in Him alone. We dare not compromise with this world as we are tested or assaulted. We cannot give in under the testing or yield to temptation to sin. We must stand firm in our faith knowing that beyond this life and all the trials that come, there awaits a crown and life forever with Jesus Christ. May God give us a deep joy in the certainty of this hope He has set before us! Therefore, may the habit of our lives be to **stand firm!**

B. WITH UNITY. PHILIPPIANS 4:2-3

"I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life." Phil 4:2-3

Paul strongly admonishes the two women as individuals to be obedient and live in unity, but also calls on the church as a whole to hold these women accountable to the church's purpose of being of the same mind intent on one purpose. Unity in the body of Christ, with fellow believers is critical to being able to stand firm. If Satan can bring about dissension and friction and it is allowed to continue, it will fracture the church of Jesus Christ. We see it happen on a continual basis. True unity, true like-mindedness is hard, especially when you have been hurt or wronged. But it is essential and Paul begins here as he exhorts us to stand firm! We are called to no less! Paul said in Philippians 2:2, "...*make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.*"

C. WITH JOY IN THE LORD. PHILIPPIANS 4:4

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

Joy is found in the secure, eternal relationship with Jesus Christ that never changes. Therefore, it characterizes the life of a true believer and is present regardless of life's events that can test the foundation of one's faith. Because our joy is in Christ, it is limitless regardless of what comes our way. This is a life lived beyond feelings, emotions and experiences and brings stability and joy to circumstances in life. We may not always rejoice in our circumstances, but we can always rejoice in the Lord.

D. WITH A FORBEARING SPIRIT. PHILIPPIANS 4:5A

"Let your gentle spirit be known to all men." Philippians 4:5a

It isn't easy to be known by a "gentle or forbearing" spirit. We are to stand firm through harsh or unfair circumstances and rejoice always in the Lord with a gentleness that endures mistreatment without any malice or bitterness towards others. And all of this is done without compromising on the truth in absolute humility. If we succumb to unfair treatment from others with sin, anger and vengeance, then we give way to sin in our lives and do not stand firm. We must give serious consideration regarding our calling to love with gentleness and forbearing to all men.

We all know we are weak in this area. Our pride gets in the way, but we must lay it down. It's hard to take unjust criticism and in the Capitol it is usually public! How can we honestly live to the standard Paul calls us to in this verse when we have to endure ruthless and spiteful actions by others? How can we respond with gentle forbearance? Only by recognizing that we serve a sovereign God and nothing happens by chance in our lives. Everything that comes our way serves to establish and mature us in our faith and we must submit our lives to the Lord's will. And when we suffer for the sake of the Gospel and continue in our faith (*standing firm*), we can expect God to use that suffering to spread the Gospel. Paul exhorts us to have the right attitude towards the events in our lives, remembering we are to shine as lights in a dark and watching world. The world will see no difference in us if we respond like

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS, GOVERNOR, STAFF & SPOUSES: WEDNESDAY, 6:30AM, BREAKFAST SERVED

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everyone else; with anger, bitterness and vengeance. Our Lord said, *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”* (Matt 5:16)

E. SECURE THAT OUR LORD IS NEAR. PHILIPPIANS 4:5B

“The Lord is near.” Philippians 4:5b

Paul exhorts us to stand firm, united in our purpose to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, rejoicing with a forbearing spirit that remains patient even when submitted to mistreatment from others all for the sake of the Gospel! Then Paul reminds us of the great truth that God is present with us always! He is near to every believer every moment of every day. He knows what we are going through. Because our Lord is near, He is able to give us aid, carry our load, our burdens and our concerns. He is able to give us grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16) His grace is sufficient for all our trials and hardships both now and in the future. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10) Psalm 73:28 says, *“The nearness of God is my good.”* Because God is near, we do not need to fear or be anxious. The knowledge of Christ’s presence with us and the certainty of His glorious coming enables us to stand firm without wavering!

F. ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING. PHILIPPIANS 4:6A

“Be anxious for nothing...” Philippians 4:6a

Often when we face trials, we forget that the *“Lord is near”*! Obviously the Philippians were worried about the hardships they were confronted with and Paul exhorts them to stop worrying because the Lord is near. Why? Fret and worry reveal a lack of trust in God’s sovereignty and power. Our confidence in life doesn’t come from ourselves but the all powerful God! That’s why Paul tells us not to worry about one thing! *“Nothing”* is a very exclusive word. It leaves out everything. There is nothing we are to worry about because we are saying there is something God can’t handle. But how are we to keep from being anxious about the challenges in life and trust God? Only by knowing God more and more each day! Hosea 6:3 says, *“Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord.”* Paul knew his God, clung to Him and his confidence was found in the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:5 says, *“And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God.”* Paul knew it was God Who was at work in him. Something more is needed to do the supernatural work God has called us to. Knowing God and living in light of the truths about Him will enable us to find His grace to be sufficient through the greatest hardship!

G. TAKE EVERYTHING TO GOD IN PRAYER- PHIL.4:6B-7

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

God promises His presence and peace to those who live rejoicing in the Lord. It is this believer who *relies on* and *trusts in* God’s sovereignty through life and though submitted to injustice or mistreatment, the believer is anxious for nothing because of his/her trust in the Lord. While we are to be anxious for *nothing*, by contrast we are to take *everything* to God in prayer and His peace will guard our hearts and minds. Paul is saying that anything and everything in life that could cause us to be anxious, bring to God in prayer with an attitude of thankfulness and gratitude to the Lord. All difficulties are within God’s ability to help and protect and are within His sovereign control. And so we turn to the Almighty God with an attitude of thankful hearts that humbly acknowledge our submission to His work and will in our lives. Believers, who stand firm in Christ, respond to trials and endure hardship with thankful prayer. As we go to God in prayer, God gives us His peace that watches over our hearts and minds as we serve Him! It is this peace that rules our thoughts which can easily race towards fear instead of faith. In place of fear, God gives us a peace we can’t understand that enables us to stand firm through all of life; guarding, protecting and watching over our hearts and minds!

H. THINK ON THESE THINGS+ PHILIPPIANS 4:8

“Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.” Philippians 4:8

Paul exhorts believers to stand firm by having minds that are continuously and repeatedly captivated by God and His Word. In Philippians 4:8, Paul commands us to *“think on these things”*. We must understand the battle is fought in our minds and in our hearts! We are called to repeatedly, constantly and daily; study, think, ponder, and consider with fervent thought-- our God and what He says about Himself in His Word. Only in this way will we remain purely devoted to our Lord and be able to stand firm and not be deceived, falter or fall. If there was any question about what was true, our Lord clarifies that unmistakably in John 17:17. Truth is God’s Word and it is through His Word that God will mature and sanctify us for His work. We are to read, meditate, think, analyze, consider, and even calculate on God’s Word continually throughout each day of our lives. Keep in mind, the Greek word for *“think or dwell”* is an imperative and thus a command for us. It is not an option in order to stand firm! Not only is it a command, but the word is a present imperative, meaning it involves continuous and repeated action. It’s not just once or twice a day, but repeatedly throughout our day. We need our minds to be saturated with God and His Word, thinking on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good report, on excellence or anything worthy of praise because temptation and deception are at every turn. As we allow God’s thoughts to dominate our thinking by filling our minds with His Word, then, His thoughts become our thoughts, His will becomes our will and His desires become our desires. So believer; choose the best things to think on, pursue the highest things with our mind and so stand firm and please God!