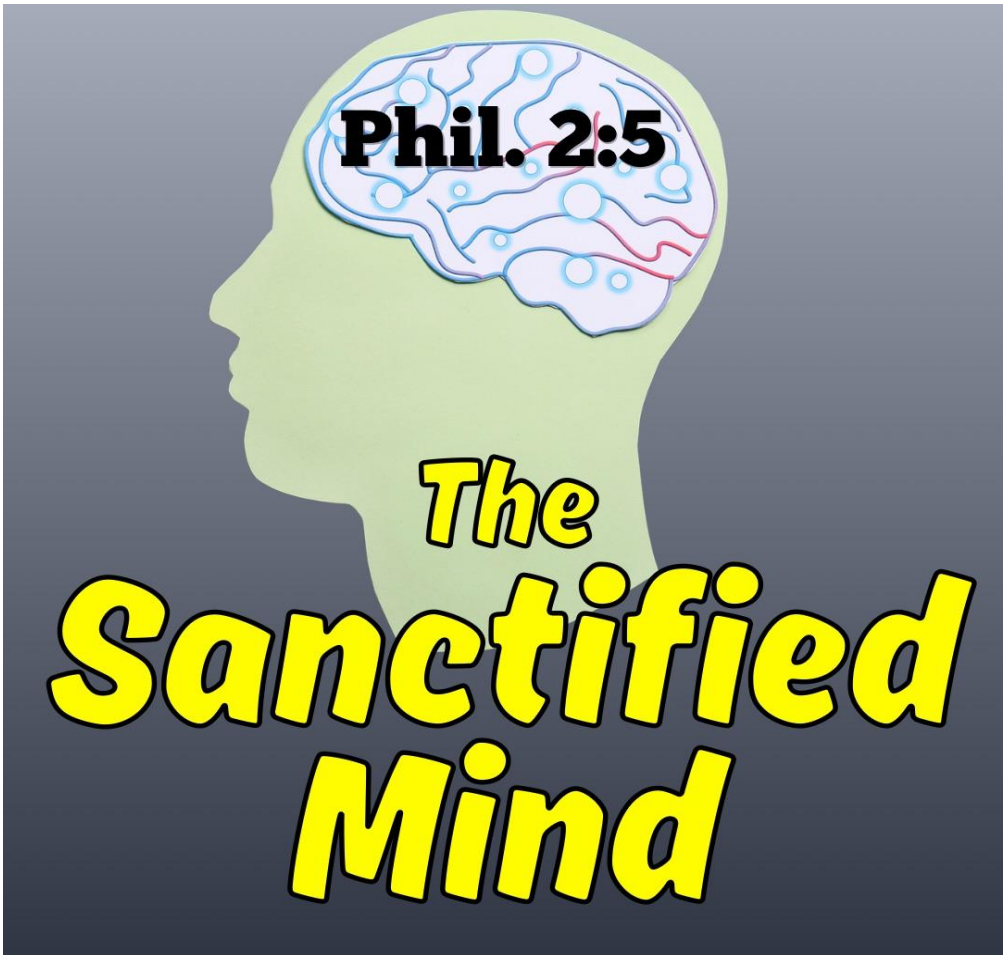
Basic Training Bible Ministries
Presents

"The Stability of the Sanctified Mind"

A Study in the Book of Philippians



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The Stability of the Sanctified Mind
The Book of Philippians

Introduction:

1. This study will complete what began in *The Battle for the Mind* (2 Cor. 10:3–6), and in *The Promises and Parables* studies (Matthew 5 and 13).

2. The Book of Philippians could rightly be called "The Epistle of the Sanctified Mind." While most associate the book with joy, the true underlying theme is a spiritual mind-set (Rom. 8:1–8).

   A. Although joy or rejoice occurs 21 times in the book, the key to joy is seen in right thinking.
   B. There are 15 references in this epistle to the mind or thinking. Since joy is possible, even in adverse conditions (1:12–18, 27–30; 2:25–30; 4:6–7), it is evident that joy is the product of the Spirit-led mind (Rom. 8:1–8).

   Note: There is an inverse relation between the epistle of Philippians and the Book of Ecclesiastes. In Ecclesiastes, *"vanity"* (emptiness) predominates, yet, in the background, joy is always present. In Philippians, we see that joy is dominant, but in the background is suffering and affliction: by the Philippians, by Paul, by Timothy, and by Epaphroditus, but especially that of Jesus in the central passage of the book (Phil. 2:5–9). Both books are pervaded with a conviction of God's sovereign control of history.

3. We are living in unprecedented times of tumult and uncertainty. Only the sanctified mind, fixed on Jesus Christ and His plan, can find joy, peace, purpose, and stability.

4. Although popular opinion calls this the Epistle of Joy, the truth is that the background of the epistle is suffering, met and defeated, in every chapter.

5. Spiritual joy is confidence in the plan and power of God in the midst of great trials and afflictions. *"Confident"* in Greek is *peitho*, which occurs in 1:6, 14, 25; 2:24; 3:3–4. These verses reveal Paul's unwavering confidence of victory in life through faith.

   "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2

6. Ultimately, in the spiritual life, victory or defeat depends on the mindset of the Christian:

   "For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" Romans 8:6 (NASV)

   "There's no defeat in life save from within, until you're beaten there, you're bound to win." (Ascribed to Kin Hubbard, among others).

7. In these four chapters, we will learn about the single mind (Chapter 1), the servant mind (Chapter 2), the spiritual mind (Chapter 3), and the stable mind (Chapter 4). These successively lead us to focus on Jesus Christ, His Cross, The Crown, and Contentment.

8. A historical note is important here: Philippi was a Roman colony, with all the rights and privileges that pertained to Rome itself. We will see Paul use this historical fact to build a spiritual idea in the mind of his readers.

Historical/Biblical Background (Acts 16:6–40)

All the elements of the Philippian epistle are found in Acts 16. Paul and Barnabas had separated over John Mark (15:36–41), then Paul finds Timothy (16:1–5). God works through adversity and affliction to accomplish His purposes!

1. Paul meets and enlists Timothy as a co-worker (16: 1–5).

2. The Macedonian call (vv. 6–10).
   Just as in the Philippian epistle, out of frustration and discouragement, comes a vision—divine guidance—and it is here that Luke joins Paul's missionary team. Also, this was just after Paul had met Timothy and included him in his mission team (Acts 16:1–5).

3. A women's prayer meeting (vv. 11–15).
   This takes place in a Roman colony, with a merchant named Lydia, and Paul's first convert in Europe.

4. Paul and Silas imprisoned (vv. 16–24).
   Paul delivers a girl possessed of the demon called Python (divination). There is a subtle parallel here with the story of the demoniac of Mark 5:6 who, *"When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him."* When a person is demon possessed, some of their words and actions are controlled by the demon, but not all. Demons do not worship Jesus, nor do they proclaim the Gospel. We have many accounts of demons acknowledging who Jesus is, and being terrified of His judgment, but none where they worship or proclaim Him as Savior to men. Rather, these were free-will actions of both the man and the girl. It is clear that the man in Mark 5 became a believer (Mark 5:18–20). Though we are not told, the fact that the girl said, *"These men are the servants of the Most-High God, who proclaim to **us** the way of salvation,"* suggests to me that once free of the demon, she also became a believer. Any time the power of God invades the enemy's stronghold, there will be persecution. Take note of the charge, *"which* [is] *not lawful for us, being Romans"* (v. 21). Paul will use this to turn the tables on them, at the cost of great suffering for himself and Silas.

5. The salvation of the Philippian jailer (vv. 25–34).
   "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household" (v. 31). Out of great suffering comes a great salvation, and with it, great joy. *"And he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household"* (v. 34).

6. The tables turned (vv. 35–40).
   Paul and Silas, both being Romans, had to willingly withhold that information, endure the suffering and abuse, so as to put fear into the magistrates, and thus protect the fledgling church at Philippi.

7. Now Paul, the Roman citizen, is writing to Philippi from a Roman prison. He shows them that faith continues to win the victory, as we keep our minds centered on Christ.

The Book of Philippians

"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?
But we have the mind of Christ." 1 Corinthians 2:16

CHAPTER ONE: THE SINGLE MIND

To have Christ-centered thinking, we must dwell on the importance and implications of the Gospel message. In it, we find the nature of God, the plight of man, the way of salvation, and the hope of eternity. It is only when the power of the Gospel captivates our mind that we are able to live a Christ-centered life.

Focus: Christ Centered (1:21)

"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

We cannot truly focus on Jesus Christ without understanding the content and the intent of the Gospel message. The "good news" is the central message of the entire Bible.

1. The Fellowship of the Gospel (1:1–6)

A. It begins with the inspired Word of God (v. 1). Paul addresses the whole church, with emphasis on *"the bishops* [overseers] *and deacons."* See Acts 6:1–7 for deacon roles, and 1 Timothy 3:1–13 for qualifications. There are three words used interchangeably for the office of Pastor: Elder, Shepherd, and Overseer (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1–4). A good Old Testament description of what a spiritual leader ought to be is found in Ezra 7:10.

B. Fellowship is built on the grace and peace of God, v.2. It is worth noting that wherever grace is linked to any other spiritual quality, it always comes first.
   1) Grace and faith (Eph. 2:8).
   2) Grace and knowledge (2 Pet. 3:18).
   3) Grace and truth (John 1:14).
   4) Grace and peace, a phrase used to introduce most of Paul's epistles, combines both the Greek and the Hebrew greetings.

C. Fellowship is sustained through joyful and effective prayer (vv. 3–5).

D. Fellowship is confident of the victory of the plan of God (v. 6).

Note: Many wrongly assume that "The Day of Christ" is simply a New Testament adaptation to the Old Testament phrase, "The Day of the Lord." But where the Day of the Lord specifically refers to the Tribulation and Second Coming of Christ (Isa. 2:17; 13:6–9; Joel 3:1–14; Zech. 14:1–9; Mal. 4:1–2), the Day of Christ speaks of the Rapture of the Church (Phil. 1:6; 1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:1–4).

Question: How confident are you in the effectiveness and quality of your Christian life?

"There is no Christian listening to my voice who will think as well of himself five years from now as he does this morning" – C.H. Spurgeon

Principle: An attitude of sanctified dissatisfaction is critical for true spiritual growth. In 1 Thessalonians 4:1 and 10, after commending the Thessalonian believers for their faithful service, Paul exhorts them to *"Excel still more"* (KJV).

2. The Confirmation of the Gospel (1:7–11)

A. Requires consistent spiritual growth and service (v. 7). *"You all are partakers with me of grace."* The word *sugkoinonos* advances the idea of *"fellowship"* in v. 5 (*koinonia*), to active, joint participation in an endeavor. The phrase *"in the defense and confirmation of the gospel"* uses typical legal language of Paul's day.

B. It builds on the evident love of Christ, v. 8 (2 Cor. 5:14–15).

C. There is a never-ending pursuit of knowledge/discernment, v. 9 (1 Thess. 4:1, 10).

D. It results in increasing spiritual fruit, v. 11 (Gal. 5:22–23). Christian productivity is not for our praise, but *"to the praise and glory of God"* (1 Cor. 1:30–31).

3. The Furtherance of the Gospel (vv. 12–14)

A. Demonstrates the victory of the providential plan of God over all adversity and affliction, v. 12 (Acts 21 and 27). God uses evil circumstances to bring about good (Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28).

B. Results in bringing others into faith in Jesus Christ, vv. 13–14. Here, the *"palace guard"* refers to the Praetorian guard (see Acts 28:16). There were twelve cohorts of these elite soldiers, who acted as the emperor's bodyguard, much like the United States Marine Corps acts under the direct command of the President.

How God works in an evil world

"The things which happened to me …" What *"things"* is Paul referring to? (Acts 21–27).

1) He is arrested in Jerusalem under false charges.
2) There was a plot by over 40 zealots to kill him.
3) He was moved by night to Caesarea, for his own safety.
4) He was there accused of sedition against Rome by the high priest.
5) His case lingered in Caesarea for two years.

6) He finally appeals to Caesar, where Jews and Christians were already being persecuted under Emperor Claudius (Acts 18:1–2).
7) He endures the storm and shipwreck of Acts 27.
8) Yet, through it all, God fulfilled His promise to Paul, *"Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified of me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome"* (Acts 23:11).

4. <u>The Defense of the Gospel</u> (vv. 15–26):

A. Prevails over all opposition, whether from within or from outside, vv. 15–16.

B. Rejoices in the proclamation of Christ, from whatever motives, vv. 17–18.

C. Views the victory of the Light, even in the midst of darkness, vv. 19–20. The *"deliverance"* Paul speaks of here refers to his acquittal from false charges. Paul's case would be of special interest to Christians in Philippi, as it would set a precedent for how Christian citizens of Rome would be treated.

D. Recognizes that both life and death are in the hands of God, vv. 21–23. *"A desire to depart"* (*analuo)* = to *"break camp."* The last words of General Robert E. Lee were, *"Strike the tent!"* Stonewall Jackson said, *"Let us cross over the river and rest in the shade of the trees."* (see also Gal. 2:20; Heb. 2:14–15).

E. Is assured that "God works all things together for good," vv. 24–26 (Rom. 8:28).

<u>Historical Note</u>: There is good reason to believe that much of the persecution against Christians was fostered by the vindictive and self-serving actions of some pastors such as those in vv. 15–16. In a letter written by Clement of Rome to the Corinthians about 90 A.D., in which he warned that divisions and accusation within the church had contributed to the martyrdom of many Christians, he included Paul in this number!

Jesus had warned the early disciples of the betrayal of brother against brother in time of persecution (Matt. 24:10).

5. <u>The Conduct Worthy of the Gospel</u> (vv. 27–30)

A. The word *"conduct"* is *politeuomai*, and speaks of life as a citizen, v. 27. Paul will use this word again in 3:20. The privileges of citizenship were to be matched by the fulfillment of duties and responsibilities.

Our great example in living as a pilgrim, "in the world but not of it," (John 17:14–16) is Abraham (Heb. 11:9–10, 13):
1) He was looking for the city of God.
2) He lived in tents with Isaac and Jacob.
3) He died in faith, assured of the promises of God to him.

B. The word *"worthy"* means "to balance the scales." Our conduct is to reflect our heavenly citizenship.

C. To *"stand fast"* is to be armed with the armor of God (Eph. 6:10–18). The Roman army was invincible because they fought as a tight-knit unit.

D. The courage of faith in the face of adversaries brings on the persecutors the conviction of their ultimate judgment, v. 28 (John 3:17–19).

Note: It is on the basis of Jesus' words in Matthew16:18 that I reject common interpretations of the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven (Matt. 13:31–33) as representing the Church being overwhelmed by evil.

E. Persecution for the faith is a gift from God, v. 29. Believing in Christ is the beginning; persecution is the evidence of spiritual growth and maturity (Matt. 5:3–16; 1 Pet. 4:12–16).

F. When we are persecuted, we take our stand with the heroes of the faith, v. 30 (Matt. 5:12; Hebrews 11).

"The early Christians did not exclaim, 'Look what the world has come to', but rather, 'Look what has come into the world'" – Carl Henry
(quoted by Chuck Missler many times)

Conclusion:
The last four verses of Chapter 1 and the first four verses of Chapter 2 focus on the relationships of believers to one another, because of our union with Christ.

CHAPTER TWO: THE SERVANT MIND

Focus: Cross Centered (2:8)

"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."

1. The Mind of Humility (vv.1–4).

A. It is based on spiritual certainties, v. 1. The "if's" are all first-class conditions. This can also be translated "since it is true."

B. Nothing so fulfills the goal of the teacher as seeing God's word at work in those who are taught, v. 2a.

C. The evidence of genuine faith-reception of God's Word is unity of thinking, love, and purpose in action, v. 2b. The phrase *"one mind"* is a verb in Greek, *phroureo*, and means "a way or system of thing." The verb form speaks of a way of life, based on an understanding of the spiritual grounds of our unity (Eph. 4:1–6).

D. *"Selfish ambition"* is always the enemy of effective ministry, v. 3a, (1:15–16).

E. True humility always places others first in consideration, v. 3b. It is trite but true, the key to joy is **J**esus first, **O**thers second, **Y**ourself last!

F. While we need to take care of our own concerns, we should carry also the burden of the concerns of others, v. 4 (Rom. 15:1).

2. The Sacrificial Mind (vv. 5–11)

The Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of humility and self-sacrifice on behalf of others. We are exhorted to "follow in His footsteps" (1 Pet. 2:21). Many scholars believe that verses 6–11 were part of an early Christian hymn, possible composed by Paul.

A. The command *"Let this mind be in you"* is, again, *phroureo* (2:2). It is a verb, referring to a system of thinking. *"In you"* is plural, that is, "among you." We are to think toward other believers as Christ thinks of us, in a sacrificial way for each one's highest benefit.

B. The phrase *"being in the form of God"* is from *huparko* and refers to His eternal pre-existence as God. It speaks of His sharing of the essence of God with the Father and the Spirit from eternity past.

C. The phrase *"made himself of no reputation"* (v. 7) is from *kenoo*, and means "to empty oneself, or to divest oneself." Jesus did not cease to be God, but He gave up His heavenly privileges to come in the form of a man. Nero, being only a man, claimed to be divine. Jesus, although God, was willing to become a man. The word *"bondservant"* suggests Old Testament passages like Isaiah 42:1 and 53:13–53:12.

Point: In vv. 5–9, Jesus fulfilled a multitude of Old Testament prophecies.

D. As if this were not enough, *"being found in appearance as a man,"* though God in the flesh, He humbled Himself all the more, even to death as a criminal on the cross, v. 8 (2 Cor. 5:21). His was a substitutionary sacrifice on behalf of all sinners (Rom. 3:23–24; 5:12; 1 John 2:2; 3:8).

E. To the degree of His self-humiliation God the Father has exalted Him above all others. *"The name of Jesus"* refers to His exalted reputation as the Redeemer and Savior of the world (John 4:42). This fulfills Isaiah 45:21–23, 53:11–12, and Romans 14:11.

Point: In this verse, we see Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13–14 fulfilled (see also Rev. 5:1–14).

F. The Lord Jesus applies this same principle of exaltation to us in Matthew 18:4; 23:12; Luke 14:11; and 18:14, as does Peter in 1 Peter 4:12–14.

G. This is in keeping with the working of the justice of God (Matt. 23:12; 1 Pet. 5:6). It is important to remember that righteousness and justice are the foundation of God's throne (i.e., will, purpose, decisions, etc.), according to Psalm 89:14 and 97:2.

H. The fact that *"every knee will bow ... and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord,"* proves that the historical evidence of the crucifixion and resurrection will, in the end, cause all who reject Him to stand self-condemned because of their unbelief (Isa. 45:23; John 3:17–19; Rom. 14:11).

Principle: In Romans 10:5–13, Paul quotes Moses in Deuteronomy 30:12–13. This is much misunderstood by many. Moses was warning Israel against their tendency toward works salvation. In Romans 10:1–4, Paul declares that it was this lust for salvation by works that had cost Israel both salvation and service. He then declares that the only hope for Israel, or any unbeliever, is to confess that Jesus is Lord. This has been abused by "Lordship salvation" proponents, who miss the point of v. 13. It is a quote from Joel 2:32, where the word *"LORD"* is *YHWH*. The problem for the Jew of Paul's day was in recognizing that Jesus Christ is God in the flesh.

Historical Fact: In the time of the early church, the Caesars claimed to be deity. This gave rise the oath "Caesar is Lord," to which the Christian replied, "Jesus is Lord" and were martyred for it. It is worth noting that in Psalm 110:1, David writes: *"The LORD* [*YHWH*] *said to my Lord* [*Adonai*], *'Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" Adonai* is possessive, *"my LORD,"* and was the word the Jews would use as a substitute for YHWH!

Application: In vv. 5–11, Paul teaches eight great doctrines of Christology:

1) The Deity of Jesus Christ,
2) His eternal pre–existence as God,
3) His equality with the Father,
4) His incarnation—the hypostatic union of God and man,
5) His voluntary and substitutionary death for sinners,
6) His resurrection and ascension,
7) His present session at the Father's right hand, and
8) His certain and ultimate victory over all evil and enemies.

Principle: The crucifixion is the key to:

1) All of Scripture,
2) All of prophecy,
3) All of history,
4) All of eternity,
5) Every one's personal and final destiny, and
6) The essence of God: Sovereignty, Righteousness, Justice, Love, Eternal life, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Immutability, and Veracity. So ...

Stop and **R**emember **J**esus' **L**ove, so that **E**very **O**bstacle becomes an **O**pportunity to press **O**n **I**n **V**ictory.

These points are confirmed by Jesus' first two messages following His resurrection to the disciples (Luke 24:25–27, 44–45).

Note: In the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16): One goat is offered as a sin offering, the other goat is sent into the wilderness to bear away the sin and guilt of the nation. All of this was anticipated in Genesis 3:21: the skin of the slain animal made a covering for Adam and Eve. The word, atonement, means "covering." The same word is used in Genesis 6:14 for the *"cover"* of pitch on the Ark.

Principle: What Jesus accomplished on the cross went far beyond the Old Testament conception of atonement (covering). The Doctrine of Expiation teaches that He deleted them from God's perspective (Col. 2:13–15)

Application: The great themes of vv. 5–11 are doctrinal in nature, but are introduced by Paul as the foundation for our conduct as Christians (v.12–30).

3. The Enlightened Mind (vv. 12–18)

Peter uses the cross of Christ as the example of how believers are to conduct themselves (1 Pet. 2:21–24, see also Rom. 12:1–2). As believers we are called to be *"salt"* and *"light"* (Matthew 13–16). Salt creates thirst, and light guides those in darkness.

Both our lives and our witness should have the effect of drawing others to faith in Christ, *"The Light of the world"* (John 1:7–8; 8:12; 9:5).

A. The true life of the spiritual Christian is a partnership with God in which His will, known through His Word, is actively carried out by the believer, vv. 12–13.

B. The *"Therefore"* (v. 12) that begins this verse applies what the Lord Jesus accomplished at the cross to our daily lives. It implies duty, obligation, responsibility.

C. This is seen in the word *"obeyed,"* which is *hupakoe*. The word means to "hear and obey," and in the ancient world was used of one who "answers a knock at the door" (see Rev. 3:20–21).

Note: To hear the Word of God is to become accountable. To obey it results in approval.

D. The word *"work"* in v. 12 is *katergazomai* and speaks of bringing a work to completion. In v. 13, God's *"working"* is *energeo*, from which we get energy, or energize. The point is that the indwelling Spirit of God provides the energy for us to live according to God's inner working (Rom. 12:1–2).

E. God works in us by His Word and His Spirit, but obedience is always an active choice on our part.

F. In vv. 14–16, Paul illustrates what this "outworking" (v. 13) looks like. It reflects the character of those who are *"children of God."* This means not only are we saved by grace but growing into the likeness of the heavenly Father. We say, "Like father, like son."

"Complaining and disputing" were the traits of the Exodus generation (1 Cor. 10:1–11; Heb. 3:7–11).

G. We are to be *"holding fast the word of life,"* which could also be translated "holding forth the word of life," v. 16. The individual believer, as well as the whole of the Christian body, ought to be a "lighthouse" and a "beacon" of life to the world. The *"day of Christ,"* as in 1:6, is a reference to the Rapture of the Church.

H. In vv. 17–18, Paul assures them that if they do these things, his death—whenever it comes—will be joyful, for their faithful sacrifice and service. Just as the disciple shares in the wisdom and experience of the teacher, so the teacher will share in the labor and reward of the disciple (see 4:1). The *"drink offering"* calls to mind Leviticus 23:18, 37.

Principle: Just as Moses in Deuteronomy 32 was preparing Israel for his departure, Paul here may be anticipating his own death and is equipping them to carry on in his absence.

4. The Compassionate Mind (vv. 19–24)

Paul has spoken of his sufferings for the Gospel (vv. 12–14), of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ (2:5–9). He now introduces us to the sufferings of his trusted fellow workers. Timothy is an example of one who adopted Paul's compassionate mind.

A. All of Paul's plans were always subordinate to the will of the Lord Jesus, v. 19a. This is the secret to effective planning and execution of our goals (James 4:13–15).

B. Timothy repeatedly received high praise from Paul, as one who reflected Paul's devotion to God and compassion for His people, vv. 20–22 (1 Tim. 1:12, 18; 2 Tim. 1:2).

C. *"Proven character"* comes from *dokime*—from the verb *dokimazo,* which means to "prove after testing." Peter speaks of this kind of character in 1 Peter 1:7.

D. The word *"served"* (v. 22) is from *deuloo*, meaning "to serve as a slave." Timothy learned from Paul to subordinate his plans and desires to the plan of God.

E. Paul's hope is that he will soon be released and able to visit Philippi himself, vv. 23–24.

5. The Death-Defying Mind (vv. 25–30)

Epaphroditus is mentioned only in this epistle (also, 4:18), and nothing is known about him beyond what we learn in these few verses. Yet, what a testimony!

A. In v. 25, Paul speaks of five qualities of this man. He was to Paul a brother, co-worker, soldier of the faith, messenger, and minister. He served the church in Philippi, and he served Paul in prison. These qualities describe what in the ancient world was known as a courier. Our modern Pentathlon is built around this idea. A courier had to be able to ride, run, swim, fight and overcome obstacles.

B. Epaphroditus had become sick, possibly by over-exertion and exhaustion, vv. 26–27. Why didn't Paul heal him? This shows that either:
   1) the power of healing was passing, or
   2) God chose not to allow it at this time.

C. During his illness, he was more concerned for their anxiety than for himself.

D. Paul would send him carrying the epistle to the Philippians, vv. 28–29. This was a land and sea journey that took about six weeks to accomplish.

E. There is a very interesting word used in v. 30, translated "not regarding his life." The word is *paraboleuomai*. It was used in the ancient world of gamblers who would bet their life on the roll of the dice. They were called *parabolani*. It was also used of gladiators who fought in the arena, and of a friend who would suffer a judgment in another's place.

F. Epaphroditus was a man of sanctified commitment: *"We have lost the sanctity of commitment"* – Chuck Missler.

Principle: Epaphroditus was a true adventurer for Christ. My definition of adventure, which I arrived at one night in 1967, in the middle of the Paru river, pulling a canoe against the rapids in Piranha infested waters, was this: Adventure is the thing you love to read about, but when you're in it, it is just suffering and hardship!

CHAPTER THREE: THE SPIRITUAL MIND

The spiritual believer knows that a faithful life of service will be rewarded in eternity. The desire for reward is not selfish, however. To the spiritual mind it is all that we have to give to Christ our Savior in gratitude for what He has done for us.

Focus: Crown Centered (3:12, 14)

"Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me ... I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Paul's Life Summarized: *"The unexamined life is not worth living"* – Socrates.

1. His past—I have counted loss.
2. His present—That I may gain.
3. His future—I press on.

1. No Confidence in the Flesh (vv. 1–6)

A. *"Finally ... rejoice,"* v. 1, "from now on" or "for the duration." *"The same things"* refers to repetition, which is crucial to learning and retaining information. This joy is not the absence of trials, but rather confidence that God is sovereign and will overrule all things for good (Rom. 8:28).
   1) The command to rejoice is based on the imperative to live by the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

2) The joy Paul speaks of is supernatural in nature, as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23). This cannot be produced by human effort or positive thinking.
3) We are commanded to have this kind of joy in the face of trials and temptations (James 1:2). As in Philippians, this joy is the product of Bible-based thinking, James 1:3, 12 (*"knowing that the testing of your faith,"* etc.).
4) The Lord Jesus is the ultimate example of this attitude, *"Who for the joy that was set before Him* [Jesus] *endured the cross"* (Heb. 12:2).
5) Joy is grounded in the manifold blessings imparted to every believer at the moment of salvation. *"Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation"* (Isa. 12:3, see Eph. 1:3).
6) Jesus has imparted His own victorious joy to every believer through His Word. *"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full"* (John 15:11).
7) This is why Nehemiah tells us, *"The joy of the LORD is your strength"* (Neh. 8:10).
8) It is the will of God that believers learn to rejoice in all things. *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."* (1 Thess. 5:16–18).

B. Paul uses three warnings to *"beware,"* along with three derogatory terms to describe the Judaizers who constantly followed him, v. 2. *"Dogs"* is what the religious Jews called Gentiles, and in the Old Testament was used of homosexual male prostitutes (Deut. 23:17). In Psalm 22:16, it is used of Christ's enemies at the crucifixion. They were *"evil workers"* because they sought to earn salvation by obedience to the Law, and the *"mutilation,"* because of their focus on circumcision as essential to salvation (Acts. 5:1–5; Gal. 5:12). *"Evil workers"* implies a works-salvation theology (Acts 15:1–2, 5).

C. From the very beginning, Moses made it clear that true circumcision was of the heart (Deut. 30:6). This truth is repeated throughout Scripture (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Lev. 26:41; Jer. 4:4; 9:25–26; see Rom. 2:28–29; Col. 2:11), true worship is *"in the Spirit."* We *"rejoice in Christ Jesus"* as the only way of salvation, v. 3.

D. In vv. 4–6, Paul recites his former reliance on human accomplishments. From a law-abiding Jewish family, a noble tribe, of Hebrew culture, a zealous Pharisee. Few of his day could compare to Paul's credentials. Not only this, but he was the star pupil of Gamaliel, the greatest teacher of his day (Acts 22:3; Gal. 1:13–14).

2. <u>No Cost too Great</u> (vv. 7–11)

A. Note the contrast in v. 7, *"gain to me"* and *"loss for Christ."* The terms Paul uses here are from the business world. The idea was to sell a commodity at a loss because of a greater opportunity. Consider the parable of the hidden treasure and the great pearl (Matt. 13:44–46).

B. The word *"count,"* vv. 7–8, is *hegeomai*, an accounting term that means to add up all the facts and come to a conclusion. His conclusion is that all his achievements of vv. 4–6 are

"dung," a word specifically used for human excrement. Paul may use this term here to refer back to *"dogs,"* which would often live by eating excrement.

C. Here is the roster of the treasures Paul found when he turned from human righteousness, vv. 8–11:
   1) The knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord—to come to Him in humble saving faith. In Old Testament theology, the highest spiritual attainment was to *"know"* God intimately (Exod. 33:13).
   2) That I may gain Christ—his personal and permanent possession.
   3) To be found in Him—where all the riches of grace reside (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:3).
   4) To possess "the righteousness of God in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:21).
   5) To know Christ, and the resurrection power He imparts to us.
   6) To share His sufferings, be conformed to His death (Acts 9:16; 2 Cor. 11:23–33). Our deepest fellowship and intimacy comes through the times of darkness, when God seems to hide His face from us.
   7) If possible, to attain to the "out-resurrection." The word *"resurrection"* in v. 11 comes from the Greek word *exananstasis*, a word that only occurs here in the Bible. The word *anastasis* is the word used for resurrection in other passages. The addition of the prefix *ex* implies an "out-resurrection" or, in the context, resurrection "out from among the dead." Since Paul links this to his extreme spiritual self-discipline in vv. 7–10, it implies a resurrection to greater eternal stature and reward, similar to the *"better resurrection"* of Hebrews 11:35.

      Commentators differ on its meaning, suggesting:
      a. Uncertainty of his salvation (not possible).
      b. The hope that he would live to the Rapture (Titus 2:13; 1 Thess. 4:13–17).
      c. The desire to win eternal crowns (1 Cor. 9:24–27).

D. I believe we will understand what Paul means by simply continuing in the context, from vv. 12–16.

<u>Principle</u>: The summary of all the above spiritual riches is found in one word—GRACE: **<u>G</u>**od's **<u>R</u>**ighteousness **<u>A</u>**t **<u>C</u>**hrist's **<u>E</u>**xpense.

3. <u>No Time to Waste</u> (vv. 12–14).

A. Paul had not *"already attained"* what he sought, which he defines as being *"perfected,"* v. 12. Though this term is often used for maturity, it is not used in this way here. Paul is obviously a mature believer. He uses the term in the same way it is used of Jesus Christ in Hebrews 5:7–9. The Lord Jesus was "perfected" in the sense that he ran his race to the finish and gave his life on the cross (Heb. 12:1–2).

B. To do this, Paul said, ***"one thing I do,"***, a single-minded focus on finishing his race well, which required forgetting the past, focusing on the future, and pressing on for the goal of the *"prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus,"* v. 14.

One Thing

1) *"One thing you lack"* (Mark 10:21). Jesus, to the rich young ruler.
2) *"One thing is needed"* (Luke 10:42). Jesus, to Martha.
3) *"One thing I know"* (John 9:25). The man born blind, to the Pharisees.
4) *"One thing I have desired"* (Psalm 27:4). David's spiritual motivation.
5) *"One thing I do"* (Phil. 3:13). Paul's single-minded pursuit.

C. The point here is that each one of us has a "calling" to fulfill, that is ours alone. Only if we finish our race in victory can we attain the reward God has determined for us. Run your race, don't be distracted by how someone else is running theirs! (see Matt. 6:4, 6, 18; 25:21, 23; 1 Cor. 3:10–15; 9:24–27; 2 Cor. 5:9–11).

Principle: Paul's mindset was the result of his matriculation and graduation in the "School of Christ" (see Phil. 4:10–13). He signed up and he finished the course (2 Tim. 4:6–8).

4. No Room for Competition (vv. 15–16)

A. In these verses, Paul urges us to follow his example (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1). This is the mind, the thinking of the mature believer, to ignore others and focus on his race.

B. The "same rule" is the divine standard. Others often *"walk"* according to a human standard (2 Cor. 10: 12, 18). Don't get distracted by false standards of spirituality.

C. A quick summary of Paul's "pattern" of walking:
   1) To live or die with the mind focused on Christ (1:21).
   2) To lay hold of the sacrificial thinking of Christ (2:5–9).
   3) To strive for the prize of fulfilling our calling (3:12–14).
   4) Looking ahead to Chapter 4, to learn contentment in all things (4:11–13).

D. *"Let us walk"* uses the word *stoicheo*, a military word meaning "to stay in step, to march in ranks, to hold formation." It stresses unity and team effort. Here, the infinitive form of the Greek word is used, which speaks of purpose or result. God's purpose is fulfilled when we obey His Word.

E. The emphasis on the mind (literally, "thinking," *phroureo*, a verb) is dominant throughout the book. Right spiritual thinking is the key to joy.

5. No Ultimate Good but Eternity (vv. 17–21)

A. *"Join in following my example"* means that Paul followed Christ, and we should follow Paul in this focus (1 Cor. 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; Heb. 6:12).

B. The *"enemies of the cross of Christ"* have been seen in 1:15–16 and 3:2–5. Is it possible for a believer to be an enemy of Christ? Look at what James says in James 4:1–5 where he is speaking to those in whom the Spirit dwells (v. 5).

C. The *"belly"* (v. 19) speaks of emotional motivation for self-gratification.

D. *"Citizenship"* (v. 20) is *politeuma*, the same word used in 1:27 for worthy conduct. Just as Philippi was a colony of Rome, far from the capitol city, so we who are children of God are an outpost of Heaven on Earth.

E. The hope of the believer (v. 20) is the return of Christ, and our transformation into His likeness (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:50–58; 1 Thess. 4:13–17; Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:1–3). The same power that will transform those who believe, will subdue, under His feet, all who reject Him (Psalm 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25–29; Heb. 2:8–9).

CHAPTER FOUR: THE STABLE MIND

Focus: Contentment Centered (4:11)

"Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am to be content." The word *"content"* is *autarkes*. This a word used by the stoics for "self-sufficiency," in the sense of being independent on external circumstances. It implies having sufficient inner resources to be composed and content regardless of happenstance.

1. The Stability of Unity (vv. 1–3)

This little section deals with a problem that affects every church, has caused division and church splits and often leaves fellow believers angry and unreconciled. It is a shame to the church and a blight on the name of Christ (John 13:34–35).

A. Paul begins the section with an eternal perspective (v. 1). He reminds these poor and persecuted believers (2 Cor. 8:1–5) that they are his joy on Earth, and his crown in Heaven. The faithfulness of these believers made all of Paul's sufferings worthwhile. *"Stand fast in the Lord."* This was the Roman battle cry, *"Stand firm"* (*stekete*, meaning, "hold your ground," see Eph. 6:10–14). We can only do this as we are *"strong in the Lord and in the power of His might"* (Eph. 6:10). This implies the filling power of the Spirit and the constant inculcation of the Word of God, combined with the will to obey it (John 7:17).

B. Paul urges *"Euodia* [Success] … and …*Syntyche* [Lucky/fortunate] *to be of the same mind in the Lord,"* v. 2 (see 1:27; 2:2, 5, 20; 3:15–16). Personal conflicts in the church can have divisive and even destructive effects. Their names are Greek, so they were probably of Macedonian descent, as Lydia was of Asia (Acts 16:14).
   1) Personal conflicts are to be resolved in the light of Scripture. (Matt. 18:15–17; 1 Cor. 3:1–4; 6:1–11).
   2) This requires humility on the part of both parties.
   3) Divisions which cannot be resolved are evidence of both carnality and spiritual immaturity. The cause is a lack of true grace orientation.

C. The *"true companion"* means "yoke-fellow" and may refer to Epaphroditus, who would carry this letter to Philippi.

D. These women had labored (*sunathleo*: to fight alongside, used also in 1:27) with Paul when he was in Philippi the first time. Paul loved to praise those who helped him (Rom. 16:3–16).

E. *"The Book of Life,"* v. 3, refers to the Lamb's Book of Life, which contains the names of all who believe in Jesus Christ (Luke 10:20; Rev. 3:5; 13:18; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27).

Principle: Personal issues should always be subordinate to eternal values.

2. Stability through Prayer (vv. 4–7)

Genuine, selfless, and effective prayer resolves disputes, results in joy, and gives evidence of the conscious presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in our midst.

A. *"Rejoice"* is a command (see 3:1) and, as seen in Acts 16:25, where Paul and Silas sang and prayed in prison after being severely beaten. This joy is supernatural and is produced by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22) without regard to circumstances.

B. *"Gentleness"* is a prominent characteristic of Jesus Christ (2 Cor .10:1). It goes with *"meekness"* (Matt. 11:29), which is the ability to endure unjust treatment without anger or retaliation, and will reap eternal reward (Matt. 5:5).

C. *"The Lord is at hand"* (v. 5b) reminds us that we daily live in His presence, and He will be the ultimate judge of our attitudes and actions (Deut. 4:7; Psalm 34:17–18; 145:18; James 5:9–11).

D. In vv. 6–7, he reminds us that anxiety, worry, and fear are contrary to faith (Matt. 6:25–27). When we pray rightly, according to His Word (1 John 5:14–15), and trust in God's faithfulness, sovereignty, and mercy (Rom. 8:28), we will enter into *"the peace of God,"* which acts as a military garrison around our soul.

Principle: Prayer is God's cure for worry and anxiety. It is God's way of allowing us to enter into His work. "Prayer is not preparation for the work of God. Prayer is the work of God" – Oswald Chambers.

Historical Note: In Romans 15:30–33, Paul appealed to the church in Rome to join him in prayer, that he would be delivered from his enemies in Jerusalem, and that he would be able to come to them *"with joy by the will of God."* Consider how God answered that prayer, and how Paul came to be in Rome, as a prisoner. God does indeed work in strange ways!

3. Stability through God's Presence (vv. 8–9)

In these verses, Paul develops further the idea of living in the presence of God from v. 5. When a deliberate consciousness of His presence permeates our lives, what a difference it makes in our attitude, our words, and our actions!

Here, the apostle places his emphasis on the thinking of the believer, because the spiritual battle fought by every child of God is won or lost in the arena of the mind.

A. *"Finally,"* as in 3:1, literally means, "from now on." When we hear or read the Word of God, we become accountable for it from that moment on.

B. *"Whatever things are true ... if there is any virtue."* The roster of virtues is followed by the first-class condition of *"if,"* which means, "It is true." *"Virtue,"* here, is *arete*, used by Peter in 2 Peter 1:3, 5 as "the display of divine power and excellence". This word conveyed to the ancient Stoics the central idea of ethics and conduct.

C. *"The God of peace will be with you."* If we meet the conditions of vv. 8–9a, this is the promise. Jesus said the same thing in John 14:21 and 23, and James affirms it in James 4:8.

Principle: The peace of God and the God of peace (vv. 7, 9):

1) At the moment of salvation, we enter into ***"peace with God"*** (Rom. 5:1). This is our permanent standing before Him as His children.
2) When we receive His Word in humility and faith, we are receiving *"grace and **peace from God**"* (Phil. 1:2).
3) When we face life with faith and prayer, we receive the ***"peace of God"*** (v. 7).
4) Persistent growth and maturity of thought and conduct bring us near to *"the **God of peace**"* (v. 9).

4. Graduating from the School of Stability (vv. 10–13)

Though Paul rejoices at their recent support, which some suggest came nearly 10 years after Acts 16, he wants them to know that 1) he had learned to be content in adverse circumstances, and 2) that his joy was not in the gift, but for the sake of the givers (vv. 14–18).

A. Far too many Christians quote v. 13, without any understanding of the context. This is **not** a promise of Scripture! It is the declaration of a man who had earned it, through long training, adversity, and effort.

B. The key idea of this section is found in the phrase, *"I have learned ... to be content."* The word *"content"* is *autarkes* and is defined at the beginning of this chapter. From a material perspective, all Paul required was *"food and clothing"* (1 Tim. 6:8).

C. This was not an automatic achievement of Paul at the point of his conversion. He details for us what it means to become a student in "The School of Christ."

1) First, there was a prolonged period of discipleship training. Paul says, ***"I have learned."*** The word is *manthano*, related to our word "disciple." It refers to a process of "discipleship training," which included learning the Word of God and applying it in circumstances of doubt and confusion (Acts 16:6–8), as well as suffering and affliction (Acts 27; 2 Cor.1:8–10; 2 Cor. 11:23–33), by which he learned to trust God to be faithful and to ultimately prevail in every condition.
2) From this intensive course of study, Paul could say ***"I know how,"*** that is, the skills of relating Scripture and faith to every time of either blessing or adversity. We speak of a person having "know how" as possessed with certain skill sets which are valuable and useful on demand.

3) With this resume of training, experience, and spiritual expertise, Paul was able to face an uncertain future (death or deliverance) with the poise and strength to say, *"**I can do** all things through Christ who strengthens me."*

Principle: When believers tritely quote this verse, then fall apart at the slightest discomfort, it gives to the unsaved reason to doubt the believers claims of the power of Christ. How much better to say, "I am working on attaining to the stature of Paul in this great spiritual achievement."

What a man can do
"A human being should be able to change a diaper, plan an invasion, butcher a hog, conn a ship, design a building, write a sonnet, balance accounts, build a wall, set a bone, comfort the dying, take orders, give orders, cooperate, act alone, solve equations, analyze a new problem, pitch manure, program a computer, cook a tasty meal, fight efficiently, die gallantly. Specialization is for insects."– Robert A. Heinlein

Point: By combining 3:12–14, *"this one thing I do,"* with 4:13, *"I can do all things,"* we recognize that the great apostle never ceased to aspire to a higher standard than what he had attained.

D. The key here is *"through Christ who strengthens me."* The word *endunamao* refers to the perpetual, daily infusion of divine power from the source, the Lord Jesus Christ, by His Spirit and through His Word, to the life of a humble and faithful servant of God.

Principle: It is critical here to see that Paul had been trained in "the School of Christ," and did not come by his victorious attitude quickly. First, he ***"learned"*** from Christ, and the Scriptures applied to his daily circumstances. Then, he developed ***"know how,"*** from his experiences of meeting sufferings by faith. The result was that he could face the future knowing that he could confidently say, *"**I can do** all things **through Christ.**".*

5. The Stability of God's Supply (vv. 14–23)
There is a direct relation between God's provision to us and how we choose to use it. In v. 19, we have another of those verses often taken out of context, which causes many believers' confusion and crisis in their faith.

A. In vv. 14–16, Paul recounts the faithful offerings of these Philippian believers for his support. He was their missionary, and they were faithful to send him offerings. Not only did they support him, but they gave lavishly—out of great poverty and persecution—for the poor saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:1–5). Paul reminds them in v. 17, for the second time (v. 11), that his rejoicing in their support was not for what he received, but for *"fruit that abounds to your account."* He is reminding them that they are "laying up treasure in heaven" (Matt. 6:20). God, who keeps the account books, would reward them in eternity for their faithful giving.

B. In v. 18, he assures them that the gift they sent by Epaphroditus had supplied all his needs. He uses three phrases to describe his current state: **"I have all ... I abound ... I am full."** These imply 1) receiving, 2) utilizing, 3) resting in—a parallel to the resources of God in vv. 11–13. What joy it must have given them to know how they had blessed him who had introduced them into eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ!

Note: What Paul called "abundance" would be quite paltry by today's standards (Again, 1 Tim. 6:8).

C. But it is not Paul alone who is gratified. Much more importantly, their offerings were to God *"A sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God"* (Gen. 8:21; Lev. 1:1–17). He balances the three-fold blessing to himself with the three-fold approval of God.

D. Verse 19 is another much-misunderstood verse, often quoted as a promise, but out of context. The point is that just as they had supplied Paul above and beyond, so now God would supply all their needs, from the storehouse of His riches in glory by the agency of Christ Himself.

The word *"supply"* is from *pleroo*, the same word in v. 18, *"I am full."* By the way, this is the same word used for the filling of the Spirit in Eph.5:18. Consider the following, which is a promise:

> *"There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself."* Proverbs 11:24–25

Or, we can come into more close proximity to the situation of Paul and the Philippians. After he speaks of their sacrificial support for the saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:1–5), he says this:

> *"But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."* 2 Corinthians 9:6.

Or ...

> *"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."* Galatians 6:7

E. My conclusion is that to quote what Paul gives to the poor Philippians, who had given so sacrificially, to believers who are often far from sacrificial is not only foolish, but it often works to give false assurance, and undermines the chief lesson that should be taught: *"God loves a cheerful giver"* (2 Cor. 9:6–9).

F. In vv. 20–23, He commends them to God and again demonstrates how God has worked all things for good (see 1:12–13 with Rom. 8:28 and Gen. 50:20), by bringing the

Gospel into the very heart of *"Caesar's household."* In four centuries, the Roman Empire would collapse from within, while the Christian church continued to spread throughout the entire world.

Philippians Summary

1. This is truly a book that is designed to lead us into the *"joy of the LORD"* (Neh. 8:10).

2. However, this joy can only come as a result of right, spiritual mindset and a corresponding lifestyle.

3. We will never know the fullness of joy until we learn to live in a broken and evil world by the power of the Spirit of God, in obedience to the Word of God.

4. Paul challenges us to follow his example (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1). That example is to develop the thinking of the Lord Jesus Christ in laying down His life for us. This is the true meaning of John 15:13, which calls for a daily subordination of self for the needs of others (Luke 9:23), and for the glory and honor of Jesus Christ.

Now that we have studied the book, all that remains is to go out and live it.
Let us make *"this one thing"* the goal of our lives!

For further study on the Book of Philippians, see notes on Gene's two-session class at Westside Bible Church, called *The Captive Mind.*

Resources

Constable's Notes on the Bible, Volume X, Philippians, Thomas L. Constable
Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament, Rienecker and Rogers
New Illustrated Bible Commentary, Dr. Earl Radmacher
The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, Walvoord and Zuck
The Book of Philippians, taught by Dr. Chuck Missler.
The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament, Craig S. Keener