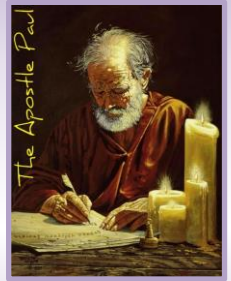


PHILIPPIANS

Joy In Christ

Lesson 07: Marks of Humble Service ... [PHILIPPIANS 2:12-16]



PREVIEW

Paul is concerned with the spiritual walk of the Philippians. He praises them for their obedience but wants them to continue their growth by working out their salvation. God is sovereignly controlling their lives, so they are to do all things without grumbling or dispute. They are to show constantly that they are innocent in a crooked world and to stay close to the Word of Life, which is the revealed Word of God.

In this lesson, Paul further develops his admonitions to the church (1:27-2:4). The illustration of Christ's humility only heightened their obligation to become true servants of the gospel. This portion of scripture is structured around two main commands: **"WORK OUT"** (2:12) and **"DO"** (2:14).

TO WILL AND TO DO: (2:12-13)

Genuine effort involves God and humans as collaborators. Believers cannot become spiritual by themselves, nor can Christ live His life through unyielded vessels. In verse 12, Paul addresses human responsibility.

HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY (12)

The Philippians' obedience was known to all. They always obeyed. The adverb **"ALWAYS"** shows the stability of their Christian walk.

The phrase **"WORK OUT"** literally means **"KEEP WORKING DOWN"**. It involves a constant process of self-initiated activity. When a believer is thoroughly working at his spiritual development, he is working out what God is working in. He is putting his position into practice (Ephesians 2:10). Believers should complete what God has started.

Three features of this work are presented. **First**, the time of the work is seen in the phrase **"... NOT AS IN MY PRESENCE ONLY, BUT NOW MUCH MORE IN MY ABSENCE"**.

Second, the object of the work was the Philippian's own salvation. People cannot *work for* their salvation, but

they can *work out* their spiritual position (Romans 4:5; Ephesians 2:8-10). Biblical salvation involves deliverance from the penalty of sin (justification), from the power of sin (sanctification), and from the presence of sin (glorification). The Philippians were saved people (1:6; 3:1); thus salvation here refers to the daily struggle for victory over the sin nature (sanctification).

SALVATION		
PAST	PRESENT	FUTURE
JUSTIFICATION	SANCTIFICATION	GLORIFICATION
Saved from...		
PENALTY of SIN	POWER of SIN	PRESENCE of SIN
2 Thessalonians 1:9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,	Hebrew 7:25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.	Romans 13:11 And <i>do</i> this, knowing the time, that now <i>it is</i> high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation <i>is</i> nearer than when we <i>first</i> believed.

Third, the attitude of work must be **"WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING."** When believers perceive God as He is and what He wants to do through them, these good emotional response will be produced. They do not mean a psychological frailty or a fear of hostile people and adverse circumstances. Obedience and holy emotions are companions.

DIVINE RESPONSIBILITY (13)

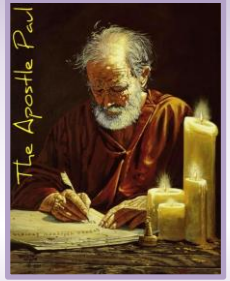
People must work because God is working. Four aspects of this divine work are presented in this verse, namely Subject of the Work, Location of the Work, Purpose of the Work, and Goal of the Work.

SUBJECT OF THE WORK

All persons of the triune Being are actively involved in the life of each believer. The Father is the husbandmen who prunes and cleanses each saint (John 15:1-2). The Holy Spirit produces His fruit within the child of God (Galatians 5:22-23). Christ lives by faith through each Christian (Galatians 2:20). The divine activity is literally an **"IN-WORKING"**. The transliteration is **"THE ONE WHO ENERGIZES."** God's inner work deals with enablement and character, whereas a person's outer work manifests

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his or her conduct. Your conduct will reflect your character.

LOCATION OF THE WORK

God works within the human life ('**IN YOU**'). This involves the total personality – the intellect, emotions, and will. God does not want to be excluded from any area of human experience. He is not content just to indwell the body of each believer; He wants to energize the new life He has quickened.

PURPOSE OF THE WORK

The **two** part of the phrase "**TO WILL AND TO DO**", show the two goals of the divine in-working. First, God desires "**TO WILL**". The will of God manifests His purpose. It includes that which He has unconditionally determined to do within the lives of all believers regardless of their faithfulness (Romans 8:28-30). It also includes that which He wants to do within each Christian; however, it is conditioned upon the believer's obedience and submission to His will (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Thess. 4:3). God does not force spirituality on anyone who refuses to have it, but He still continues to work out His purpose.

GOAL OF THE WORK

God works for His own glory ("**FOR HIS GOOD PLEASURE**"). All aspects of salvation are executed for the praise of the glory of divine grace (Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14). They are decreed according to the good pleasure of the divine will (Ephesians 1:5, 9). Believers must find pleasure in what brings God pleasure. When they do, they have joy and satisfaction.

HOLD FAST THE WORD OF LIFE: (2:14-16)

EXPLANATION OF THE COMMAND (14)

The **First Command** (2:12-13) dealt with the believer's vertical relationship to God, whereas the **Second Command** (2:14) concerns their horizontal relationship to people and situations. Their **first** was to be obeyed

with a **positive** attitude; the **second** is to be discharged without a **negative** outlook.

THE ACTION

Paul simply declared: "**DO ALL THINGS.**" This stresses the necessity to keep on doing at all times and in all situations. The believer must always be a doer of the Word (James 1:22).

The direct object ("**ALL THINGS**") includes all that God has commanded. Love for God manifests itself in the keeping of His directions (1 John 5:2). Life, outside God's will, is oppressive, but voluntary conformity to the divine will brings rest to the soul (Matthew 11:28-30).

THE ATTITUDE

Christians are to avoid "**COMPLAINING AND DISPUTING.**" When adversity comes, people have a tendency to blame others or God for their difficulties rather than faulting themselves or rejoicing in tribulation.

PURPOSES OF THE COMMAND (15-16)

A holy reason can always be found behind a divine command. The verb "**THAT YOU MAY PROVE YOURSELVES**", shows that there is a difference between being a Christian and living out the Christian life. The former refers to **position**, the latter to **practice**.

BOASTFUL REJOICING

Paul knew that he would appear "**IN THE DAY OF CHRIST.**" This event includes both the return of the Savior and His subsequent judgment of believers. In that day, Paul wanted to rejoice over what his ministry had accomplished in the lives of the Philippians.

PRODUCTIVE LABOR

Paul was not content with merely a good start. He wanted his spiritual children to go on to maturity and holiness, to be right both in position and in practice. He did not want to find out at the Judgement Seat of Christ that he had "**RUN IN VAIN.**" This would occur if he preached a faulty or partial message (Galatians 2:2).