

A Study of

PHILIPPIANS

Stand Firm in Faith

By

Mary Duchow

Introduction

I find in Mary's writings simplicity of thought, yet a depth of truth that flows from a sincere walk with Jesus. Each thought is carefully weighed in the balance of God's word and then has been tried in the fires of adversity. In spite of much personal trial, there is no bitterness. There is a sweet reminiscence of what God has done from the perspective of one who has experienced much. Scripture references are abundant and offered in context. You never get the feel that she is searching for a text to prove or justify her position or opinion. Her writings are simple, profound, and refreshing.

Living in the Glory

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Acknowledgements:

Throughout this study, Scripture is taken from the New International Version Study Bible, unless otherwise indicated, in the left margin. Also, in the left margin Scripture references are listed, as are additional source materials. Occasionally, to implement the text with personal experience or viewpoint, the words, Personal Comment, will occur in the left margin, indicating that the material to the right is from the author of this study.

Footnotes are primarily based upon those that appear in the NIV Study Bible, and are written in the left margin. The author paraphrases most of the footnotes, in order for them to be read more easily. Hence, quotation marks are rarely used. The object is to get the material before the reader with as few interruptions as possible.

The text of this study is typed in **boldface**, and quotation marks are not used.

Since the author was blessed with salvation, her desire to share this gift of redemption is strong. The memory of her past weakness, bitterness and sin, prompted her to tell others how the Lord brought her through repentance and forgiveness, and to the place of trust in Him. The Lord laid out all that was needed to accomplish this Bible Study. Scattered throughout this work are Personal Comments, which tell of her own experience. These show others a little of her life before she was able to accept the forgiveness and peace the Lord gives, in hope that her readers will be able to truly trust in God. She encourages the reader to come to Jesus, let Him into your heart and He will do the rest. Just follow His lead, learn from the Lord and live in the freedom of His peace.

Dedication

These Bible studies are dedicated to my children and grandchildren: Christine Palafox, her husband Nick, their children, Tahlia and Jansen; Robin Schickert and her husband Norb; and Mark Duchow. With gratitude, in the name of Jesus, these studies are written by your loving mother.

Sources:

Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version ® NIV ®
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Mary

Her hair is gray.
The years of her life are evident
In the lines of her face.
Her hands show the delicate tracery of veins
That mark their aging.
She is now in her 75th year.

But this façade is deceptive.
For many, at this stage of life,
The light within is growing dim.
But, not so for this unique person;
For this woman has,
In the not so distant past,
Just begun to live.

The events of her life
That have aged her physically,
Were a necessary prelude
To the wisdom and insight
She has gleaned from them.

It has become her mission in life
To use this precious gift
That was bestowed on her
By God's Holy Spirit,
To help as many hurting people
As He sends her way.

What words can I use
To describe her?
I sat across the table from her
On that first day,
Never dreaming that I was about to embark
On one of the most meaningful journeys
Of my life!

I looked at her there,
An ordinary woman,
At first glance.
How could I know
What wisdom and insight were stored
Within that all too human frame?

How could I know, then,
That God would use this
Ordinary, extraordinary vessel
To free me from the bondage
Under which I had lived
All of my life!

*The woman who was counseled by the writer
Of these Bible studies, wrote this poem.*

<p>Philippians introduction</p> <p>Ac 16:21; Php 3:20-21</p>	<p>The city was named after King Philip II of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great. It was a prosperous Roman colony, which meant that the citizens of Philippi were also citizens of the city of Rome itself. They prided themselves on being Romans, dressed like Romans and often spoke Latin. No doubt this was the background for Paul's reference to the believers' heavenly citizenship. Many of the Philippians were retired military men who had been given land in the vicinity and who in turn served as a military presence in this frontier city. That Philippi was a Roman colony may explain why there were not enough Jews there to permit the establishment of a synagogue and why Paul does not quote the OT in the Philippian letter. This lack of a synagogue and consequent representative group of Jews resulted in freeing Paul from the need to warn these new Christians about the Judaizers. (The Judaizers were those Jews who tried to get Gentile converts to Christianity to become Jews first, by submitting to circumcision and other Old Testament rites and rituals.) Therefore, Judaism counted for little in Philippi.</p> <p>Paul's first meeting there was with the small group of women who took a leading role in the Christian church in its early years at Philippi. Lydia was a well known businesswoman, originally from Thyatira, just south of Pergamum in Macedonia. The area was famous for its dyeing works. Macedonia was distinguished in Greek society because women were allowed greater freedom and influence.</p>
<p>Ac 28:30; Php 1:13; 4:22</p> <p>Ac 24:27</p> <p>Read 2Co 1:8-11</p>	<p>It is considered, that while Paul was imprisoned in Rome, AD 59-60, he wrote several letters. Together they are referred to as "the Prison Epistles," and include, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians and Philemon. Paul refers to the praetorian guard and to Caesar's household, information which indicates that he was under house-arrest in that city during the time these epistles were written. This is not a historical fact because there is little recorded about Paul's day to day life. Rather, what facts we know are gleaned from Scripture. If one were to take 1Corinthians 25:32 literally, we might think he was anticipating being thrown to the lions! However, the NIV footnote for this verse states that there is no evidence that Paul had to suffer imprisonment of that nature or to face lions. It is more likely that Paul was referring to his enemies in Ephesus whom he considered to be ferocious as wild beasts. But from an over-view, Rome appears to be the most agreed upon locale for Paul to have written these epistles.</p>
<p>See Php 4:15-16</p> <p>Ac 28:16; Php 1:12-14</p> <p>AD 67-68</p>	<p>The church at Philippi was to Paul his nearest and dearest because these Philippians were truly Christian people who really helped him with all manner of gifts, practical items he needed to exist, etc. This letter, of all those that Paul wrote, reveals a bit more of his personal life, even though at the time (AD 59-62) he was living in a rented house in Rome and was under house-arrest, not in the Mamertime dungeon as he was when he wrote 2Timothy. Also, the letter is full of friendship and affection for this church in Philippi. His primary purpose in writing was to thank them for the gifts they sent to him, to help defray his expenses. Perhaps another reason for the comparative cheerfulness of this letter was because he was free to speak of the Gospel of Christ to anyone who came to him there in Rome, though he was technically under house-arrest. Five years later he was imprisoned for a year or so and then martyred in the Roman tradition. Since Paul was a Roman citizen, the mode of execution was decapitation. But we are ahead of the story.</p> <p>In reading Paul's epistles we are fed with a steady diet of lofty Christian principles. But the Philippian epistle translates these truths into the practical every-day living of real Christian people. Paul touches upon a full range of human experience, from joy to bitterness; agreement to argument; humility to arrogance. With these words, describing the</p>

<p>PHILIPPIANS 1 : 1 – 11</p> <p>v.4</p> <p>v.7 See Ro 1:9</p> <p>v.9 See Jas 3:18</p> <p>v.11</p>	<p>human condition blessed by faith, we get a clearer picture of the heart of Paul and the one who is closest to his heart, Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus. To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 1:1-2</p>	<p>The epistle to the Philippians opens in the characteristic way because Paul is following the conventional letter format of the 1st Century AD: 1. identification of the sender, 2. Identification of the recipients, and 3. the customary greeting. Timothy, here, is Paul’s assistant but was not a co-author. Paul sends out his words to the “saints,” who are Christian, born-again believers of Christ Jesus and are authorized by Him to be citizens of heaven. “Saints” who already have a place in heaven, positionally, while yet living on earth. This is the only place where Paul especially addresses “the overseers and deacons” (traditionally, bishops) are singled out as recipients of a letter. Though this opening greeting was customary, it is not simply a polite observation. Paul thus gives a distinctly Christian character to his words.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 1:3-5</p>	<p>A conspicuous characteristic of the opening sentences of Paul’s letters is the prayer of joyful thanksgiving for the response to the gospel of his readers—for this is the very reason Jesus miraculously appeared to Paul, and dramatically changed his life—to bring the good news of Christ and His salvation to the world. However, his joy was not only because of his readers’ reception of the gospel but also their active support of his ministry.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 1:6-11</p> <p>(v. 6)</p>	<p>But Paul is not only confident of what God has done “for” his readers—forgiving their sins—but also for the “work” God has done “in” them. Paul refers to God’s actively saving them “until the day of Christ Jesus,” which means God’s beautiful work in Christian believers will be theirs up to the day of Christ’s second coming and beyond, to be with the Lord throughout eternity. It is God who initiates salvation, who continues it and who will one day bring it to its consummation, that is, to its completion.</p>
<p>(v.7) See Php 4:18</p> <p>(v.8)</p> <p>(v.9)</p>	<p>To “share in God’s grace” is the goal and reward of Paul’s mission, even while he is in prison. The Philippians willingly identified themselves with him, by sending Epaphroditus with their financial gifts and their encouragement, for in this way they had become “one with him” in his persecution. What a great gift this was! It was not so much the money, but the love, compassion and prayers that the Christians from Philippi lavished on Paul that was a very real source of joy for him. In his desire to be with them, Paul tells them of his desire to be with them and to share living expenses with them, but of course, he is under house-arrest and can only send his words and his love in his letter. He realizes that real love requires growth and maturation. He tries to supply these needs through his words. His prayer for them is to “abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight.” Practical discernment and sensitivity are significant of Christian love for it is not mere sentiment; it is rooted in</p>

<p>(v.10)</p>	<p>knowledge and understanding. It is through Christian love (through the power of the Holy Spirit) that one is able to recognize what is morally and ethically superior. The goal of Christians is to be “pure and blameless,” by living lives that are without any mixture of evil in order to be free of disapproval or criticism. This goal will be perfectly realized on the “day of Christ” when Christians give on account of what they have done or left un-done.</p>
<p>Personal Comment: See 2Co 11:1-15 Gen 3:1</p>	<p>The character of the Judaizers and false apostles exemplifies on of the devil’s most tenacious ways of demeaning the very truth of the Gospel of Christ Jesus. A deceiver from the beginning, Satan said, incredulously to Eve, “Did God really say...?” The devil planted the seeds of doubt in the very gullible human mind, with the potential of the sin nature about to experience its weakness for the first time. Always it is through deception that Satan began his work down through the centuries. Within the first years of the fledgling Christian church, he was there, disguised in the Judaizers and the false apostles and teachers. I wonder, at what point did the leaders of the early church begin to subvert God’s true purpose and intention?</p>
<p>Php 1:8</p>	<p>The character of the Judaizers and false apostles exemplifies on of the devil’s most tenacious ways of demeaning the very truth of the Gospel of Christ Jesus. A deceiver from the beginning, Satan said, incredulously to Eve, “Did God really say...?” The devil planted the seeds of doubt in the very gullible human mind, with the potential of the sin nature about to experience its weakness for the first time. Always it is through deception that Satan began his work down through the centuries. Within the first years of the fledgling Christian church, he was there, disguised in the Judaizers and the false apostles and teachers. I wonder, at what point did the leaders of the early church begin to subvert God’s true purpose and intention?</p>
<p>Jer 23:1-4</p>	<p>In Jeremiah, God is speaking about the Jews whose leaders led the people into unfaithfulness, idolatry and injustice. But the same can be said about the false apostles and ultimately the leaders of false religions (cults) who lead people astray and away from the truth of Bible based faith in Christ alone.</p>
<p>See Ac 15:1-5</p>	<p>Some men, probably from the party of the Pharisees, sometimes called Judaizers, false apostles or false teachers, were “believers” but they insisted that in order to become Christian one first must keep the law of Moses. They were legalistic, grim, holier-than-thou, nit-picking, power-hungry and self-righteous—and as Jesus Christ identified the true nature of the leaders of the Jews in Matthew—they were miss-guided in character and deportment. And it seems that many organized religions, with their main emphasis upon man-made rules, rituals, laws, and commandments, simply followed this unholy tradition. Why? Because it made man important and God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, secondary. (And this deception pleases Satan.)</p>
<p>Mt 23:27-28</p>	<p>Some men, probably from the party of the Pharisees, sometimes called Judaizers, false apostles or false teachers, were “believers” but they insisted that in order to become Christian one first must keep the law of Moses. They were legalistic, grim, holier-than-thou, nit-picking, power-hungry and self-righteous—and as Jesus Christ identified the true nature of the leaders of the Jews in Matthew—they were miss-guided in character and deportment. And it seems that many organized religions, with their main emphasis upon man-made rules, rituals, laws, and commandments, simply followed this unholy tradition. Why? Because it made man important and God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, secondary. (And this deception pleases Satan.)</p>
	<p>I may get criticism for these words but having been raised a strict Roman Catholic—third generation German-American “katolisher,” I have the right! I cannot tell you of the anguish—spiritual, mental and emotional un-absolved guilt I suffered because of my early training. Finally, I walked away from it all and consequently fell apart. I was so angry! Eventually, I began to read the Bible—to prove I was right and I was wronged! But the Holy Spirit had a different agenda. The more I read the Bible, the more I came to love the truth it held! Truth and love are at the heart of Scripture. The combination sweeps the objections away and makes room in the heart for obedience.</p>
	<p>Dear reader, I have never been so happy and at peace. It is the gift and blessing from God who has made my life, in spite of all those misguided years, beautiful and bountiful. These words that you read are the bounty—the fruit— that the Lord has produced through this very weak, old human being! I am changed because of what Jesus Christ did for me on the cross. His perfect sacrifice for the sins of human-kind has freed me from a life of grim self-hatred and brutal fear of God (not awesome fear, but fear of punishment fear) and has allowed me the grace to know love—His love!! He has done this by creating in me—as in all believers—a new spirit. He has given me the indwelling Holy Spirit, who is in me at all times!</p>
<p>PHILIPPIANS 1 : 12 – 30</p>	<p>Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace</p>

<p>Ac 4:29; 21:33 v.15</p> <p>v.18 2Co 1:11 Ac 16:7 Ro 8:19 1Co 6:20</p> <p>v.21</p> <p>v.23</p> <p>v.25</p> <p>v.27 1Co 16:13</p> <p>v.29 Mt 5:11; Ac 14:22 Heb 10:30</p>	<p>guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly. It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. I eagerly expect and hope that I will be in no way ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me. Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. For it has been granted to me on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for Him. Since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 1:12-13</p> <p>(v.13)</p>	<p>Paul writes, “what has happened to me,” and he is referring to his detainment in prison which like everything God positioned and circumstanced in Paul’s life, was to bring about more believers. Paul’s imprisonment, instead of hindering the gospel, served to “advance the gospel.” He continues, that it was evident to all who saw him “in chains,” that he was imprisoned, not because he was guilty of some crime but because of his assured commitment in preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ to all he encountered in life, regardless of who they were. In this verse, he tells that even the palace guard understood he was not a criminal but a bearer of the gospel. The “whole palace guard” was a contingent of seven thousand Roman soldiers, many of whom would have had personal contact with Paul or would have been assigned individually to guard him during the course of his imprisonment.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 1:14-17</p> <p>See 1Co 2:2-5</p> <p>(v.16)</p> <p>(v.17)</p>	<p>The unexpected result of Paul’s imprisonment is that others are “encouraged to speak” by his example and are forcefully proclaiming the gospel. Even those who are delighted that he is in prison, speak the gospel, not out of love, but “out of envy and rivalry.” However, the gospel is also being preached by those who admire and support Paul while he is in prison because they truly believe he was authorized by Christ, miraculously, to preach “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” whether in prison or not. “The latter do so in love” because their motive is the right motive for they recognize the true reason for Paul’s imprisonment, already expressed earlier in verse 13. Consequently, they are encouraged to take the same bold stand that he has taken. “The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition.” Those who preach with wrong, insincere motives do so out of a sense of competition with Paul and think they are making his imprisonment more difficult to bear. These men are sincere only in furthering their own objectives and are not concerned about preaching “Christ.”</p>
<p>Footnote:</p>	<p>Paul writes, “whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached.” These preachers are</p>

<p>Php 1:18</p>	<p>not to be viewed as being heretical. Their message is true, even though their motives are not pure. The gospel has its objectivity and validity apart from those who proclaim it; the message is more than the medium through which it is delivered. In this instance, Paul was in prison (whether house arrest or the dungeon in Rome) and those who continued to preach Christ, out of envy of Paul's popularity and excellence, not to propagate the faith as much as they hoped to add to his difficulties by doing so. Christians and Christian preachers were not popular!</p>
<p>Personal Comment: American Heritage Dictionary</p>	<p>It is stated in the NIV Bible footnote for Philippians 1:18: "The gospel has its objectivity and validity apart from those who proclaim it; the message is more than the medium." The word, <i>medium</i>, is defined as an intervening substance through which something is transmitted, carried on or accomplished, conveyed or transferred. In our culture, money is the principle medium of exchange. The <i>media</i> is a means of mass communication, such as newspapers, magazines, television or the internet. So here, the NIV states that the message of the gospel is more powerful, important and valid than are those who preach it, whether they have pure motives or ulterior motives. In this case, those jealous individuals preached the gospel to make further trouble for Paul.</p>
	<p>I believe this is true to an extent—that the message is more than the medium— but the aura of an evil person preaching the gospel is abhorrent and despicable because, as we have seen, preachers who have been discredited because of amoral behavior bring ridicule down upon the Christian faith and the Bible—because people generally equate the message with the messenger. So if you are going to preach or teach the Bible, you better be sure your life and how you live it is an example of how a Christian is to live. Yes, we all have faults and we all sin. But, those who are on TV, radio, the pulpit, the internet, or evangelizing in any other way should live what they preach. There should be no double standard here. They should not have the attitude of "do as I say not as I do!"</p>
<p>Jn 14:6</p>	<p>Yes, the Bible, the word of God, was written under the inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit and therefore it is true and holy because it is the word of God. However, in our time, more than ever before, there are more people falling away from that which is true and making up false concepts and changing the meaning of the original text. Consequently, what they preach suits their life style but it is not necessarily the truth. Many of our long established religions may be cults in disguise. Any religion that holds the Bible aloft and claims to be Christian yet whose members live by the rites and rituals peculiar to that religion—but not found in the Bible—are not necessarily Christian. This illegitimate series of ways to get to heaven are totally contrary to the way prescribed by Jesus Himself and are not God's plan for salvation. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only (begotten) Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."</p>
<p>Jn 3:16</p>	<p>Yes, the Bible, the word of God, was written under the inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit and therefore it is true and holy because it is the word of God. However, in our time, more than ever before, there are more people falling away from that which is true and making up false concepts and changing the meaning of the original text. Consequently, what they preach suits their life style but it is not necessarily the truth. Many of our long established religions may be cults in disguise. Any religion that holds the Bible aloft and claims to be Christian yet whose members live by the rites and rituals peculiar to that religion—but not found in the Bible—are not necessarily Christian. This illegitimate series of ways to get to heaven are totally contrary to the way prescribed by Jesus Himself and are not God's plan for salvation. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only (begotten) Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."</p>
<p>Lk 23:39-43</p>	<p>The first recorded person to enter heaven as truly a believer in Christ Jesus was "the good thief." He did not get down off his cross, join a church, ("cultish" or otherwise), go through all kinds of sacraments, indulgences, rites and rituals, nor did he read and memorize a catechism or a special series of books by the leader of a sect. No. He simply believed and said to Jesus who was hanging on the cross next to him, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And then those most precious words—"Jesus answered him, 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.' "</p>
	<p>To get back to Philippians 1:18—Paul was emphasizing that the important thing is to get the word of God preached—whether the preachers are for or against Paul himself. That is not the important issue here. Paul was adamant and totally devoted to teaching the gospel of</p>

<p>See 1Co 2:2</p>	<p>“Jesus Christ and Him crucified” to as many people as possible. (I’m not so sure that many of the “big” religions of today’s world care that much about saving people’s souls. It appears on the surface that they would rather have entertainment than worship and a text preached that conforms to their mode of life rather than the truth of Scripture. I have been to such churches and was appalled at the total lack of the gospel of Christ.)</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 1:19-20</p> <p>Ro 8:28</p> <p>(v.20)</p>	<p>Paul writes, “the Spirit of Jesus Christ,” here because the Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of God the Father but also the Spirit of Christ, the second person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and by the Son. By “deliverance,” Paul is anticipating a possible release from prison or by deliverance brought to him as a believer in the salvation of Christ by death. The circumstance of imprisonment with all its attendant suffering and opposition, constitute a real temptation for Paul to abandon the gospel and his resolute service for Christ. We rarely view Paul as being weak and human, just like we are, but he often writes of his very human weaknesses. In verse 20 he writes that he hopes he will “in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage...so that Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or death,” Christ is exalted (to elevate by praise) in the body of the believer where He dwells by His Spirit. And His Spirit is at work and is therefore exalted by what Paul does “whether by life or by death.” Whether Paul’s service for Christ continues or ends in death.</p>
<p>Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary</p> <p>Personal Comment: Dt 31:6 Heb 3:3 Jn 1:3</p>	<p>Toward the end of the OT book of Deuteronomy, which was toward the end of life, Moses said these words to the Israelites: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them (the Canaanites who occupied the promised land), for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you.” In the NT book of Hebrews we read the fact that Jesus is greater than Moses—the Creator is greater than the creature. In the beginning of John’s gospel that through Jesus Christ, the Word, “all things were made.” In the last chapter of Hebrews these same words, originally said to Moses by God now refer to the Spirit of Jesus living in believers: “never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”</p>
<p>Heb 13:5</p> <p>Jn 14:6</p>	<p>In the very truest sense, Paul was a servant of Christ and he tried with every fiber of his being to demonstrate how the power of Christ’s redemption in him gave him the strength to live his life accordingly. Paul knew this—as do all believers—but the reality of the day-to-day living in prison conditions were very, very hard for him. He was concerned that because of the dire situation he was in, that his human weaknesses would tarnish his desire to please God and represent Christ. Most of us believers are not asked to demonstrate our love for God and our desire to live “the way” to this extent, but we are to live the life we have been given in His strength—not in our own strength!</p>
<p>Jn 14:16-17, 30</p>	<p>On our own strength and in our own power we are too weak to withstand the attacks of the enemy, Satan. The temptations we encounter on a daily, hourly, basis are too much for us to handle on our own. Thank God, His Spirit resides within us and when we ask, it is His power that fights off these attacks of the evil one. When our temptations are of the variety of a personal addiction, it is absolutely essential to enlist—verbally, in your mind, silently or out loud—the power of Christ which indwells us. Remember that the devil has no “hold on Christ” because the Lord is all powerful. But we humans are not all powerful! We need to enlist the power of God to combat the hold the evil one has on us, especially in those of us who have an addictive nature. I have a very addictive nature, so I speak from experience!</p> <p>Never could I have become a recovered alcoholic on my own. I was saved from that horrible addiction because of the miraculous grace of God. I stopped smoking through that same grace from God. Without that power, I would still be polluting the air, fouling my lungs and filling my body with nicotine and carcinogens. I had other addictions which were even more</p>

	<p>destructive to my mind and spirit. These addictions deprived my children of the love and attention I should have lavished on them and these same addictions were a factor in my divorce.</p> <p>After years of living under the control of those addictions, the Lord began His work in me. It was very, very hard to follow His lead and allow Him to fight these addictions—these sins—I had lived with and cherished for so long. But I couldn't live with them any longer! The Lord allowed me to see the evil in my acceptance of the addictive sins. It was probably the hardest thing I ever experienced and it took years to get from realizing I had to change to the point where I felt relatively free of their tenacious grip. But, thank the good Lord, I am relatively free of them.</p> <p>Because their pathways were so established in my mind—I may never be completely free of the memory or response—but for the most part, thank God, I can say and mean, He made me free of this evil power.</p> <p>This, of course, is the goal of anyone who gets fed up with the life he or she lives. There is only one answer to this prison of addictions and that answer is Christ Jesus. It was after I repented of the life I lived and became a believer that the Lord made it possible for me to be able to proceed towards the life I now live. The reason being that once I believed, Jesus Christ gave me a new, re-born spirit. This new spirit in me made it possible for those marvelous changes in my habits to occur. With my new re-born spirit, Jesus also gave me the indwelling Holy Spirit—His spirit—to be with me always. His Spirit is always present in me to be the power to fight off the attacks of Satan upon my mind. Oh, I do not know how to thank God enough for taking away that awful, evil that I lived with for so long. And I pray, dear reader, that those of you who are so afflicted will enlist the power of God to rid you of the addictions that ruin your life.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 1:21-22</p> <p>(v. 22) See Jn 15:1-8</p> <p>Jn 14:6</p>	<p>Paul writes, “to live is Christ,” because Christ was the source and the secret of Paul’s continual joy, even when he was in prison. He found all the meaning and purpose for his life in Christ Jesus. As a direct result of his life “in Christ” as long as he was “to go on living in the body (that is, on this earth) this will mean fruitful labor for me.” According to the words of Jesus, recorded by John, a believer is able to produce fruit or good works only while being “in Christ.” Believers must make the purpose of their life to follow “the way” so that the good they do in life is motivated by the desire to be fruitful because of their being “in Christ.” Good deeds done for personal gain or in pride and not “fruit!”</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 1:23-26</p> <p>(v.24)</p> <p>(v.25)</p> <p>(v.26)</p>	<p>Whether he remains on this earth to continue his ministry as an apostle in Christ, or not, Paul considers either event to be good, for he writes, “to depart and be with Christ” is in reality the goal and desire of every believer. How else would one want to spend eternity? And as he usually does, Paul puts the needs of those to whom he ministers ahead of his personal preference. He indicates that whether he will remain in prison or not, no matter under what circumstances his life will be lived for those to whom he teaches. He knows that their “joy in Christ Jesus will overflow because of me.”</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 1: 7</p> <p>Mk 3:24-25</p>	<p>Paul is not being conceited here. He is stating the fact that Christians need each other. In his teaching he brought the gospel to the believers at Philippi. It is through the living-out of these teachings that believers are able to share with each other the joy of living “in Christ.” Also the Lord’s presence in Christians gives them the strength and purpose to bolster each other and teach new converts who are brought into the faith by the work of the Holy Spirit. “Contending as one man...in one spirit,” particularly where the gospel is under attack. Christians need</p>

<p>Footnote: Php 1:28-30</p> <p>(v.29)</p> <p>Mt 10:34</p> <p>(v.30)</p> <p>Read Ac 16:19-40</p>	<p>each other and must stand together.</p> <p>Paul encourages the Philippians (and all Christians) to remain stable, valid, intact and unchanged in Christ, in the living-out of the Christian way of life, “as one man for the faith of the gospel.” “Stand firm,” without fear, toward those who oppose you, for in this way it will be “a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God.” In the same context, when Christians are persecuted for their faith, it is a sign of the genuine reality of their salvation. Christian suffering—for their faith—in this sense is given as a gift or a privilege. This is not an easy concept to digest, but what better way to prove the depth of your belief in Christ—who certainly suffered to bring you your salvation. The Christian life is blessed not only with joy but also in the very participation of the truth that Christ came not “to bring peace to the earth...but a sword.” The NIV footnote for Matthew 10:34 states, that “the inevitable result of Christ’s coming is conflict—the conflict between Christ and the antichrist, between light and darkness, between Christ’s children and the devil’s children. This conflict can occur even between members of the same family.” Here, Paul refers to an incident of violence that occurred when Paul and Silas first visited Philippi and there they were imprisoned. The whole of this conflict and its result can be read in the Book of Acts.</p>
<p>PHILIPPIANS 2 : 1 – 11</p> <p>Footnote: Php 2:1 See Jn 15:1-8</p> <p>Ro 8:1; 2Co5:17</p> <p>Jn 3:16 Ro 8: 38-39 1Jn 4:9-10, 16</p>	<p>If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.</p> <p>In Paul’s teaching, we are “united with Christ,” or more correctly stated, we are united in Christ. This personal union is the basic reality of salvation. To be in Christ is to be saved! It is to be an intimate, personal relationship with Christ Jesus the Savior. From this intimate relationship flow all the particular benefits and fruits of salvation, like encouragement, as Paul writes about more fully in chapter 3. Comforting knowledge and assurance come from God’s love in Christ, demonstrated especially in Christ’s death for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, and this “comfort from His love” we receive as the grace and gift we are given as believers. The fellowship among believers produced by the “Spirit,” who indwells each born-again believer is evident in the intense care and deep sympathy that true Christians have for each other.</p>
<p>Personal Comment:</p>	<p>All these benefits—encouragement, comfort, fellowship, tenderness and compassion—are viewed by Paul as present realities for the Philippians as well as for all Christians who read these words of Paul in the wonderful New Testament of the Bible. I know I have experienced a special recognition of a fellow Christian when I meet a stranger in a public place like an airport, theater, bus or train, while shopping, in a park, etc. One look into this stranger’s eyes is usually enough to know that person is “in Christ.” This is not magic! Far from it, for magic has to do with the evil one—and he, too, may be recognizable in a stranger, even though his main trick is deception. So one needs to exercise a certain caution, especially in these</p>

<p>Footnote: Php 2:2 Ro 15:5;2Co 13:11</p>	<p>troubled times. It is a good idea to pray for the protection and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit within you, in such an encounter. Paul writes that this “like-minded” characteristic in believers is because the “same love” indwelling each is because they are “one in spirit and purpose.” He emphasizes the unity which should exist among Christians, not uniformity in thought but the common disposition to work together and serve one another, exhibiting in our lives the “attitude” of Christ!</p>
<p>Personal Comment: Jn 8:36 See Gal 5: 1, 13 Jn 14:6</p>	<p>Paul does not in any way tell Christians to be like programmed robots. God has given to each human being He has created a unique personality and brain. He expects us to be “one in spirit” but to retain our individual character, the one He designed in us. Whenever we see “Christians” who are so brain-washed by a religion, that is actually more of a cult than a vital Christ believing religion, we see people who cannot use the mind, personality and individuality God gave them! They, then, are not free! Jesus said, “So if the Son (Jesus) sets you free, you will be free indeed.” He does not mean license to do whatever you please, but free from the yoke of sin or the yoke of some debilitating “religion” or cult that is based on deception. Free to follow the way of Jesus Christ, the way that Paul writes about in all his epistles.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 2:3-6 See Gal 5:20 Ro 12:10; Eph 5:1; 1Pe 5:5</p>	<p>Paul warns the Philippians (and all believers) “to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.” One of the mortal enemies of unity and harmony in the church is “selfish ambition” which is listed among the “acts of the sinful nature.” The source of Christian unity is “humility.” It is the mind-set of the person who is not conceited but who has a right attitude about himself or herself. Here, Paul does not mean that everyone else is superior or more talented, capable, etc., but that Christian love sees others as worthy of preferential treatment rather than concentrating on oneself.</p>
<p>(v.4-5) Ro 15:1 Mt 11:29; Jn 13:12-17</p>	<p>It is necessary to have a proper amount of concern for “your own interests,” but only if there is equal concern for the interests of others. A Christian’s attitude should be modeled on the attitude of Christ. In spite of all that is unique and essentially different about the person and work of Christ, (because, after all He is the Son of God), Christians are to have His attitude of self-sacrificing humility and love for others.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 2:6-11 Ro 9:5</p>	<p>The poetic, even lyrical character of these verses is apparent. Many Biblical scholars view them as an early Christian hymn that Paul may have modified to be included here. The words clearly express his convictions. The passage tells of Christ’s humiliation and exultation. The words, “in very nature God,” affirm that Jesus is fully God. His essential form is the sum of those qualities that make God specifically God. The words, “equality with God,” clearly state that Jesus Christ possesses the status and privileges that inevitably follow from His being in the very nature of God. The glory Christ had with the Father before His incarnation (His birth) was not available to Him in His carnate state (in the flesh of a human being and under the terms that He and His Father agreed upon before the beginning of time.)</p>
<p>NIV Quest Bible Sidebar</p>	<p>“Before His days on earth, Christ enjoyed complete equality with the Father. Even in human form His essential nature remained unchanged; He was still God. Yet, so that He might take away the sins of the world, he voluntarily laid aside the privileges and glory of His heavenly authority.”</p>
<p>(v.7) Jn 17:5; 2Co 8:9 Isa 42:1-9</p>	<p>Jesus “made Himself nothing,” literally He “emptied Himself,” not by giving up deity, but by laying His glory aside and submitting to the humiliation of becoming man. Jesus is truly God and truly Man. Another view is that He emptied Himself, not of deity itself, but of its prerogatives. (His exclusive right to being deity, that is, the essential nature or condition of being God: this He laid aside.) And took upon Himself the “nature of a servant.” These words</p>

<p>Mt 20:28</p> <p>(v.8)</p> <p>Jn 1:14; Ro 8:3; Heb 2:7-9,17</p>	<p>emphasize the full reality of His servant identity (as predicted by God to Isaiah and said by Jesus and recorded by Matthew.) As a servant, He was always submissive to the Father. Not only was Jesus “found in appearance as a man,” that is to say, Jesus was “like” a human being, but He also took on the actual outward characteristics of a man, “humbled Himself” and was “obedient” to God, even and especially, in His death as a man on the cross. These beautiful words stress both the totality and climax of Jesus Christ’s obedience. Being crucified was the height and depth of humiliation. He died as someone cursed! Crucifixion was the most degrading kind of execution that could be inflicted on a person.</p>
<p>(v.9-11)</p> <p>Isa 52:13;Mt 28:18 Isa 45:22-24; Ro 14:11</p>	<p>“God exalted Him...and gave Him the name that is above every name.” This is doubtless the office or rank conferred on Jesus—His glorious position as Messiah. Yet “every knee should bow...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” God’s design is that people everywhere—alive or dead, physically—should worship and serve Jesus as Lord. Ultimately, all will acknowledge Him as Lord, whether willingly or not. In Romans we read that “we all will stand before the judgment seat” and then “every knee will bow” before Christ the Lord God. “Each will give an account of him (or her) self to God.”</p>
<p>Personal Comment:</p> <p>Isa 7L14 Mt 1:18-25 Isa 11:1-10</p>	<p>We often link His “given” name, Jesus to His “title” and mission. It is the Greek form of the Hebrew name, Joshua, which means, “God is salvation.” Joshua was the common Hebrew name that God chose for His only begotten Son. His title and mission are expressed and identified in the Greek word, “Christ,” or the Hebrew word, “Messiah or Messias.” Messiah means the anticipated and prophesied deliverer—not only for the Jews as King of the Jews, but also for the Gentiles as the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind—for all who believe on His name! We may say, Jesus the Messiah, or Jesus Christ; essentially we are saying the same thing.</p>
<p>PHILIPPIANS 2 : 12 – 18</p> <p>See Heb 13:20-21 v.15</p> <p>v.17 v.18</p>	<p>Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not urn or labor for nothing. But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you should be glad and rejoice with me.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 2:12</p> <p>See Ro 15:14-22; 2Co 10:5-6</p> <p>Ac 16:12-40; 20:1-6</p> <p>1Co 9:24-27; Heb 6:9-11; 2Pe 1:5-8</p>	<p>“Therefore,” because of Christ’s incomparable example (see verses 5-11) we are to follow Him. One of the main reasons Jesus Christ came to earth in the form and being of a man was to show us how to live, love and pass on to eternal life with Him. Here, the commands of God are passed on to the Philippians by Paul—and to all who read his words. The words, “my presence,” refer to the time Paul spent with them, during the course of his second and third missionary journeys. He advises his readers to “work out your salvation” and to work it out to the finish. This is not a reference to the attempt to earn one’s salvation by works but Paul expresses the need Christians have to actively work at their spiritual growth and development. Salvation is not merely a gift received once for all; it expresses itself in an ongoing process in which the believer is strenuously involved—the process of perseverance, spiritual growth and maturation.</p>
<p>Personal Comment:</p>	<p>I know a young man who appeared to be “on fire for the Lord.” He worked diligently to help young people, especially young men and boys to come in off the streets (from gangs and the</p>

<p>Read Jn 15:1-17</p> <p>Footnote: Php 2:13</p> <p>Mt 7:21-23</p> <p>Footnote: Php 2:14-18</p> <p>See 1Co 10:10 2Ti 2:23; Titus 3:9</p>	<p>street culture) then to embrace Christ and grow in fellowship. He also worked by helping other abused and hurting young people. He championed the Christian men’s groups and other charitable causes. He gave needy people used vehicles and technical equipment like used printers, computers, etc. He often got up in church and tearfully said how grateful he was to the Lord Jesus. Everyone in the fellowship spoke well of him.</p> <p>But, for whatever reason, that wasn’t enough for him. I believe he wanted everyone to be involved in “his” missions, “his” charities, etc., to the extent that he was involved. Or at least that is what he indicated. Well, not all of us could be involved in the way he was. The Lord directs each of the fellowship to contribute in his (or her) own way—but according to this man’s point of view that was not enough. He complained and said, “I went through all this work for these various missions and nobody else appreciates what I am doing!” (Or words to that effect.) Apparently, he was more motivated to receive praise and acceptance from men and women than to produce “fruit” (good works) for the Lord. He became increasingly more angry, bitter and belligerent. He began divorce proceedings and literally kicked his wife out of the house. He could not see how much she loves him in spite of all he does and he hurt her very deeply, emotionally. He alienated himself from the church and the fellowship. The Pastor and elders counseled with him and many of the church groups pray for him.</p> <p>Yet, at this point he is still estranged, by choice. However, the fellowship continues to pray for him and his wife. Those who know him are concerned that he truly is saved. Just saying the words and doing “good works” does not necessarily, automatically mean one is saved. There is a spiritual rebirth which occurs when one believes in Christ Jesus and His salvation. If one does not live life according to this rebirth, others may question if salvation actually occurred. Here again, about the only thing we can do for a loved one who we thought was saved but doesn’t act like it, is to pray. We really don’t know. It is between God and this person. And it is most serious and frustrating to think a loved one is saved, but judging from his or her actions and life choices, it may seem that they are not following the way of Christ Jesus. Again, the only true help we have for them is prayer and asking God to work in them the miracle of salvation, and to bring about a changed life.</p> <p>Paul writes in 2Timothy, chapter 2, verse 19b, “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.” There are many arguments concerning, “once saved, always saved.” I certainly agree with this truth. I also believe that when one believes in the salvation of Christ, one receives a new, born-again spirit and the indwelling Holy Spirit. One is changed. When one does not change one’s inner self, or one’s behavior to demonstrate this claim to salvation, I question its validity. I will always state the miracle of salvation is the gift of grace and forgiveness from the Lord, but just because someone says some words, or comes up for an altar call, this does not necessarily mean they are saved. They truly may be and live the rest of their life accordingly. Jesus was recorded in Matthew as saying, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!’ “</p> <p>In the next several verses Paul describes things that are involved in working out our salvation. We are not to complain, because “complaining” is being discontented with God’s will. It is an expression of unbelief that prevents one from doing what pleases God. “Arguing” over debatable points that do not need to be settled for the good of the church are simply extensions of complaining and asserting one’s will!</p>
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<p>(v.15) 1Jn 3:5b 2Co 5:21 See Ac 2:40 Eph 2:1-10 Mt 5:15-16</p>	<p>Paul encourages the Philippians to be “blameless and pure...without fault.” He does not mean absolute sinless perfection for only Jesus Christ is able to claim that distinction! Paul means that all believers should have wholehearted, unmixed devotion to doing God’s will. This is especially true in a “crooked and depraved generation,” which is Paul’s way of describing the unbelieving world. Believers are to “shine like stars.” The contrast, like light in darkness is what Christians are to be to the world around them.</p>
<p>(v.16-18) Num 15:12;2Ti 4:6; 2Co 12:15 Ex 29:38-41</p>	<p>Here Paul wants to boast “on the day of Christ,” not out of pride or a sense of self-accomplishment, but because of what God has done through him, as an apostle of Christ Jesus. And Paul encourages all born-again Christian believers to “rejoice,” because Christian joy ought to be mutually joyful—always! In verse 17, Paul writes, “I am poured out.” The reference may be to his entire ministry as one large thanksgiving sacrifice. However, it is more probable that Paul, here, refers to his present imprisonment, which may (and does) end in a martyr’s death. His life would then be poured out as a drink offering accompanying the sacrificial service of the Philippians. “Like a drink offering” is in reference to the Old Testament’s daily sacrifice as described in the Book of Exodus. Paul commends the Philippians for their genuine faith because it is active and working and in a sense is connected to his sacrificial efforts—because Paul did indeed pour out his life for those to whom he preached the gospel of Christ.</p>
<p>Personal Comment:</p>	<p>In light of the personal comment above, it seems that some believers do not comprehend that God desires to continue His work in their spirit and in their lives after their profession of belief in Christ. Opening one’s heart to Jesus is the essential first step. But this is an action of the heart which should include one’s spirit, mind and body.</p>
<p>Rev 3:19-21</p>	<p>Jesus, in a special vision and manifestation said the following words to the Apostle John which are written in the Book of Revelation: “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him (or her) and he (or she) will eat with Me.”</p> <p>It is the continuing action of the Lord God to “rebuke and discipline” us. Sometimes it takes a long period of time for a believer to truly repent of his or her past. Some habits and addictions are very, very hard for a person to acknowledge, confess and repent (that is, to change). I have written much about the power of ingrained evil habits and addictions that some of us acquired during our previous lives—before becoming believers in Christ. These past addictions, whether mental or physical, or both, have to be actively removed from our minds, spirits and bodies before we can be truly used by God. He cannot use us if we still consistently harbor in our thoughts and actions our old way of life. In fact, Jesus emphatically tells the new believer that he and she must be “earnest,” sincere and “repent.” And the word “repent,” means “to change!”</p>
<p>See Jn 4:4-26</p>	<p>An analogy has been made between a person filled with the ways of the world and a glass that is filled to the brim. When Jesus talks to the Samaritan woman at the well, He says He will give the woman “living water,” which refers to the indwelling Holy Spirit one receives when one believes in Christ Jesus, and is spiritually reborn. However, if one persists in going back to the un-saved life he or she lived before, there will be no room for the Holy Spirit to fill you! You will be filled to the brim with sin.</p>
<p>Rev 3:20</p>	<p>All these many ways that are used to explain may be just so many words, because the real change that takes place is very personal between the person and the Lord. It is true that all one has to do is ask Jesus into one’s heart and Jesus will do the rest...the saving of that</p>

<p>American Heritage Dictionary</p>	<p>person's spirit. But one must go along with these changes that the Lord gives. One must welcome Jesus into one's heart...and Jesus will come in and dwell with that individual. Now, consider, do you want Jesus dwelling in your spirit and then you go out and do and think all the evil that you accepted as your way of life before Jesus came into your heart?</p> <p>The word "repent" is defined, "to feel remorse, contrition of self-reproach." But it doesn't stop there at just the "feelings" level. Repentance is further defined, "to feel such regret for past conduct as to change one's mind regarding it." The mind is the beginning point of all our actions. It controls what the body does. Therefore, when one truly repents and changes his or her mind about one's former way of life, then it follows that the believer will control the thoughts and actions that comprised that former way of life. However, one cannot control or bring about this change by oneself. This major change needs the power of God. That is why we receive the indwelling Holy Spirit of God within us to be that power!</p>
<p>Php 2:13</p>	<p>If the change, the repentance, was truly and sincerely in depth, that believer will follow through with the often spiritually and emotionally painful behavioral changes that God continues to "will and act" in the believer's life. God is right there, immediately, to begin the changes necessary for the believer to be useful to Him (God) and to truly be a follower of Christ.</p>
<p>Rev 3:19</p>	<p>This can be hard-hard to do for most people who come to salvation in adulthood—especially when one's past was a minefield of habitual sin! This past life may not have appeared to others as overtly sinful, but to the perfect vision of God, sin dominated in that person's life and now after being redeemed by Jesus Christ's atonement, the new believer has much to change.</p> <p>Jesus says, "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent." Repentance is change and it is an on-going condition in the new believer's mind, spirit and body and it begins with a confession of faith in Christ and welcoming Him into ones heart. This is the beginning of living a saved life. It is not the end step. That is to say, if one merely says the words or simply goes up to an "altar call" and walks away thinking that is all there is to it—in the words of Jesus, the word repentance means change: change of heart, mind, spirit and body. These are to be done by believers with the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit who is God and who compels us to realize our faith and our obedience cannot be separated.</p>
<p>Jn 15:1-8</p>	<p>In a sense, this is what God was trying to get across to the Jews throughout the endless laws and ups and downs of the OT—and as a people, the Jews never got it! Some individual Jews certainly did and became the heroes of the OT. But it was impossible to follow the laws perfectly. Only their faith in God told the story in their obedience.</p> <p>Then in the Gospel of John, we read the beautiful analogy of "The Vine and the Branches." This, too, I've mentioned before in these studies, but it is an essential truth. God the "Father is the gardener." He tends His garden and prunes the branches so they will "bear fruit." Jesus Christ is the vine and the believers are the branches. Obviously, as long as the branches stay on the vine, they will receive the life-giving nourishment they need to live and produce fruit. When a believer is no longer prayerfully and humbly connected to Christ, and walks away from Bible reading, church fellowship, worship services and does his or her "own thing," then wants praise for it, that believer needs to get on his or her knees and beg God's forgiveness and get back into active worship.</p> <p>All things that take precedence over and above God in our lives are essentially worthless and</p>

	<p>idolatrous. This includes all the evil habits which lure us away from our main objective as followers of Christ. If you question your own behavior, ask yourself, “is this what Jesus would do?” If your answer is no, then please, dear reader, get down on your knees (physically and/or spiritually) and beg God to forgive you and change you to be like His Son, Jesus. Continue to read verses 9-15 in chapter 15 of John’s gospel and truly live to remain on the vine that is Christ, and realize the beautiful love He has for you, a saved sinner! For none of us lose our sin nature, even after we are spiritually born-again. That part of our lives after salvation is where we need to work at being followers of Christ. It is an active, everyday willful act for us to produce “fruit” for the Lord. Look at it as the one way you can actively participate in the act of maturing, spiritually, after salvation, for yourself and for others. Salvation and re-birth by their very nature are not the end of the story—they are the beginning.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 2:14-18</p>	<p>In the next several verses, Paul describes things that are involved in working out our salvation. We are not to complain, because “complaining” is being discontented with god’s will. It is an expression of unbelief that prevents one from doing what pleases God. “Arguing” over debatable points that do not need to be settled for the good of the church are simply extensions of complaining and asserting one’s will for unnecessary reasons, except to assert one’s own will!</p>
<p>See 1Co 10:10 2Ti 2:23; Titus 3:9</p>	
<p>(v.15)</p>	<p>Paul encourages the Philippians to be “blameless and pure...without fault.” He does not mean absolute sinless perfection, because only Jesus Christ is able to claim that distinction! Paul means that all believers should have wholehearted, unmixed devotion to doing God’s will. This is especially true in a “crooked and depraved generation,” which is Paul’s way of describing the unbelieving world. Believers are to “shine like stars.” The contrast is to be like light in darkness—what Christians are to be to the world around them.</p>
<p>Ac 2:40; Eph 2:1-3 Mt 5:15-16</p>	
<p>(v.16-18)</p>	<p>Here Paul wants to boast “on the day of Christ,” not out of pride or a sense of self-accomplishment, but because of what God has done through him, as an apostle of Christ Jesus. And Paul encourages all born-again Christian believers to “rejoice,” because Christian joy ought to mutually joyful—always!</p>
<p>(v.17) Nu 15:12; 2Co 12:15</p>	<p>In verse 17, Paul writes, “I am being poured out.” The reference may be to his entire ministry as one large thanksgiving sacrifice. However, it is more probable that Paul, here, refers to his present imprisonment, which may end in a martyr’s death. His life would then be poured out as a drink offering accompanying the sacrificial service of the Philippians. “Like a drink offering” is in reference to the Old Testament’s daily sacrifices as described in the Book of Exodus. Paul commends the Philippians for their genuine faith because it is active and working and in a sense it is connected to his own sacrificial efforts—because Paul did indeed pour out his life for those to whom he preached the gospel of Christ.</p>
<p>Ex 29:38-41</p>	
<p>PHILIPPIANS 2 : 19 -30</p>	<p>I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon. But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only</p>
<p>v.22</p>	
<p>v.25 Ro 16:3-21 2Co 8:23</p>	

<p>v.28 See 1Co 16:17-18</p>	<p>but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. Welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.</p>
<p>v.30 See 1Ti 5:17</p>	
<p>Footnote: Php 2:19-30</p>	<p>In the following verses, Paul tells the Philippian church of his plans to send Timothy, who is with him in Rome, so he will be able to discover and report back to Paul what conditions are in the fellowship there. Paul is concerned about Timothy's safety while in Rome, with him, and also during this planned journey to Philippi, for Paul writes: "I have no one else like him." Timothy was a good example of the kind of person envisioned in verse 4 of this chapter, where Paul urgently appeals to the church fellowship: "each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." This advice is necessary to be taken to heart and practiced by all Christians. Here, Paul sharply contrasts between Timothy and the other associates he has had. It is an outstanding commendation for one so young. And it brings a question to the reader's mind—is Paul holding Timothy up as an example to demonstrate to others their lack of concern?</p>
<p>(v.21)</p>	
<p>(v.22) From NIV Pastoral Letters</p>	<p>The relationship between Timothy and Paul was "as a son with his father." This relationship is developed farther in the first and second chapters of the first Pastoral Letter that Paul wrote to Timothy after Paul's was imprisoned in Rome. This first letter to Timothy was written during Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey. Later he traveled to Rome, where he was put in prison the second time, this time in the Mamertine Prison. Here he wrote the second letter to Timothy, shortly before he was executed. Timothy "served" like Jesus and like Paul with a servant's attitude. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul tells them why he was sending Timothy to them. He writes, "...I am sending to you, Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church." (Paul loved Timothy as son. Paul did not have a son but felt toward Timothy as a father.)</p>
<p>(AD 67 or 68) See Isa 42:1-4 See 1Co 4:17</p>	
<p>(v.24) See Php 1:25-26</p>	<p>In verse 24, Paul anticipates his release from prison in Rome. This was his first imprisonment, which was actually when he was under house arrest and not in a proper prison. As we read above, he was released from house arrest and embarked on his fourth journey.</p>
<p>(v.25)</p>	<p>Epaphroditus, too, after a close brush with death, is being sent home to Philippi. He is described by Paul as a "messenger," but a broader use of the Greek word often is translated, "apostle." Epaphroditus was a representative of the Philippi church.</p>
<p>(v.28) See Php 4:6</p>	<p>The "anxiety" that Paul mentions here indicates the legitimate cares and concerns that come with the Christian life and the gospel ministry. But later in this letter, Paul cautions his Christian readers: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." The human part of living life as a Christian, in many cases may cause anxiety, but remember, the re-born spirit within you, as a Christian, is where your strength resides and it is from this indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit of God and of Jesus Christ, that a Christian gains the strength to bravely face whatever life in this world may bring.</p>
<p>Personal Comment:</p>	<p>I wonder...Paul is in prison in Rome and is treated like any other prisoner—or perhaps even much worse because of his faith. As we read through Paul's letters, we often get an approximate picture of what he was enduring at the time he writes each letter. Yet, the words he writes are so eloquent and persuasive! I have not read more of Paul's life than what have</p>

	<p>gleaned from various Bible introductions to his letters, some sidebars and some commentaries, but I get the impression that he was a powerful apostle for Christ—but as a man he seemed ordinary. He considered it an honor to serve Christ, regardless of the suffering that was a necessary part of living the life Jesus had given him to live. Paul was not a complainer. So we just don't always appreciate the depths of his human sorrow and suffering. Obviously, neither did these relatively comfortably well off Philippians! He is hurting and they are not really helping here—except for Timothy and Epaphroditus.</p>
<p>PHILIPPIANS 3 1 - 11 v.3 Ro 2:28-29; Gal 6:15;Col 2:11 v.5 v.7 v.9 v.11</p>	<p>Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 3:1-2</p>	<p>The word, “finally,” marks a transition to a new section of this letter, as Paul moves on toward his conclusion. This does not mark the close of the letter but it introduces Paul’s personal testimony, (as seen in verses 4-14), which is the most significant autobiographical section in his letters. Paul writes “again” which indicates that he has covered these facts and information previously in other letters, or that he had already dealt with them verbally.</p>
<p>(v.2)</p>	<p>Paul uses the harsh word, “dogs” to describe his opponents because of their conspicuous and aggressive opposition to the gospel and the seriousness of their error and its destructive, “devouring” results. These “dogs,” sometimes called Judaizers and false apostles were a chronic danger to these early churches and Paul writes vehemently about these destructive, devil-inspired, evil men.</p>
<p>Personal Comment:</p>	<p>They may have been the first of many whose legalistic and erroneous solution to salvation was wrongly placed under a catch-all cover of “Christianity” and probably evolved into the many popular religions we have today. But their catechism is based on doctrine and principles that define a salvation by works, with Christ as a nice but not necessary footnote to their laws. These were Paul’s opponents and their teaching is a great threat to born-again believers today. Wolves in sheep’s clothing are in our midst, but today, not many dissensions are about mutilation of the flesh in physical circumcision as was the case in Paul’s day. Because, today, this is far removed in time from the first century. In America, most baby boys are circumcised at birth for hygiene purposes, not as a covenantal sign. In other cultures, the rite is carried out for a variety of reasons, not necessarily religious.</p>
<p>Mt 7:15; Ac 20:29</p>	<p>There are many man-made religions, cults and sects out there that are questionable if not fundamentally wrong in their teaching about God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They tell people how they should worship and believe, not according to the Bible but according to man-</p>

<p>Jn 3:16;14:6; Rev 3:14-22</p>	<p>made laws. On the surface these churches seem so nice—beautiful buildings, talented choirs and musicians, dynamic speakers, and a panacea of lesser gods or saints, but they are not in reality, truly “Christian,” because they all believe in their man made laws, rites, rituals, and perhaps their own version of Jesus, as an afterthought. Some people simply do nothing or do what feels right to them, based on their own ideas. And some religions deny Christ altogether. Be careful what you believe and why! Rites and rituals and man-made dogma or opinion, will not get you to heaven. Belief in Jesus Christ will!</p>
<p>Ac 1:4-8;26:14-18; 2Co 12:9; and in Revelation</p>	<p>A Christian is a believer in Jesus, the Christ of the Scriptures, His redemptive salvation—first and foremost; then this believer receives the rebirth of his or her spirit and thus receives the indwelling Holy Spirit. The new Christian begins to follow “The Way” Jesus taught in the Gospels. The Book of Acts and the Epistles or letters, written by the apostles, amplify, explain and apply the lessons taught by Christ through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and in some instances through Jesus Christ Himself.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 3:3 See Ro 2:28-29; Col 2:12-13 See Dt 30:6</p>	<p>The true, inner meaning of circumcision is realized only when true believers in Christ Jesus worship God with genuine spiritual worship and glory in Christ as their Savior rather than trusting in their own human effort. In Deuteronomy, Moses writes, “The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love Him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.” Believers are to put “no confidence in flesh,” that is, in human effort. Everyone is a “boaster,” either in Christ or in himself or herself, but there is only room for one God in our lives—Jesus Christ (who is God) or self. Often, Paul writes about the “flesh.” This word is found in Scripture and is synonymous with our human nature, our corruptible, weak nature. Here and in other letters, Paul refers to our sinful human nature with its frailties, therefore the “flesh” is not worthy of our confidence—it cannot save!</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 3:4-6 See Gal 1:13-24; 1Ti 1:12-16 Ac 22:1;26:1-23</p>	<p>In these next verses, actually verses 4 through 14, we read about Paul’s personal testimony. His words reveal the model for every believer. It is one of the most significant autobiographical sections in his letters. Paul’s pre-Christian confidence was rooted in his own personal Jewish pedigree, privileges and attainments.</p>
<p>(v.5)</p> <p>Webster’s Dictionary Ac 22 , 23 & 26</p>	<p>Paul was born a Jew of the “tribe of Benjamin.” His Jewish roots are deep and unambiguous. Jerusalem, the Holy City, lay on the border of the tribal territory of Benjamin. In language, attitudes and life-style, Paul considered himself to have been “a Hebrew of Hebrews.” And he was a Pharisee, that is, Paul was a member of the Jewish sect, noted for their strict observance of rites and ceremonies of the written law and for their insistence on the validity of their own oral traditions concerning the law.</p>
<p>(v.6)</p> <p>Ac 9:1-19 Ro 3:27-28;4:1-5; Gal 2:16; 3:10-12</p>	<p>Through “legalistic righteousness” produced by observing the law as an attempt to merit God’s favor, approval and blessing, was the way of life for Paul before he miraculously encountered Christ on the road to Damascus. When he knew the truth of Christ’s salvation and accepted His redemption, Paul was well equipped to oppose the law as being contrary to the gospel itself. In terms of legalistic standards of scrupulous, external conformity to the law Paul was formerly, a zealous, “Hebrew of the Hebrews,” and considered to be “faultless.”</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 3:7-11</p> <p>Ac 9:3-16 (v.8)</p>	<p>The next several verses deal with Paul’s confidence in Christ. The things mentioned in verses 5 & 6 were considered a “loss,” by Paul as compared to his faith in Christ. The great reversal in Paul began on his journey to Damascus where he went from being a self-centered Jew to being a man centered on Christ. “Knowing Christ Jesus” for Paul was not only knowing the facts of Christ’s mission on earth, but it was a knowledge gained through experience in the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ as God and Savior! That</p>

	<p>knowledge transforms oneself, entirely! The following verses describe this miraculous transformation—from unsaved to saved. What Paul now has as a Christian is not merely preferable or a better alternative; in contrast, his former way of life was worthless and despicable.</p>
<p>(v.9) Ro 3:21-22; 1Co 1:30; Gal 2:16</p>	<p>To “be found in Him...” to be in union with Christ is not simply an experience in the past, but a present, day-to-day, continuing relationship. The righteousness a believer receives is through Christ. Essentially, God the Father “looks at” born-again Christians “through” His Son and believers “in Christ” have righteousness through Him because of Him...a “righteousness by faith.”</p>
<p>(vv. 10-11) Eph 1:17-20; 2Co 4:7-12;12:9-10 1Co 15:23</p>	<p>Knowing Christ is not merely factual, it includes the experience of the power of His resurrection, fellowship in His sufferings and being like Him in His death. Believers already share positionally in Christ’s death and resurrection, however, Paul speaks of the actual experience of Christ’s resurrection power and suffering with and for Him, even to the point of death. This is the great personal anticipation of every believer.</p>
<p>PHILIPPIANS 3 : 12 – 21 Lk 9:62 v.15 v.17 v.18 v.19 v.21</p>	<p>Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained. Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 3:12-13 Mt 24:13;Heb 12:1</p>	<p>Paul and others sometimes compare the Christian life to running a race. The comparison is that of struggling toward a goal and standing firm in your faith. Paul’s goal is Christ’s goal and Christ supplies the resources for him to “press on toward the goal.”</p>
<p>(v.13)</p>	<p>By using the word, “forgetting,” Paul does not mean that we should lose all memory of our sinful past. That would be impossible because our minds are designed by God to remember! But Paul means that we should try very hard—with the power and grace from the indwelling Holy Spirit—to leave our past behind for we are done with that part of our lives and because of God’s forgiveness, the issue is settled.</p>
<p>Personal Comment: Jer 31: 31-34 Eze 36: 26-27</p>	<p>In the Book of Jeremiah we find the prophetic announcement and definition of the new covenant, which was to be different from the Mosaic covenant. In the following are the superior benefits of this New Covenant. (1.) God’s laws will become inner principles that enable His people (Jews and Gentile Christians) to delight in doing His will. (2.) God and His people will have intimate fellowship. (3.) Sinful ignorance of God will be removed forever and (4.) Forgiveness of sins will be an everlasting reality.</p>
<p>Heb 8:12</p>	<p>In the Book of Hebrews we find virtually the same words spoken by God, as are written in</p>

<p>Heb 11:17</p>	<p>Jeremiah: “For I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more.” God chooses to “remember no more” our sins that He has forgiven. He does not want us to rehash the guilt of our past sins, once He has forgiven them, because when we wallow in revisited guilt and remorse, we do not have God foremost in our minds. We are stuck in the “misery of me—the sinner I was and am.” Since we are forgiven by God (once we repent and become believers in the redemption and salvation of Christ,) He chooses to remember them no more and we are to do the same.</p> <p>These self-inflicted accusations of guilt revisited are directly from the devil. Now that you are a confessed Christian and forgiven by God, the devil cannot work in you for you to sin in quite the same way he did before, but he can walk through his favorite haunts in your mind. He will then taunt you with word such as these: “So you think you’re absolved of all you have done—let me bring them to your mind to prove how terrible you were!” And the nasty part of that is that we humans, with our weaknesses, find it very hard to fight off those attacks of “guilt revisited.”</p> <p>You must pray to God your loving Father to help you to choose to remember those past sins and their accompanying guilt no more! This will take time, but your loving Father does not want you to re-inflict that kind of mental, emotional and spiritual pain and punishment on yourself. But, only He has the power to rid you of this habit—because, habit it is! A habit is something you once learned to do so well that you don’t have to think about doing it. But what you have learned can be unlearned, with the help of God! You can get rid of that nagging old, useless guilt-revisited!</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 3:14</p>	<p>The “prize” in this verse refers to the gift the runner of a foot race won in Greek athletic games at that time, which was a crown or wreath of leaves. However, Paul emphasizes that the award received by a Christian is that of imperishable, everlasting glory! He continues with the description of the believer’s “goal” which is to be with the Lord, eternally, in “heaven.”</p>
<p>Personal Comment:</p>	<p>I searched for years, across several States, for that sense of “being home” in a church fellowship. The Lord graciously led me to Faith Bible Alliance Church, Neosho, Wisconsin. I was looking for a Bible based church. When I first contacted Pastor Fletcher, on a Wednesday afternoon, I asked, “Does your church have a dress code?” He laughed and said, “No!” I said that I was glad of that because in my seventies, I feel I can dress that way I want, comfortably, and not be ridiculed, etc., because I may not be in style. What has that got to do with worship? He told me that the church had a Wednesday night Prayer and Bible Study scheduled. So, that very night, at 6:30pm I was introduced to what would become, “my” church. Their in-depth Bible study and the sincerity of their praying were just what I was searching for! The next Sunday, I walked in the door of the entrance-way and was greeted warmly by the “greeters” with such radiating Christian agape love, that I knew God had brought me home! Home to a church family whom I have grown to love and cherish. Truly, since I am virtually the last of my family, except for my children and grandchildren, these people of this church are my family, my brothers and sisters.</p> <p>Why I brought this up at this point in that no matter how wonderful one may be experiencing “home” with family and/or fellowship, or how much one is looking forward to find such a home here on earth, that feeling we all have for “home” is most perfectly and completely expressed in our anticipation for eternity with the Lord in heaven. The Lord God planted in each of us human beings the desire to be loved by God. God is the only one who truly and perfectly loves us. Therefore, our deepest desire is to be with Him throughout eternity.</p>

<p>Footnote: Php 3:15-18 1Co 3:1-9;Heb 5:14</p> <p>(V. 16)</p> <p>(v.17) Jn 14:6</p> <p>(v. 18) Ac 20:19, 31</p>	<p>Paul calls those who have made reasonable progress in spiritual growth “mature.” The viewpoint of the mature Christian is our awareness of the goal of glory to which we strive and our realization that we do not stop growing, as a believer. Spiritually, as long as we are of this earth, we are not yet perfected. Paul warns there are things left to be done, so we may not become complacent about the gift of grace we have received. If there are lesser aspects of the Christian life upon which believers may find it difficult to agree, Paul urges us to open our hearts to God, who will clarify the matter. Paul encourages his readers to “Live up to what we have already attained.” Put into practice to truth you already understand, for you are responsible for the truth you already possess. Paul follows the example Christ demonstrated for us to follow while He was on earth. And Paul encourages those he teaches to “take note of those who live according to the pattern set by apostles, leaders, teachers and Christ Himself. The lifestyles that Christians lead ought to be models worth following. It troubled Paul’s heart grievously that “many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.” Some, who call themselves “Christian” so not live like Christians but are indistinguishable from those who live according to the world and their own evil desires.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 3:19</p>	<p>Those whom Paul describes in verse 19 are deeply self-centered because their personal appetites and their own desires come first. Often these appetites develop into addictions. We all have met these arrogant types whose unspoken mantra is “me first, me only!” They have their minds set on the things of this life, especially of their own life. However, here, Paul is speaking of those who are opposite of the legalists he wrote about before. In the NIV footnote, they are called antinomians, or libertines, who are the direct opposite of the legalists.</p>
<p>Webster’s Dictionary</p>	<p>An antinomian is one who holds that under the gospel dispensation of grace the moral law is of no use or obligation because faith alone is necessary to salvation; also one who rejects social established morality. It is from the Greek, meaning “anti-law.”</p>
<p>Personal Comment: Jn 15:1-8</p>	<p>Yes, faith alone in Jesus Christ’s salvation is the only way to receive redemption. But according to John, as long as we are “in Christ” and attached to Him as a branch is attached to the vine, we are to produce fruit. The fruit we produce are the good works we do in the name of Jesus. According to Jesus and His discourse on the “Vine and the Branches,” if the branch does not produce fruit, God will cut it off and throw it on the burning pile! Yes, faith alone saves but in most cases there is more to Christian life on earth than that first essential step of faith. There is an exception in Scripture when the “good” thief said to Jesus, “remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” Jesus answered, “Today you will be with Me in paradise.” The “good” thief did not get down off the cross and produce good works for Christ. He simply believed and that is really all that is necessary.</p>
<p>Jn14:6</p>	<p>Once saved, we are to grow, spiritually. We have been spiritually re-born and what does birth signify? Growth! If we don’t grow then why did Christ suffer on the cross? Just so we could believe and rest on our own laurels? No—we are to follow the way He showed us and the way the apostles and their writings show us! We are to be vital Christians, living “in” Christ and showing our growth in the “fruit” (good works) we produce! It has been said that we are to live by faith alone but not by faith that is alone.</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 3:20-21 Jn 17:14-16; 1co 7:29-31; 1Pe 2:11</p>	<p>For “our citizenship is in heaven.” Now, in this world, Christians are aliens, who are fully involved in living as— saints or believers in Christ—Christians, according to how Scripture tells us to live on earth. Christians are to be involved in the world but not of the world. “In heaven” is where Christ is and where believers are positionally, in union with Him. Christians on this earth are to be in contrast to those described in verse19, that is, a Christian’s destiny</p>

<p>Eph 2:6; Col 3:1-4 Ro 8:19; 1Co 1:7 (v.21) See Php 2:8 Ro 8:29; 1n 3:2</p>	<p>is not on earthly things, not on destruction, because their God is the Lord. And from this life on earth, Christian believers “eagerly” wait for the second coming of Christ from heaven. Christ’s present power, earned by His obedience to death and received in His resurrection and ascension, is universal and absolute. The “lowly bodies” of Christian believers will be transformed by the Holy Spirit at their resurrection! Our earthly bodies are now subject to weakness, decay and death due to sin. The resurrection body, already received by Christ, who is the “first-fruits,” (that is, the first to be resurrected by God from the “dead” earthly body of Jesus to the “risen” body of Christ Jesus,) will be received by believers in the future resurrection “harvest.” It is “spiritual,” that is, transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.</p>
<p>PHILIPPIANS 4 : 1 - 7 v.3 v.4 v.7</p>	<p>Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand in the Lord, dear friends! I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Jesus Christ.</p>
<p>Personal Comment:</p>	<p>These words of Paul, verses 4-7, are perhaps some of the best advice a Christian can put into practice in life. How many of you get frustrated at work, at home, in crowds or all alone? I know this used to be an almost insurmountable problem for me. I still do not “suffer fools gracefully!” My human nature is very arrogant but it has been tamed, measurably, by the grace and power of God! While I was becoming a Christian—salvation came in an instant, but being useful to God took a while! I had a whole portfolio full of arrogant responses ready to use in almost every circumstance. Whether alone or with someone, I was not always nice. Sometimes nice with an ulterior motive, but more often not so nice!</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 4:1</p>	<p>The people who Paul taught were very dear to him. He cut himself off from family and former friends because of his radical, miraculous change from doing everything in his power to exterminate Christians and Christianity to devoting his life and his love to evangelism. He truly loved, with agape love, those whom he taught. We, centuries later, benefit by his words and the truth of his life—we, too, are his “dear friends.” He considers those whom he teaches to be his “joy and crown.”</p>
<p>Footnote: Php 4:2-3 (v.3)</p>	<p>Verse 2 is interesting. Our pastor recently preached a sermon about it. He pointed out how important it is for Christians to curb their natural human tendency to disagree and remember why they worship together. Paul, too, felt the disagreement between Euodia and Syntyche (pronounced: <i>u-o-di-a and sin-ti-ke</i>) to be serious enough to be mentioned in a letter to be read publically. Paul seems confident that “these women” will be reconciled. His handling of the situation is a model of tact—he does not take sides but encourages others who are closer to the conflict to promote reconciliation between these two women. Paul goes on to address his “fellow workers” and “loyal yokefellows” who are associated with him in the cause of the gospel. These are the men and women whom he considers his equals, not subordinates. He mentions, Clement, (here only in the NT) by name but the others are not individually mentioned because they are known by God and their names are entered in the book of life—the heavenly register of the elect.</p>
<p>Rev 3:5</p>	<p>John records the words of Jesus in the Book of Revelation, as He tells him about this “book of</p>

Ex 32:32-33; Ps 69:28; Dan 12:1	life.” It was first mentioned in Exodus by Moses, then in Psalms by David and the others who wrote Psalms, then by Daniel and by many other writers of Scripture. The “book of life” is God’s list of those destined for eternal life with Him in heaven. It is a register of all citizens in the kingdom community. This is an official recording of the elect. Believers in Christ and His salvation are “positionally” already “saints” in this register.
Ac 9:32,41	
Footnote: Php 4:4-7 (v.5)	Paul encourages his readers to “rejoice in the Lord” under all kinds of circumstances. Peter, James and many other writers of Scripture also urge people to “rejoice in the Lord.” Christ-like consideration for others also is encouraged among church members and especially church leaders, who are to be gentle and considerate. We all are to remember that the next great event in God’s prophetic schedule is Christ’s return! The whole period from Christ’s first coming (His birth at Bethlehem, life in Nazareth and ministry throughout Judea and His death, resurrection and ascension near Jerusalem,) to the consummation of the kingdom which is viewed in the NT as the last time. (The word, <i>consummation</i> , means the ultimate end or goal, at which time Jesus Christ will bring to completion, perfection and fulfillment all that has been prophesied since the beginning!)
See 1Jn 2:18	
Ps 90:4; 2Pe 3:8	From God’s vantage point, “a thousand years are as one day.” God does not view time as humans do. He stands above time, with the result that when time is seen in the light of eternity, an age (a thousand years) appears no longer than one short day, and a day (24 hrs) seems no shorter than a long age. Since time is purely relative with God, in respect to His creation: the universe; the world—the earth and all life, He waits patiently while human beings stew with impatience. How often has the Lord advised, “be still and know that I am God.”
Ps 46:10 (v.6)	To be “anxious” is to be self-centered. It is very counter-productive because worry does not address the legitimate cares and concerns for the spread of the gospel. Rather, Christians should not worry but, “in everything, by prayer,” seek the power and direction of the Lord—and accept the circumstances that He may bring about in response to honest, humble petition. Anxiety and prayer are two great opposing forces in the Christian experience. “Thanksgiving,” praise and acknowledgement of God and His purpose is the antidote to worry!
(v.7) Jn 14:27; Ro 5:1	“Peace of God” does not mean merely a psychological state of mind, but an inner tranquility based on peace with God. This peaceful state or condition is the result experienced in those people whose sins are forgiven. The opposite of anxiety, (worry and fretting) is tranquility, (peace and acceptance) that comes when a believer commits all his or her cares to the Lord in prayer and worries about them no longer. The full dimension of God’s love and care are beyond human comprehension. It “transcends all understanding.” Often, Paul borrows from military discipline. Here he writes, “guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” These words are a military concept depicting a sentry standing guard. God’s “protective custody” of those who are in Christ Jesus extends to the very core of their beings and to their deepest intentions.
Eph 3:18-20	
1Pe 1:5	
Personal Comment:	Why is that so hard for us to do? Why do we know this and continue to fret and worry? Of course it is our weak sin-nature with a little help from the evil one. The devil is used to calling the shots in our pre-believer, unsaved condition. At least this is true in my life since I really wasn’t a “saved” Christian for about the first 70 years! That’s a long time in which to get used to the habits, accusations and pollutions of evil. I still struggle with this very thing Paul writes about so often. I believe it was something he felt deeply within himself because he, too, did not become a believer until Jesus Christ literally threw him off his high horse and brought him to faith. But most of us humans, with our self-centered sin-nature, have a very hard time
Php 4:7	
Ac 9:1-19	

<p>Jas 2:20-24</p>	<p>being at inner peace and putting our problems (past, present and future worries) into the hands of God—and leaving them there!!</p> <p>It may be that we don't believe that God can handle whatever our problems are and we retrieve them, one by one, after we have "given" them to Him. We do this so we can worry about them a little bit more. How do you think this makes God feel? Like we really trust Him? Like we really believe He is capable of handling our problems? If that is the case, be careful because God may say to you, "You asked for these problems back without believing I Am able to help. So here they are. The problems are now in your weak and helpless hands—worry about them all you want." I don't know if God would do that or not. It's just an idea I heard a preacher say. But I wonder if God might feel this way.</p>
<p>Eze 14:6-11 Ps 78:21-22 Jer 11:9-11 Ro 1:21-22 Jn 6:38;14:6</p>	<p>Why did the Israelites seek other gods and worship idols? Because they stopped believing God was able to make things happen the way they wanted. They forgot that God has His own agenda. It included their obedience, love, honor, trust, etc. Are we obedient when we worry? God has His own purposes in our lives and in the lives of our loved ones. By worrying instead of trusting God, in a sense, we are rejecting Him. Jesus Christ obeyed God explicitly. Aren't we supposed to follow Him, as Christians?</p>
<p>Php 4:7</p>	<p>Well, of course we are not able to be perfect because even though Christian believers have a new, re-born spirit, as long as we are of this earth, we retain our sin-nature. But, when we learn to put our trust in God and in His perfect will and purpose for our lives, we will experience an indescribable peace. Much of the stuff we worry about will take on a different appearance because of our trust in God. This is hard to explain or comprehend because it is one of the beautiful results of learning to trust God. First, we must un-learn all the ways to worry and fret—to make room in our new spirits for this wonderful spiritual dimension God gives to those who trust Him. It's called peace.</p>
	<p>There are many Scriptural passages which support the above comment. The following verses are but a few.</p>
<p>Eph 5:17</p>	<p>"Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."</p>
<p>Php 2:13</p>	<p>"...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose."</p>
<p>1Th 5:16-18</p>	<p>"Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."</p>
<p>1Jn5:14</p>	<p>"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."</p>
<p>Php 4:7</p>	<p>"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."</p>



THIS MAN

At times he teaches Christian values
 Wrapped in humanly comic pages
 Of laughter, games and the joy of faith.
 He is an intercessor in a happy hat
 Who plays with the offspring of his flock.

This man also displays a serious nature
 And feels our deepest pain and distress,
 So keenly, that he knows simple words
 Do not reach into the gap formed
 By the chasm of our own inadequacy.

He comes, speaking faith and hope,
 Quenching our thirst while the Lord heals,
 For he is heard by our gracious God.
 In humble assistance, he is the support,
 Bolstering the lonely need of our singleness.

Sometimes, his words from the pulpit,
 Are direct, calling us to account.
 In them our weaknesses are mirrored,
 Life's tragedies and misfortunes laid bare,
 As he cradles us gently to the foot of the cross.

Where he, a mere man, stands with us,
 Accompanying our embrace of repentance.
 In the stillness of our huddled group
 Together we wait in patient, trusting belief,
 Praying for answers no vocabulary can fathom.

He is our brother, son, dad, confessor;
 Our available, understanding yokefellow
 Who brings us his personal spiritual peace,
 To teach, preach and encourage our hearts.
 This man is Pastor Steve and we love him.

By Mary Duchow