

# Philippians

## Exhortations [2:12-18]

### • To Continue Growing [2:12-13]

- So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed,  
Ὡστε, ἀγαπητοί μου, καθὼς πάντοτε ὑπηκούσατε,
  - The phrase “my beloved” is ἀγαπητοί μου (agapētoi mou) which is a term of endearment.
  - Paul uses the word “beloved” 27 times in his letters [Rom 12:19; 1 Co 15:58; 2 Co 7:1; 12:19; Eph 5:1], but in this letter it is always “my beloved” [Phil 4:1].
  - The word “obeyed” is from ὑπακούω (hupakouō) which means “obey” or “be subject to”.
  - The root of this word is ακούω (akouō) which means “hear”.
  - The prefix of this verb ὑπο (hupo) means “under”.
  - The literal meaning of this word is “under hearing” and it came to mean “yielded under the hearing of instruction”.
- not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence,  
μὴ ὡς ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ μου μόνον ἀλλὰ νῦν πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἐν τῇ ἀπουσίᾳ μου,
  - The word “presence” is from παρουσία (parousia) which means “coming” or “advent”.
  - This word can mean “presence” in the sense of the result of having come [2 Cor 10:10].
  - The word “absence” is from ἀπουσία (apousia) which means “absence”.
  - This is the only occurrence of this Greek word in the Bible, but also the English word “absence”.
  - The phrase “much more in my absence” is in reference to their continued obedience, but also to Paul’s exhortation to “work out” their salvation.
- work in accordance with your salvation with fear and trembling;  
μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε.
  - The phrase “work out” is from κατεργάζομαι (katērgazomai) which means “do” or “produce”.
  - The root of this word is ἐργάζομαι (ergazomai) which means “work” or “carry out”.
  - The prefix of this verb κατα (kata) means “according to” or “in accordance with”.
  - The best way to translate this verb here is “work in accordance with”.
  - The phrase “fear and trembling” refers to the awe we should have for God and the humility that results from understanding His perfect character and authority to judge us.
- for God is the one working in you, both to will and to work for *His* good purpose.  
θεὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ ἐνεργῶν ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ τὸ θέλειν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐδοκίας.
  - The phrase “it is God who is at work in you” is literally “God is the one working in you”.
  - The message is that God is actually the one accomplishing the work as we “work”.
  - The phrase “to will” is from θέλω (thelō) which means “desire”, “want” or “will”.
  - This means that it is God’s will to perform His work in and through us.
  - The phrase “good pleasure” is from εὐδοκία (eudokia) which means “good pleasure”, “desire” or “good will”.
  - This word literally means “good thinking” which brings into view God’s perfect purpose.
  - The things which please God are those things which are in accordance with His purpose.

- Principles of Philippians 2:12-13
  - Paul had great affection for the believers in Philippi and was not shy about expressing it to them.
  - Likewise, we should show our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ [Ro 12:10; Gal 5:13; Eph 4:2].
  - The Philippians had been obedient to God's word at all times – not just when Paul was with them.
  - In a similar way, believers today should not honor God through obedience to His word only when at church or when in the company of their pastor.
  - We must always remember that our service is unto the Lord, not men [Eph 6:5-8; Col 3:22-24].
  - This includes earthly “masters” [Eph 6:9; Col 4:1].
  - As believers we have work assignments prepared especially for us to do [Eph 2:10].
  - We should carry out these work assignments in accordance with our salvation [Col 2:6] as unto the Lord [Col 3:17; 1 Cor 10:31].
  - This is not done to earn God's favor, but from a humble heart [Acts 20:17-21; 1 Pet 5:1-5].
  - This humility stems from a proper reverence for God Almighty whom we serve [Heb 12:28-29].
  - It is important for us to keep in mind that, when we are bearing true spiritual fruit in our lives, God is the one accomplishing the work in and through us [1 Cor 12:6; 15:10; Heb 13:20-21].
  - When we humble ourselves and allow God to accomplish His work in us, we will be walking according to His will and His purpose for our lives [2 Thess 1:11-12; 2 Tim 1:8-11].

## • To Be Above Reproach [2:14-16]

- Do all things without grumbling or disputing;  
Πάντα ποιείτε χωρίς γογγυσμῶν καὶ διαλογισμῶν,
  - The word “grumbling” is from γογγυσμός (gongusmos) which means “utterance made in a low tone of voice”.
  - This word describes behind-the-scenes talk which can be positive or negative [John 7:12].
  - In the negative sense, this word can mean “displeasure” or “complaint” [Acts 6:1; 1 Pet 4:9].
  - The word “disputing” is from διαλογισμός (dialogismos) which means “argument” or “dispute”.
  - This is a thinking word [Luke 5:22; 6:8] and can refer to conflicting ideas expressed [Luke 9:46-47].
- so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent,  
ἵνα γένησθε ἄμεμπτοι καὶ ἀκέραιοι,
  - The word “blameless” is from ἄμεμπτος (amemptos) which means “blameless” or “faultless”.
  - This is used of the Law [Heb 8:7] and experiential righteousness [Luke 1:6; Phil 3:6; 1 Thess 3:13].
  - The word “innocent” is from ἀκέραιος (akeraios) which means “pure” or “innocent”.
  - This word means “unmixed” in the sense of not being involved with evil [Matt 10:16; Rom 16:19].
- children of God uncorrupted in the midst of a morally corrupt and depraved generation,  
τέκνα θεοῦ ἄμωμα μέσον γενεᾶς σκολιᾶς καὶ διεστραμμένης,
  - The phrase “children of God” speaks of our adoption into the family of God at the moment of our salvation [Rom 8:14-16; Gal 4:4-7; 1 Jn 5:1-2].
  - The phrase “above reproach” is from ἄμωμος (amōmos) which means “unblemished”.
  - This word is from the same root as ἄμεμπτος (amemptos) which we saw means “blameless”.
  - In this context it means having avoided corruption from a crooked and perverse generation.
  - The word “crooked” is from σκολιός (skolios) which means “bent” or “crooked”.
  - Here it is used in the sense of being morally bent or crooked.
  - The word “perverse” is from διαστρέφω (diastrephō) which means “deform” or “pervert”.
  - Here it is used in the sense of being morally deformed or perverted as in “depraved”.
  - The word “generation” is from γενεά (genea) which means “generation” or “age”.
  - This includes all contemporaries, including some who are believers corrupted by the world.
- among whom you shine as guiding lights in the world,  
ἐν οἷς φαίνεσθε ὡς φωστῆρες ἐν κόσμῳ,
  - The word “appear” is from φαίνω (phainō) which means “become visible”, “appear” or “shine”.
  - Given that this is used with the word “lights”, the translation “shine” makes most sense [2 Pet 1:19].
  - The word “lights” is from φωστήρ (phōstēr) which means “star”, “luminary” or “radiance”.
  - This word carries the meaning of a “guiding light” which best fits the context here.
  - The word “world” is from κόσμος (kosmos) which can refer to Satan’s kosmos system.
  - Here, however, this refers to the world in which we live and the people that occupy it.

- holding firmly to the word of life,  
 λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες,
  - The phrase “holding fast” is from ἐπέχω (epechō) which means “hold forth” or “hold fast”.
  - This word communicates the idea of having a firm hold on something so as not to allow it to slip away [1 Tim 4:16].
  - The phrase “the word of life” refers to the word of God, especially the gospel [John 6:63-68].
- so that in the day of Christ I will be proud of you because I did not run to no end nor toil with no results.  
 εἰς καύχημα ἔμοι εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ, ὅτι οὐκ εἰς κενὸν ἔδραμον οὐδὲ εἰς κενὸν ἔκοπίασα.
  - The phrase “the day of Christ” refers to the Rapture event, not the Day of the Lord.
  - The phrase “have reason to glory” is καύχημα (kauchēma) which means “take pride” or “boast”.
  - The meaning here is that Paul will be proud of the Philippians because they followed God’s word.
  - The words “run” and “toil” refer to Paul running his race and laboring hard on behalf of the Philippians.
  - The word “vain” is from κενός (kenos) which means “empty” or “vain”.
  - The emphasis here is on the results of his ministry and his effort.
- Principles of Philippians 2:14-16
  - As believers who are objects of God’s amazing grace, we are already abundantly blessed and should be to go through life without grumbling about anyone or anything.
  - The ability to have contentment in any and every circumstance of our lives is something we have to learn as we grow spiritually [Phil 4:11].
  - This contentment stems from knowing that God is always with us [Heb 13:5] and will shower us with His grace, abundantly supplying all of our needs in this life [2 Cor 9:8; Phil 4:19].
  - The believer who is continually discontent will be unsettled in his soul and have a tendency to be argumentative about things (including doctrine).
  - God’s will for believers (especially within a local church) is that they have fellowship with one another [1 John 1:7], not bickering and disputes.
  - As we shine the Light of Christ in the midst of this morally corrupt and deprave generation, we show that we are indeed children of God who remain uncorrupted by the world [Jas 1:27; 2 Pet 1:4].
  - We must rely upon God’s wisdom and strength to avoid becoming entangled in the defilements of the world [2 Pet 2:20-22].
  - This requires that we fix our attention on the word of God and hold firmly onto the things we have learned from it [2 Pet 3:1-2; Jude 17-21].
  - Likewise, we should remember those who have led us in our spiritual growth and imitate their walk of faith [Heb 13:7].
  - Our spiritual leaders will rejoice in seeing our growth and, in the day of Christ, will boast in what God has accomplished in our lives [1 Cor 1:30-31; 2 Cor 10:8-17].
  - It is encouraging to those who teach God’s word to see the word performing its work in those who believe so that they will know that they have not been toiling for nothing [Gal 4:9-11; 1 Thess 2:13].

- **To Rejoice [2:17-18]**

- But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial service of your faith,

Ἀλλὰ εἰ καὶ σπένδομαι ἐπὶ τῇ θυσίᾳ καὶ λειτουργίᾳ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν,

- The “if” here is a 1<sup>st</sup> class conditional – that Paul is being poured out as a drink offering is assumed to be true.
  - The phrase “I am being poured out as a drink offering” is σπένδομαι (spendomai) which means “offer up a drink offering” as a sacrifice [Num 28:7].
  - Paul uses this phrase here to describe the likelihood that his death was imminent [2 Tim 4:6].
  - The word “sacrifice” is from θυσία (thusia) which means “sacrifice” or “offering”.
  - This is the same word Paul uses for presenting ourselves as a living and holy sacrifice [Rom 12:1].
  - The word “service” is from λειτουργία (leitourgia) which means “formal service” or “public service”.
  - This word is used to describe the priestly service of Zacharias [Luke 1:23] and Christ [Heb 8:1-6].
  - The phrase “sacrifice and service” has the meaning of “sacrificial service”.
- I rejoice and want to share my joy with you all.  
χαίρω καὶ συγχαίρω πᾶσιν ὑμῶν·
  - The word “rejoice” is χαίρω (chairō) and the phrase “share my joy” is συγχαίρω (sunchairō) which means “rejoice together with”.
  - Given what verse 18 says, συγχαίρω (sunchairō) describes Paul’s desire to share his joy.
- You too, *I urge you*, rejoice in the same way and desire to share your joy with me.  
τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ καὶ ὑμεῖς χαίρετε καὶ συγχαίρετέ μοι.
  - Paul exhorts the Philippians to rejoice as he has been rejoicing.
  - Given Paul’s circumstances, he is urging them to rejoice regardless of any difficulties they might encounter.
  - Paul also exhorts the Philippians to have a desire to share their joy.
  - In particular, he wants them to share their joy with him so that he can rejoice together with them.

- Principles of Philippians 2:17-18
  - At the time of the writing of this letter, Paul was facing circumstances far more difficult than anything we will likely face in our lifetimes.
  - Those circumstances did not dictate Paul's mental attitude as he was able to rejoice over the faith of the Philippians.
  - Paul had offered himself as a sacrifice to the Philippians through his ministry to them which had resulted in the sacrificial service of their faith.
  - It was because of Paul's service to the Philippians (and others) on behalf of Christ that he had been thrown into prison.
  - Though he expressed confidence that he would be released from prison [vv. 1:24-26; 2:23-24], Paul knew that he might die in prison.
  - He had willingly offered himself as a sacrifice for them in his life and would rejoice even if he were to die because of his ministry to them [2 Cor 12:15].
  - Paul wanted to share his joy with the Philippians so that they would not be discouraged because of his circumstances or their own.
  - He also wanted them to have a desire to share their joy with him so that he would be encouraged by their walk of faith [v. 19].
  - We, like Paul, should be able to rejoice in the Lord always regardless of the circumstances we face in this life [1 Thess 5:16].
  - And, like Paul, we should desire to share our joy with others so that we might be a source of encouragement and an example to them when they encounter difficulties and suffering in this life.