

# To Die is Gain

## THE PATH TO JOY, A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS

### LESSON 7 (3:17-4:9)

Each and every day the Philippians encountered those who eagerly set forth their template of life and faith. Shaped by their flesh and their love of the world, they offered a pattern of Christianity that shunned Paul's example and opposed the very essence of the cross.

*"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you," [Paul said]. Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for Him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what He wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you" (Romans 12:1-2, MSG).*

If the Philippians were to stand fast in the Lord (Philippians 4:1), they must maintain godly perspective and *do* the things which they learned and received and heard and saw in Paul (4:9). If they would reject the world's model and emulate the pattern of those who followed Christ, they would confidently declare as he did: *"Follow me as I follow Christ"* (1 Corinthians 11:1).

READ PHILIPPIANS 3:17-4:1.

1. What had Paul exemplified for the Philippian believers?
2. What was the cause of Paul's sorrow? (vv.18-19)
3. Why are those whose *"god is their belly"*, who glory in *"and set their mind on earthly things"* enemies of the *cross* of Christ?



9. According to 1 Corinthians 15:42-53, how will Christ *transform* (outward appearance) and *conform* (inward nature) the believer at His coming?

10. Now read 1 John 2:28-3:3. What are we to do until that day? Why?

11. In verse 1 of Philippians 4, Paul encourages the Philippians to *stand fast*. This means “to hold one’s ground, maintain a position; be steadfast or upright.” Why is this a constant threat to those who profess faith in Jesus Christ?

READ PHILIPPIANS 4:2-9.

12. Why is Paul concerned with Euodia’s and Syntyche’s relationship?

13. If a dispute cannot be resolved between parties, how can a third individual be of benefit?

14. According to verses 4-8, what thoughts and emotions might their dispute be generating?

15. Verse 5 can also be translated, “*Let your graciousness or forbearance be known to all...*” It carries the idea of lenience, mercifulness or tolerance of slight deviations from moral or legal rectitude”; a non-retaliatory spirit. Per Paul, what necessitates this attitude? (v.5)

Why is graciousness imperative to the believer? (Also think on Matthew 18:21-35.)

16. The word *anxious* in Philippians 4:6 is rendered “to be pulled in opposite directions”. Further, “the old English root from which we get our word *worry* means ‘to strangle’.”<sup>1</sup> What does anxiety affect? (v.7b) Of what does it rob the believer?

17. How did Paul keep himself from anxiety when facing difficult people and circumstances? (vv.4, 6, 8) (Also consider his present predicament.)

18. In verse 6, what four words are used to describe the believer’s communion with God? How do they differ from one another?

19. Explain why peace is of greater value than understanding.

20. What occurs when we allow ourselves to think “wrongly”?

21. "Meditate on these things..." (v.8). Define the following themes of thought:

- a. True:
- b. Noble:
- c. Just:
- d. Pure:
- e. Lovely:
- f. Good report:
- g. Virtue:
- h. Praiseworthy:

How does this way of thinking guard a man from wrong feelings, wrong thinking, and wrong actions?

22. Why do you believe Paul instructs the Philippians to change their minds, not their hearts?

23. What steps are to be taken as one seeks to correct his thought patterns? (v.9) Why is right thinking insufficient in and of itself?

24. Is there anything that keeps you from declaring as Paul, "Follow me as I follow Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1)?

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<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. (2001). *The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament* (Vol. 2, p.94). Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications.