



III. AN EXHORTATION IN OBEDIENCE (Philippians 2:12-18)

A. Without Partiality (Philippians 2:12-13)

1. Toward Paul's presence or absence (Philippians 2:12)
 - a. They always obeyed.
 - (1) Not as in his presence only; meaning they did obey in his presence, but not only in his presence
 - (2) Now *much more* in his absence
 - (3) In a day when Christians do much less than expected, it is refreshing to see believers doing much more than expected (Philippians 2:12; Philemon 1:20-21). This would be a tremendous testimony for anyone to bear today.
 - b. They were to work out their own salvation.
 - (1) The means
 - a) With fear
 - b) With trembling
 - (2) The meaning—The salvation had been accomplished on the inside, but they needed to work it to the outside.
 - c. Three levels of obedience
 - (1) Sometimes, we are so concerned about the doctrinal impact of the phrase “work out your own salvation” that we miss the practical lesson God has for us here.
 - (2) This passage teaches that there are three levels of maturity in obedience to God (although it applies to other situations as well).
 - a) First, the Philippians obeyed the commands given to them by Paul while he was there. ***This is obedience in the leader's presence.***
 - i) The Philippians obeyed the commands of Paul in his presence.
 - ii) This is the most basic form of obedience.
 - iii) I will do it because I have been told to do it and someone is watching.
 - b) Second, they obeyed Paul's commands when he was absent. ***This is obedience in the leader's absence.***
 - i) The Philippians went further.
 - ii) They obeyed Paul in his absence.
 - iii) This is the second level of obedience. I will do it because I have been told to do it and it matters not if anyone is watching.
 - c) Third, he wanted them to grow to where they found out from God what needed to be done and did it—even without being told to do it. ***This is obedience directly to God.***
 - i) This is the meaning of working out salvation.
 - (a) They were to allow God to deal with them directly without a go-between.



- (b) They were to work it out of themselves knowing that “it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13).
 - ii) Paul now wanted the Philippians to go one step further. He wanted them to learn to get their orders directly from God; to let their own salvation work out of their lives; to let God work in them to will and do of His good pleasure.
 - iii) This is the highest level of obedience.
 - 2. Knowing the work was of God (Philippians 2:13)
 - a. From within to without
 - (1) He worketh in you.
 - (2) Work out your own salvation.
 - b. From start to finish
 - (1) He works in you “to will”; the desire.
 - (2) He works in you “to do”; the fulfillment.
 - (3) Perhaps no passage demonstrates the difference between the two better than Romans 7:14-25.
 - (4) Note: Good intentions are not enough; the believer needs to win the battle of desire and the battle of fulfillment.
 - c. With one goal in mind—“his good pleasure” (see Revelation 4:11; see also Ephesians 1:5, 9; 2 Thessalonians 1:11)
 - d. Note: Until men learn that everything is of God and about God, they will be full of hypocrisy and more concerned with pleasing others. Changes made to please men occur on the outside and never move to the inside, whereas changes made to please God begin within and always work their way without.
- B. Without Blame (Philippians 2:14-16)
- 1. The proper attitude in obedience (Philippians 2:14)
 - a. Without murmurings—the inner struggle; Note: A murmur is a heart problem.
 - b. Without disputings—the struggle with others
 - 2. The outcome of obedience (Philippians 2:15-16)
 - a. That ye may be blameless and harmless (Philippians 2:15)
 - (1) Blameless; taking heed to self
 - a) The word *blame* and its various forms appears twenty-four times in scripture.
 - b) It is imperative to realize that blameless does not mean sinless (Romans 3:23; compare Luke 1:5-6).
 - c) In a general sense, *blame* is the guilty responsibility concerning a matter.
 - d) Consider the example in the life of Judah.
 - i) In Genesis 43:1-10, Judah understood the necessity of taking Benjamin if they were to buy food, but he also understood the concerns of his father.



- ii) Jacob already lost Joseph; he was not prepared to lose another son.
 - iii) With these things in mind, Judah promised his father that Benjamin would come back to Jacob alive and well.
 - iv) If Judah was unable to fulfill this promise, he was prepared to bear the blame forever.
 - v) When it looked as though Benjamin would be taken, Judah stepped in and declared his responsibility (Genesis 44:10, 32).
 - e) One of the most difficult tasks in the life of the believer is his efforts to make his practice line up with his position in Christ.
 - i) Positionally, the saint of God is blameless in Christ (Ephesians 1:1-4; Colossians 1:21-22); but practically, he must strive daily to “be blameless and harmless... in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.”
 - ii) In this world, believers represent the Lord as sons of God. As such, they should “do all things without murmurings and disputings.” Why is this so important? Because believers are to “shine as lights in the world.” It is imperative that each believer strive daily to live a godly life and preserve a godly testimony in a world that has little to no knowledge of God (Matthew 5:16).
 - (2) Harmless—taking heed to others
 - b. That ye may be without rebuke (Philippians 2:15-16)
 - (1) In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (Philippians 2:15)
 - (2) Among whom ye shine as lights in the world (Philippians 2:15)
 - (3) Holding forth the word of life (Philippians 2:16)
- C. With Rejoicing (Philippians 2:16-18)
- 1. The rejoicing of others (Philippians 2:16-17)
 - a. For labours not in vain (Philippians 2:16)
 - (1) That I may rejoice in the day of Christ
 - (2) That I have not run in vain
 - (3) That I have not laboured in vain
 - b. For sacrifices well offered (Philippians 2:17)
 - (1) For the faith of others
 - (2) For the joy of others
 - 2. The rejoicing of the obedient (Philippians 2:17-18)
 - a. The mutual rejoicing (Philippians 2:17-18)
 - (1) Paul rejoiced with the saints (Philippians 2:17).
 - (2) The saints rejoiced with Paul (Philippians 2:18).
 - b. The mutual cause of rejoicing (Philippians 2:18); “For the same cause also do ye joy.” The things that brought joy to Paul would also bring joy to the believers at Philippi.