



Philippians Chapter 4

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Genre:

- **Letter:** sometimes referred to as Epistles
 - Written in response to a specific need or circumstance.

Context:

- **Author:** Written by Paul (with Timothy- his disciple)
 - Around 61 AD; about 30 years after Christ's death; original generation still alive
 - One of 4 letters written while Paul is in prison in Rome
- Original audience:
 - The Christians in Philippi;
 - not one church; lots of small churches within the city
- What was going on?
 - They had sent their member, Epaphroditus, with a gift to deliver to Paul. Paul wrote the letter to thank them for their support/encouragement while he's imprisoned.
 - Paul was also concerned about coming persecutions and the members not all getting along→ written to instruct them to work together
- Bonus: Read Acts, chapter 16, for some of the historical accounts in the Epistles

Observe: What's Happening?- *What is the text saying?*

- Again, asking the churches to get along:
- Vs 2- Agree with each other!
 - Greek women; possibly led separate house churches and not getting along
 - Inscriptions show that women played a significant role in Philippi's religious realm
 - They worked w/ Paul; obviously has high regard for them
 - Asking other to mediate; help them to reconcile
- Stand firm in your faith, agree with each other, do not be anxious,
- Instead: think of good things and the God of peace will be with you
- Thanks them for their gifts (vs 10-20)

- Paul is stating his gratitude without seeking further gifts; doesn't want to depend on their gifts
- He's learned to be content
- Paul is telling them not to worry about him
- Learning to be content
- Vs 11-13- Greco Roman thinkers would have valued self-reliance; Paul is placing dependence on Christ instead of self
- Vs 19- Paul can't repay them, but trusts God to meet their needs
- Vs 22- News that the gospel had reached Caesar's household would have been really exciting and encouraging to the original hearers
 - Acts 28- those who guarded Paul heard his teachings

Interpret: What does it mean? *What is the central lesson the author wanted to communicate? What does it teach us about God?*

- Again visits the theme of unity
- **Excellent Thoughts:**
 - Do not be anxious- present to God
 - Paul follows his instructions for unity, rejoicing, and releasing anxiety with thinking about good things
 - Vs 8- Repetition would have been intentional to get reader's attention
 - Does this really help?
 - Example of how what we think/dwell on affects us
 - Always thinking negatively/taking in negative things isn't helpful
 - Cognitive Therapy: a type of psychotherapy in which negative patterns of thought about the self and the world are challenged in order to alter unwanted behavior patterns or treat mood disorders such as depression
 - Paul follows his instructions for unity, rejoicing, and releasing anxiety with thinking about good things
 - Also goes in line with the idea of perspective from Chp1; Paul's perspective shaped his attitude of the situation
 - And the God of peace will be with you
 - Vs 7 & 9 (sandwiches the thoughts of peace)
 - Peace- Greek is "eirene" (equivalent to "shalom" in Hebrew)
 - tranquility, absence of conflict/harmony with each other
- **Contentment:**
 - Vs 11- learned to be content whatever the circumstances
 - Vs 13- Do everything (other translations say "I can do all this") through Christ who strengthens me
 - Not taking vs 13 out of context
 - Allowing Christ to help you be content whatever the circumstances vs. the traditional interpretation of vs 13 as a motivational statement
 - Strength to endure

“Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-- think about such things.” - Phil 4:8

Application: What does it mean for you? *Personal application*

- Begin to pay attention to how what you're consuming and repeating in your thoughts is affecting you-- both positively or negatively. Are there any areas in your life where you could replace certain thoughts with whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy?
- Reflect on this area of contentment? Do you generally feel satisfied or does the culture's message of “more” have an impact on you? Are you able to lean on the Lord for strength in seasons of want?
- Did anything else speak to you from the reading?