

1602 - The Book of Philippians

Chapter 2 - THE HUMBLER, THE HOLY SERVANT

I. LOWLINESS OF MIND

Philippians 2:1-4 (NKJV)

“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, {2} fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. {3} Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. {4} Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

In Chapter 2, Paul writes of consolation, comfort, and the shared Christian experience. He gives the Philippians instructions based on the list of “ifs” he has just put forth (2:1). These were to be the guideposts and boundaries of their lives. This principle stands for us today. “*Lowliness of mind*” is synonymous with humility.

II. THE FORM OF A SERVANT

Philippians 2:5-8 (NKJV)

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, [6.] who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, [7.] but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. [8.] And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”

Christ’s obedience knew no limits. He was the Suffering Servant who brought us salvation. He paid a debt He did not owe so we would not have to pay a debt we could not pay. His servanthood was the supreme act of love and holiness.

Jesus modeled the role of a Bondservant.

John 13:3-5 (NKJV)

“Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to

God, [4.] rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. [5.] After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded."

Jesus actions indicated that His disciples should also be servants.

John 13:12-16 (NKJV)

"So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? [13.] You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. [14.] If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. [15.] For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. [16.] Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him."

The Apostle Paul referred to himself as a servant of Christ (Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:10; Philippians 1:1), as did James (James 1:1), Peter (2 Peter 1:1), and Jude. Today, everything goes against the idea of serving others. Even in church, we can easily fall into the trap of making Jesus into a Santa Clause.


We hear much more about our inheritance as children of God than we do about our responsibilities as servants of God.

III. THE STRENGTH OF THE LORD

A. Strength for All Things

Philippians 2:9-11 (NKJV)

"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, [10.] that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, [11.] and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Jesus is exalted above everything and everybody. Sometimes, when things are difficult, we have to remind ourselves who it is we serve and what position He holds. He is Lord above all. In Christ, we have strength, His strength. Even when we do not feel the strength, we can gather it from Him; and, put it to work for us. 

Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)
"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

B. Work it out!

Philippians 2:12, 13 (NKJV)

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; [13.] for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

God will turn our weaknesses into His strength; and, set it to work within us. Then, God asks us to do our part - to work it out. What does working out our salvation mean?

Philippians 2:12 (Living Bible Paraphrase)

“obeying God with deep reverence, shrinking back from all that might displease him. And ...charging forward with all that pleases Him.”

God’s strength becomes real in you when you give Him Lordship over everything. Our strength can never replace His. As strong as it may seem, our strength is only a measure of human weakness.

IV. THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST, THE HOLY SERVANT

Philippians 2:14-16 (NKJV)

“Do all things without complaining and disputing, [15.] that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, [16.] holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.”

- Verse 14 (KJV) *“Do all things without murmurings and disputings;”*
- (NIV) *“without complaining or arguing”*

A. Submit to His Leading.

Paul encourages us to be like Jesus, to refuse to permit murmuring, grumbling, complaining and arguing in our lives. Paul knew that we would not always succeed, but he also knew that we could grow more and more like Christ, as we submitted to His leading. Murmuring, grumbling, complaining and arguing do not please God; and, can only hurt us.

B. Your Personal Rights

Which do you consider most important?

- Expressing your preference, position, opinion and personal rights
- Expressing your love at the expense of personal position, etc.

Which did you choose?
Why did you choose it?

Acts 15:36-40 (NKJV)

“Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.” {37} Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. {38} But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. {39} Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; {40} but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God.”

At times even Paul chose to express his opinion or rights at the expense of love. He rejected John Mark. Even though he believed he was right (and may have been), it caused a permanent split with Barnabas - a permanent loss of fellowship with a friend.

- Expression of your rights may not be sin, but doing so without love may cost you a relationship.
- If you choose to express your love by giving up your rights, it may cost you your preference, position or opinion, but will gain you a relationship. According to the earlier verses of Philippians 2, Jesus did this when He humbled Himself.

There will be times when you cannot express your position or rights without losing something in the relationship, or the relationship itself. Most of the time, protecting the relationship is more important than your pride; or, proving you are right.

C. The Power of Truth, Spoken in Love

Ephesians 4:15 (NKJV)

“but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head; Christ;”

Speak only words flavored with “agape” love. These are “Life words.”

Ephesians 4:15a in its original Greek is, “*aletheuo aletheuo agape.*” It literally says, “Speak the truth... speak the truth... love”

“aletheuo” is pronounced al-ayth-yoo'-o”

“agape” may be defined as “*your active, living and deliberate effort to deliver the grace of God to somebody... at whatever the cost may be to you.*” If you flavor every one of your words with love, others must choose whether to respond to your agape love... or to reject it.

- If everyone chooses to disagree, but agape love is maintained in the discussion, the relationship stays intact.
- Love maintains a gentle spirit throughout the discussion. Do not allow feelings to harden your heart. Hearts are easily hardened and seldom softened.

Philippians 4:5 (NKJV)
“*Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.*”

1 Corinthians 13:8a (NKJV)

“*Love never fails...*”

Always have an attitude that places love into your words, even when you have to disagree. An attitude of love will keep you pure before God and man. You will be what Jesus wants you to be.

V. POURED OUT AS A DRINK OFFERING

Philippians 2:17-18 (NKJV)

“*Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. [18.] For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.*”

Paul means when he describes himself as a “drink offering?” How was a drink offering given to God?

Verse 17 (Paraphrase)

Yes, and if, at my coming trial, they sentence me to die, then my blood will be spilled as an offering to God, poured out in the spirit over your faithful sacrifice and service to the Lord.

A. Timothy: a Reputation of Proven Character

Philippians 2:19-24 (NKJV)

“*But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. [20.] For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for*

your state. [21.] For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. [22.] But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. [23] Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. [24.] But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly."

Paul says Timothy means genuinely cared. It was not an act, or pretense. Timothy's heart was full of concern for people. He felt a responsibility to be Christ-like and serve.

How much do you care about other people? Grade yourself on a scale of 1-5.

1 = "I do not care much."
5 = "I care so much I will always put others first."

Check one: 1 1½ 2 2½ 3 3½ 4 4½ 5

Now grade yourself on whether you are self-centered (always looking to others to give to you) or other-centered (serving others).

1 = "I am strongly focused on getting my needs met."
5 = "I care so much I will always try to meet the needs of others, even if it costs me."

Check one: 1 1½ 2 2½ 3 3½ 4 4½ 5

Paul judged Timothy's character by how Timothy served as part of the team and by his willingness to behave like a son. He was a learner under submission and discipline. Notice his relationship with Paul was a loving father-son covenant relationship, not a master-servant or boss-hireling relationship.

B. The Ways of a Servant

1. Servants listen and learn - as a matter of willing sacrifice.
2. Servants make a habit of accepting God's teachings into their hearts.
3. Servants guard their hearts and do what the Word requires.
4. Servants should be quick to see another person's need and move to meet it. (Philippians 2:25-30)
5. Servants are faithful to the one who poured into them.

Epaphroditus and Timothy

Philippians 2:25-30 (NKJV)

“Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; [26.] since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. [27.] For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. [28.] Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. [29.] Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; [30.] because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.”

Paul describes Epaphroditus as, “*brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier.*” Timothy and Epaphroditus teamed up to serve Paul in the fight of faith. Paul says we are to hold such people in esteem or high regard - to respect them. They were humble servants, willing to give their lives. They were faithful to another man without looking for personal recognition, attention or gain. There was no covetousness or jealousy in them.

- Have you felt resentment because people did not appreciate or recognize the unselfish service you had performed?
- Are your feelings the controller and indicator of your character?

People of character are people who find their rewards in God and love to see His blessings fall on others.