

# Philippians

## A Call for Peace [4:1-9]

- **Through Harmony [4:1-3]**

- So then, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my pride and joy,  
Ὡστε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοὶ καὶ ἐπιπόθητοι, χαρὰ καὶ στέφανός μου,
  - The word “Therefore” is Ὡστε (hōste) which means “for this reason”, “therefore” or “so then”.
  - “So then” is probably the best translation because this is a transition to a new section of the letter.
  - The phrase “my beloved brethren” is ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοὶ (adelphoi mou agapētoi).
  - This phrase would be translated literally as “my brethren, beloved”.
  - Paul’s only other use of this expression is in 1 Cor 15:58, so his love for them is unconditional.
  - James is the only other N.T. author who used this expression [Jas 1:16, 19; 2:5].
  - The phrase “whom I long to see” is καὶ ἐπιπόθητοι (kai epiythētoi) which means “and longed for”.
  - Coupled with the previous phrase we have “my brethren, beloved and longed for”.
  - The word “crown” is στέφανος (stephanos) which means “prize”, “reward”, “wreath” or “crown”.
  - Here it means a prize that is an adornment or a source of pride [1 Thess 2:19].
- in this way stand firm in the Lord, beloved.  
οὕτως στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ, ἀγαπητοί.
  - The phrase “in this way” is οὕτως (houtōs) which means “in this manner” or “so”.
  - This can be used to introduce new material, but here refers back to the reminders of chapter three.
  - The phrase “stand firm” is from στήκω (stēkō) which means “be firmly committed in conviction”.
  - This is the word that would be used of a soldier standing his ground when under pressure in battle.
  - The phrase “my beloved” is from ἀγαπητοί (agapētoi) which simply means “beloved”.
  - Some manuscripts omit this text, but the meaning of the verse does not change either way.
- I implore Euodia and Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.  
Εὐδοκίαν παρακαλῶ καὶ Συντύχην παρακαλῶ τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ.
  - Euodia and Syntyche were two women in Philippi who were at odds with one another.
    - Euodia (Εὐδοκία) = prosperous journey
    - Syntyche (Συντύχη) = pleasant acquaintance.
  - The verbs “urge” are from παρακαλέω (parakaleō) which can mean “urge”, “implore”, “exhort”, “request”, “entreat”, “comfort” or “encourage”.
  - Here “implore” would be the best translation.
  - The phrase “to live in harmony” includes the verb φρονέω (phroneō) which was the word used for “mindset” in chapter three.

- The full phrase in the Greek is τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν (to auto phronein) which means “to have the same mindset” or “to be like-minded”.
- Paul understood that if we are standing firm in the Lord (v. 1) then it follows that we will also be like-minded in the Lord.
- Indeed, loyal Syzygus, I ask you also to help these women  
ναὶ ἐρωτῶ καὶ σέ, γνήσιε σύζυγε, συλλαμβάνου αὐταῖς,
  - The phrase “true companion” is γνήσιε σύζυγε (gnēsie suzuge) which means “loyal companion”.
  - However, σύζυγε (suzuge) could be a proper name rather than a simple noun.
  - Given that Paul named two women in the previous verse and there is no reference elsewhere as to whom this companion might be, taking it as a proper noun makes the most sense.
  - The word “help” is from συλλαμβάνω (sullambanō) which means “take into custody” or “capture”.
  - However, this word is also used to mean “help” in the sense of coming to someone’s aid [Luke 5:7].
- who have been striving together with me in the ministry of the gospel,  
αἴτινες ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ συνήθλησάν μοι
  - The word “struggle” is from συναθλέω (sunathleō) which means “contend along with”.
  - The only other use of this word is in Phil 1:27 where we saw it to mean “striving together”.
  - The phrase “in the cause of the gospel” is literally “in the gospel”.
  - This is a reference to Euodia and Syntyche participating in the ministry of the gospel.
- together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers,  
μετὰ καὶ Κλήμεντος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου,
  - This clause describes additional people connected to the gospel ministry that Euodia and Syntyche had been participating in, not additional people Paul is asking to help these two women.
  - Although not specifically mentioned here, it is quite possible that Epaphroditus was among these fellow workers [Phil 2:25].
- whose names are *written* in the Book of Life.  
ὧν τὰ ὀνόματα ἐν βίβλῳ ζωῆς.
  - The Book of Life is a heavenly registry of the names of everyone who is a born-again believer [Psalm 69:28; Luke 10:20; Rev 20:11-15].
  - Perhaps Paul is trying to remind Eudonia and Syntyche that their ministries have been shared with fellow believers and, specifically, each other.

- Principles of Philippians 4:1-3
  - Paul expressed his love for the Philippians and told them he longed to be with them.
  - Likewise, we should express our love for our fellow believers and desire to be with our spiritual family.
  - The Philippians were Paul's pride and joy...
    - He had led them to faith in Christ.
    - He had helped them grow in the faith.
  - Paul told the Philippians that they needed to stand firm in the Lord according to the reminders he had given them in chapter three.
  - Likewise, we should stand firm in the Lord on the basis of all we have learned about God which is resident in our souls [1 Cor 15:58; 16:13; Eph 6:10-17; 1 Thess 3:6-13].
  - As we stand firm in the Lord we will be like-minded in the Lord which leads to spiritual harmony rather than discord [Rom 12:16-18; 15:5-6].
  - Two women in Philippi, Euodia and Syntyche, had failed in this regard and had become contentious toward one another.
  - This kind of dissention occurs when believers lose their objectivity and allow personal differences to create a division between them.
  - What can start as a minor conflict between two believers can end up causing a schism in a local church and eventually lead to a church split.
  - Because Paul knew that such conflicts can deeply divide a local church, he asked a loyal friend, Syzygus, to help these women to see past their differences and recognize the objective reality of their common faith in Christ.
  - Paul reminded Euodia and Syntyche that they had been his fellow-workers in the gospel ministry.
  - They were both believers, after all, who should have been rejoicing together that their names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life [Rev 21:27].
  - If they had been looking for new heavens and a new earth [2 Pet 3:13] rather than focusing on their differences, perhaps they would have been content rather than contentious.
  - Breaking fellowship with like-minded believers makes no sense knowing that God's plan for us is that we would live together in unity, not in strife [Eph 2:14-16; 4:1-3].

- **Through a Joyful Spirit [4:4-5]**

- Rejoice in the Lord at all times; again I will say, rejoice!  
Χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ πάντοτε· πάλιν ἐρῶ, χαίρετε.
  - As in Phil 3:1 Paul instructs the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord, but this time emphatically.
  - The implication is that the discord arising within the church could be avoided if everyone involved were rejoicing in all that they have because of Christ.
  - The word “always” is πάντοτε (pantote) which means “always” or “at all times”.
  - To capture the idea that Paul is communicating here “at all times” would be a better translation.
- Let your graciousness be known to everyone.  
τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις.
  - The phrase “your gentle spirit” is literally “the gentle of you”.
  - The word “gentle” is ἐπιεικῆς (epieikēs) which means “gentle”, “kind”, “courteous” or “tolerant”.
  - The HCSB translation of “your graciousness” best expresses the meaning here.
  - The phrase “all men” is πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις (pasin anthrōpois) which means “all people” or “everyone”.
- The return of the Lord is imminent.  
ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς.
  - The word “near” is ἐγγύς (engus) which means “near” or “close to”.
  - This word can mean close in spatial terms or in temporal terms.
  - Here this is a reference to the imminence of His return to get His Church.
- Principles of Philippians 4:4-5
  - As believers, we have many reasons to rejoice because of our standing in the Lord.
    - Christian joy is not the same thing as happiness.
    - Christian joy is inner tranquility and contentment that comes from God [Rom 15:13; Gal 5:22].
    - Happiness is an ephemeral emotion based upon circumstances and conditions.
  - When we center our lives in the Lord, we will find joy every day by walking in His perfect will.
  - Since no one can take Christ away from us, no one can steal our joy if we are focused on Him.
  - When Christians have joy in their hearts, they are predisposed toward harmony with others rather than discord [Rom 12:18; 14:19; Heb 12:14].
  - Along with inner joy, gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit [Gal 5:23].
  - Joy is resident in the soul and may not be obvious to others, but gentleness is something which can be observed [Titus 3:1-2].
  - Gentleness is a quality which tends to calm unrest rather than provoke it [Pr 15:1].
  - Knowing that Jesus could return for His Church at any moment, we should be joyfully and gently building one another up in the faith rather than engaging in disputes [Heb 10:23-25].
  - If we truly believe that the Judge Himself could appear soon, we should not be so quick to complain against one another [Jas 5:7-9].

## • **Through Prayer [4:6-7]**

- Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication  
μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε, ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ δεήσει
  - The word “anxious” is from μεριμνάω (merimnaō) which means “be apprehensive” or “be unduly concerned”.
  - This word is often translated “worry” [Luke 10:41].
  - This entire phrase can be reworded to make this statement even more clear.
  - The word “prayer” is from προσευχή (proseuchē) which is the common word for “prayer”.
  - The word “supplication” is from δεήσις (deēsis) which means “urgent request to meet a need”.
- with thanksgiving let your requests be expressed to God.  
μετὰ εὐχαριστίας τὰ αἰτήματα ὑμῶν γνωρίζεσθω πρὸς τὸν θεόν.
  - The word “thanksgiving” is from εὐχαριστία (eucharistia) which means “rendering of thanks”.
  - This word involves more than the outward act because it includes the mental attitude of gratitude.
  - Notice that it is *by* prayer and supplication and *with* thanksgiving which indicates that thanksgiving should be part of any type of prayer that we offer.
  - The word “thanksgiving” is from αἴτημα (aitēma) which means “request”.
  - This is a general word for request whereas δεήσις (deēsis) is a request made of God.
  - The phrase “be made known” is from γνωρίζω (gnōrizō) which means “reveal” or “make known”.
  - God is omniscient, so this word is used to describe the expression of our requests to God.
- And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension,  
καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ ὑπερέχουσα πάντα νοῦν
  - The word “peace” is εἰρήνη (eirēnē) which means “peace” or “harmony”.
  - This word is used of peace with God [Rom 5:1] and peace with others [Rom 12:18], but also of peace within our souls [Col 3:15].
  - The word “surpasses” is from ὑπερέχω (huperechō) which means “be better than”, “surpass” and sometimes “be in authority”.
  - This word occurs five times in the N.T., three of those in Philippians [Rom 13:1; Phil 2:3; 3:8; 1 Pet 2:13].
  - The word “comprehension” is from νοῦς (nous) which means “mind” or “intellect”.
  - Here it is used in the sense of “ability to understand” [Rev 13:18], so “comprehension” captures the idea being expressed by Paul.
- will protect your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.  
φρουρήσει τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν καὶ τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.
  - The word “guard” is from φρουρέω (phroureō) which means “guard” or “protect”.
  - Here it is used in the sense of protection [1 Pet 1:5].
  - The word “hearts” is from καρδία (kardia) which means “heart”.
  - This word is used to describe the innermost part of the soul which includes the emotions.
  - The word “minds” is from νόημα (noēma) which means “mind” or “thought”.
  - Here this word is used of the thoughts that occur within our heart [1 Cor 10:5].

- Principles of Philippians 4:6-7
  - As believers who are cared for by God Himself, we should not be subject to worry [Matt 6:25-34; Luke 8:4-15; 12:11-12; 21:34-35].
  - Instead, we should take everything that could cause us worry and give it over to the Lord in prayer requests [1 Jn 5:14-15].
  - God knows what we need even before we ask [Matt 6:8], but if we do not express our requests to God, then we may end up lacking [Jas 4:2c; 5:16].
  - All of our prayers, including our supplications, should always be offered with a heart of gratitude [1 Thess 5:16-18].
  - If we humbly cast our worries upon God who cares for us [1 Pet 5:6-7], He will sustain us [Ps 55:22] and we will experience His peace [Isa 26:3].
  - This is the peace which sustained Jesus during His 1<sup>st</sup> Advent [John 14:27] which He wants us to have regardless of circumstances [John 16:33].
  - This peace comes from knowing that God is our caregiver who will supply all of our needs [Phil 4:19; 2 Cor 9:8-11] and provide for us even beyond what we might ask or even think [Eph 3:20].
  - God's peace gives us a calm spirit of contentment and together with His wisdom provides protection for our souls [Pr 4:5-6; 2 Cor 2:11; 1 Pet 1:2b-7].

- **Through the Proper Focus [4:8-9]**

- Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is respectable, whatever is right,  
Τὸ λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί, ὅσα ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ, ὅσα σεμνά, ὅσα δίκαια,
  - The word “Finally” is from λοιπός (loipos) which means “beyond that”, “in addition” or “finally”.
  - We saw this word in Phil 3:1 meaning “in addition”, but here it does mean “finally”.
  - The word “honorable” is from σεμνός (semnos) which means “honorable” or “worthy of respect”.
  - This word is translated “dignity” or “dignified” when used of people [1 Tim 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2].
  - The word “right” is from δίκαιος (dikaios) which means “right”, “righteous” or “just”.
  - The translation “righteous” is used of people, so either “right” or “just” is appropriate here.
- whatever is pure, whatever evokes love, whatever is admirable,  
ὅσα ἀγνά, ὅσα προσφιλή, ὅσα εὐφημα,
  - The word “pure” is from ἀγνός (hagnos) which means “pure” or “holy”.
  - This is a cultic word which refers to that which is undefiled, particularly by sin or evil [1 Thess 5:22].
  - The word “lovely” is from προσφιλής (prophilēs) which means “pleasing”, “agreeable” or “amiable”.
  - This word is not talking about something which is physical beautiful, but rather something which evokes love.
  - The phrase “of good repute” is from εὐφημος (euphēmos) which means “praiseworthy” or “admirable”.
  - We have another word for “worthy of praise” in this verse, so “admirable” is probably best here.
- if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.  
εἴ τις ἀρετὴ καὶ εἴ τις ἔπαινος, ταῦτα λογίζεσθε.
  - The word “excellence” is ἀρετὴ (aretē) which means “excellence of character”.
  - Peter used this word to refer to excellence in terms of the characteristics of God [1 Pt 2:9; 2 Pt 1:3-5].
  - The phrase “dwell on” is from λογίζομαι (logizomai) which means “consider” or “dwell on”.
  - This is a thinking word which requires that we come to know these things, remember what we have learned and then concentrate on them.
- The things you have learned and accepted and heard about and observed in me,  
ἃ καὶ ἐμάθετε καὶ παρελάβετε καὶ ἠκούσατε καὶ εἶδετε ἐν ἐμοί,
  - The word “learned” is from μανθάνω (manthanō) which means “learn”.
  - This word is used of learning through instruction rather than through experience.
  - The word “received” is from παραλαμβάνω (paralambanō) which means “receive” or “accept”.
  - This word refers to acceptance as truth when it comes to teaching [1 Cor 15:1; Gal 1:9; 1 Th 4:1].
  - The word “heard” is from ἀκούω (akouō) which means “hear” or “hear about”.

- This word is used here of the Philippians hearing about the things which the Apostle Paul had done.
  - The word “seen” is from εἶδον (eidon) which means “see”, “perceive” or “observe”.
  - This word is used here to describe the careful observation of the Apostle Paul by the Philippians.
- put these things into practice, and the God of peace will be with you.
- ταῦτα πράσσετε· καὶ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ’ ὑμῶν.
- The word “practice” is from πράσσω (prassō) which means “act”, “do” or “put into practice”.
  - This word does not mean practice as in “baseball practice” or “piano practice”.
  - The phrase “God of peace” here connects back to the phrase “peace of God” in verse 7.
  - Paul used this type of phrase fairly often [Rom 15:33; 16:20; 1 Thess 5:23; 2 Thess 3:16].
  - The construction here implies that *if* we act on what we have learned *then* the God of peace will be with us, but since we know God is always with us this must refer to His peace in particular.

- Principles of Philippians 4:8-9
  - The world is full of negatives...
    - lies
    - disrespect
    - wrongdoing
    - immorality
    - anger and conflict
    - shameful behavior
  - If we dwell on such things we can easily develop a negative mental attitude and become discouraged, pessimistic, cynical, etc.
  - To help us maintain the proper mental attitude, God has graciously given us His word which teaches us about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.
  - From God's word we can learn about...
    - truth
    - dignity and respect
    - righteousness
    - purity
    - love, joy and peace
    - admirable behavior
  - This list gives a pretty good summary of the character of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
  - This list also represents characteristics that are the fruit of the Spirit [Gal 5:22-23].
  - We cannot walk by means of the Spirit [Gal 5:16] when our minds are occupied with the sin and unrighteousness that characterizes the world.
  - All of us have a choice regarding what type of things will occupy our minds [2 Cor 10:5].
  - If we are fixing our eyes upon Jesus [Heb 12:1-2] then our thoughts are guaranteed to be focused on that which is excellent and worthy of praise.
  - Our focus on Christ is based upon what we have learned about Him from the Bible.
  - When we learn God's word and/or the principles derived from Scripture, we will profit spiritually only if we accept those things as true [Heb 4:2].
  - Therefore, our spiritual growth comes about as a result of rejecting the worldly, fleshly garbage we are constantly being inundated with and accepting the things of God's word.
  - Sometimes we can learn biblical principles by observing the behavior of other believers.
  - This can occur through personal observation as well as hearing about the faith of others in action [Eph 1:15-16; Col 1:3-4; 1 Thess 3:6-7; Phlm 4-7].
  - No matter how we learn God's truth, it is critical for us to put these things into practice [2 Pet 1:2-10].
  - If we know God's truth and do not live accordingly, we are effectively deluding ourselves [Jas 1:22].
  - If we act upon what we have learned from God's word, we will be building up a foundation in our souls that will be unshakeable [Luke 6:46-49].
  - Living according to biblical principles also allows us to experience God's peace [2 Cor 13:7-11].