

Principles of Philippians 1:3-5

- Even though Paul was imprisoned and had been separated from the Philippians for years, he thanked God for them every time they came to his mind [Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4].
- As believers, we can be difficult to be around or we can be a source of spiritual refreshment for others [1 Cor 16:17-18; 2 Cor 7:13; Phlm 7, 20].
- The Philippians were a source of joy for Paul and it was with such joy that he offered continual prayers for these believers.
- It has always been God's intent for all believers to be joyful in prayer [Isa 56:6-7].
- The Philippians had participated in Paul's gospel ministry from the first time they met him.
- We are all ambassadors for Christ [2 Cor 5:20], but we can participate in the spread of the gospel by supporting ministries that focus on reaching people with the message of salvation [2 Cor 8:3-5].

Principles of Philippians 1:6

- The very moment that someone places their faith in Jesus Christ, God begins a work in him.
- That work is done through the power of the Holy Spirit [John 14:26; 16:13; Rom 5:5; 15:13] in conjunction with the living, active and piercing Word of God [Heb 4:12; 1 Thess 2:13].
- God is faithful to continue His work in us for His good pleasure [Phil 2:13] all the days of our lives.
- God is faithful to continue His work in the Church that we might be found sincere and blameless the day Jesus Christ comes to get His bride [Phil 1:10; 1 Cor 1:4-8].
- Paul's confidence in God's faithfulness to continue this work in the Philippians was one of the sources of his joy and thankfulness.
- Likewise, pastors derive joy and thankfulness knowing that God is actively working in the flock that had been allotted to their charge [1 Pet 5:3].
- Every believer should have this same confidence that God is faithfully shaping and molding him through the daily transformation accomplished by the renewing of his mind [Rom 12:2].
- This renewal occurs through reproof, correction and training in righteousness [2 Tim 3:16-17].

Principles of Philippians 1:7-8

- Paul thought very highly of the Philippians because they supported him in defending and affirming the truth of the gospel.
- Likewise, we should have a high estimation of other believers who uphold the truth regarding salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Paul had affection for the Philippians because he knew they had him constantly in their hearts.
- The fact that Paul had been imprisoned for his faith did not cause the Philippians to abandon him.
- They were truly partners with Paul in his ministry to share the gospel with as many people as possible.
- As a local church, we are partners with the missionaries we support financially and in prayer.
- It is important for us to hold these missionaries in our hearts constantly because this can be a source of encouragement for them.
- Paul had not seen the believers in Philippi for a long time, but he longed to be with them.
- The affection Paul had for the Philippians was not merely human attraction – he had a love for them that had its source in his relationship with Christ.
- We, too, can love our brothers and sisters in Christ with a love that is not of the flesh, but manifest in us through the Holy Spirit [1 John 4:7-21].

Principles of Philippians 1:9

- Paul knew that the Philippians had exhibited ἀγάπη love toward others [Phil 2:2].
- He prayed that their ἀγάπη love would continue to increase to the point of abundance (overflowing).
- This is not sentimental love, but rather sacrificial, integrity love manifest in us by God [1 Thess 3:12].
- God's ἀγάπη love will increase in us as we grow spiritually in the full knowledge of Him and gain greater insight into how to apply His word to the circumstances of our daily lives [Col 1:9-11].
- As we mature in the faith, we become more able to discern between good and evil [Heb 5:14].

Principles of Philippians 1:10-11

- As we mature in the faith we increase in the love which only God can manifest in us.
- In the process we also gain full knowledge and insight into God's word and the ways of this world.
- This allows us to examine everything we encounter and approve the things which have eternal value.
- The word of God establishes the standard by which we must evaluate everything in our lives.
- This standard is based upon God's perfect righteousness, not relative righteousness.
- As we approve things of real (eternal) value, we should prioritize our lives around such things.
- Example:
 - Money serves a purpose in our lives, but is itself of no eternal value.
 - However, using money for God's glory does have eternal value.
 - ∴, we should not prioritize making money, but rather using the money we do make to glorify God.
- If we approve the things of real (eternal) value and make them a priority in our lives, we will walk in a manner that is pure and blameless before God.
- If we walk in this manner, we will be ready for the day of Christ (Rapture) to happen at any time so we might be found faithful [Matt 24:44-46].
- When Christ comes, our pure and blameless walk means we will be found having been filled with the fruit of righteousness (the fruit of the Spirit).
- This righteousness comes through abiding in Christ as the word dwells richly in us [1 John 2:24] to the glory and praise of God [Mt 5:16; Jn 15:8].

Principles of Philippians 1:12-14

- Paul was in danger in his imprisonment in Rome.
- This danger included the possibility of death, yet Paul's assessment of his imprisonment was to see how God was using it in a positive way.
- We should view our own circumstances from this Rom 8:28 perspective.
- Paul's imprisonment resulted in the advancement of the gospel [2 Tim 2:8-9].
- The entire imperial guard (and others) knew that Paul was in prison because of his faith in Christ.
- This allowed Paul to be a witness to this group of men that would not normally be reachable.
- Many believers observed how the Lord was using Paul even while he was in prison and it increased their trust in the Lord.
- This gave them far more courage to speak the word of God knowing that He would be with them even if they suffered consequences for doing so.
- These Christians were fearlessly witnessing to others because Paul had been a witness to them.
- This shows how important it is for us to be a witness for Christ to everyone we encounter – believers and unbelievers alike.
- This also shows that our circumstances are never an excuse not to share our faith with others.

Principles of Philippians 1:15-17

- After mentioning the courageous brethren who were speaking the word of God to others, Paul turns his thoughts to the motives of various preachers of the gospel.
- Some of these preachers were envious of Paul's accomplishments and considered him a rival rather than a fellow soldier in the ministry.
- These preachers were proclaiming the true gospel (faith alone in Christ alone), but were doing it to promote themselves and their own ministries rather than from pure motives.
- These men failed to recognize that God had appointed Paul to the ministry of defending the gospel and was blessing that ministry.
- Their desire for "greatness" was wrought out of pride and this was producing strife in their souls.
- This strife was causing them to envy Paul's ministry and to want to bring him distress.
- These preachers failed to understand that the greatest in God's plan is the one who has a servant's heart [Mark 9:34-35].
- There were other preachers who loved the Lord as well as Paul.
- These preachers recognized Paul's calling and were thankful for his success in spreading the good news about Christ.
- These men had their hearts in the right place regarding preaching the gospel.
- They understood that the preaching of the gospel is not a competition, but rather a fellowship of servants [1 Cor 1:9-13; 3:21-23].

Principles of Philippians 1:18a

- It is a good thing when the true gospel is being proclaimed, regardless of the purity of the motives of the ones proclaiming Christ.
- The result of speaking the true gospel is that seeds will be planted and then God is the one who brings about the positive results [1 Cor 3:6-7].
- The key to understanding this is that it must be the true gospel being proclaimed which is the power of God for salvation [Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18].
- If someone is proclaiming a “different gospel” (which is actually a distortion of the true gospel), then this principle does not apply [Gal 1:6-9].
- Some common distortions of the true gospel...
 - Salvation can be earned through works (attending church, following the Ten Commandments, changing society, etc.).
 - Salvation is acquired through faith plus works.
 - Having good morals is enough to be saved.
 - Knowledge of the Bible means you are saved.
 - Salvation involves an emotional experience.
 - Salvation will result in temporal prosperity (perfect marriage, wealth, great job, etc.).
 - Everyone will be saved and go to heaven.

Principles of Philippians 1:18b-20

- We have already seen that Paul rejoiced knowing that Christ was being proclaimed.
- Paul knew he would continue to rejoice because everything that was happening to him was going to work out for his deliverance [Gen 50:20].
- By deliverance, Paul meant that he knew he would not be put to shame [Isa 50:7; 1 Pet 4:16].
- Paul's eager anticipation regarding this outcome was based on his understanding that the prayers of the Philippians would be effective [Jas 5:16b].
- Paul's confidence came from his knowledge that the Holy Spirit would provide for him in any and every circumstance [Rom 5:3-5; 15:13-16].
- No matter what Paul might be facing in his life, his utmost desire was to continue to be boldly outspoken about Christ his Savior [Eph 6:19-20].
- Paul knew that he might die while in prison, but he was going to glorify Christ in his body whether he lived or died [Rom 12:1-2; 14:7-8; 1 Cor 6:20].

Principles of Philippians 1:21-24

- We have seen that whether he lived or died, Paul would glorify Christ in his body.
- In Paul's thinking, to live is Christ.
- In other words, Paul sees his temporal life as a means by which Christ can be manifest to the world through him [2 Cor 4:7-10; Gal 2:20].
- Paul knew that when he died, he would be face-to-face with Christ [2 Cor 5:6-8].
- Being in heaven with Christ would be better for Paul than staying here on earth.
- However, if he lived on in this world he would have more opportunities to bear fruit for Christ.
- Paul's ministries were benefitting the believers he served, so for their sakes it was better if the Lord gave him more time on this earth.
- The two options each had merits and Paul struggled to decide which one he liked better.
- As Paul assessed God's plan for his life, he came to the conclusion that it was more necessary for him to remain on in the flesh.
- Paul did not get to choose whether he would live or die, but as much as he loved Jesus and desired to be with Him, he knew his work was not yet complete [2 Tim 4:6-8].

Principles of Philippians 1:25-26

- Paul had given so much consideration to God's will for his life that he had become convinced that it was more necessary for him to live on for the sake of the believers he was serving with his life.
- This led him to be sure in his knowledge that he would be released from prison one day so that he could visit the Philippians once again [Phil 2:24].
- By the Lord allowing him to live on and continue his ministries, the Philippians (and all of us) would benefit by advancing in their spiritual growth and in the joy that comes about as a result.
- We will encounter circumstances in this life that do not inspire rejoicing, but if our focus is on Christ we will be able to rejoice in Him [Phil 2:1; 1 Pet 4:13].
- This type of rejoicing (joy) is unique to the Christian faith and is something we have the capacity to do continually [Phil 4:4; 1 Thess 5:16].
- Paul wanted to make sure Jesus Christ got the credit for preserving his life and allowing him to be released from prison and that the Philippians' confidence in him was rooted in Christ Himself.
- In fact, he wanted their confidence in Christ to increase to the point of overflowing through the Lord allowing him to visit them once again.
- The grace of God would be on full display by His allowing the one who taught them about Christ to come see them again and help them to grow in their faith [2 Pet 3:18].

Principles of Philippians 1:27

- If you are a born-again believer, you have been saved by grace through faith, not because of any merits of your own [Acts 15:11; Eph 2:4-9].
- We came to know how we could be saved through the message of the gospel [Rom 1:16].
- As believers, we ought to live our lives in a manner worthy of the gospel [1 Tim 3:15; 2 Pet 3:11].
- Although Paul had become convinced that he would live on, be released from prison and get the chance to visit Philippi, he knew that God was sovereign over his life [Acts 16:6-8].
- Whether he was able to go see the Philippians or remained absent from them, he wanted to hear that they were united in their faith [Eph 4:3].
- Not only did he want the Philippians to be united in their faith, Paul wanted them to contend for the faith [Jude 3; 1 Tim 6:12].
- This faith encompasses all that we believe about God based upon what we have learned from His word, starting with the gospel itself [Eph 1:13-17].

Principles of Philippians 1:28-30

- As we stand firm in our faith depending upon the strength of the Lord, we will not be intimidated by the schemes of our adversaries [Eph 6:10-11].
- In fact, as we endure suffering through the persecution of unbelievers, it is a sign of our salvation and an omen of their path to eternal condemnation [2 Thess 1:3-8].
- These are both from God as a result of the conviction of the conscience in the unbeliever and the confidence wrought by the Holy Spirit in the born-again believer [1 John 5:10-13].
- God has graciously given us a means of salvation which depends solely upon faith in His Son Jesus Christ [John 3:16-18; Eph 2:8-9].
- If we happily accept the gift of salvation, but resist the gift of suffering for Christ, we fail to understand the ways of God [Job 1:21; 2:10; Isa 55:9].
- Paul is an example to all of us regarding the spiritual resolve to endure persecution and suffering for the sake of Christ [1 Thess 2:1-2].
- Christ Himself set the example that Paul followed as He suffered many things in His earthly life [Matt 16:21; Acts 3:12-18; Heb 2:10].

Principles of Philippians 2:1-2

- The moment you place your faith in Jesus as your personal savior you are baptized by the Spirit into union with Christ [Gal 3:27; 1 Cor 12:13].
- Our union with Christ should be an encouragement to us because, in Him, we have access to every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places [Eph 1:3].
- As believers, we are the object of God's love which is a source of comfort and consolation in our daily walk [2 Cor 1:3-5; 7:6-7; 2 Thess 2:16-17].
- We are also comforted through the love of other believers [Phlm 7].
- This love is not of the flesh, but is manifest in us by God the Holy Spirit [Rom 5:5].
- One of the spiritual blessings we are able to enjoy is fellowship with other believers, but only when we have fellowship with God [1 John 1:9].
- This fellowship is of the Spirit who produces in us a kindness and gentleness that we would not have apart from Him [Gal 5:22-23].
- This inward change of the soul should result in an outward change in our behavior as we show tender affection and mercy toward others [Col 3:12-13].
- As a body of believers in a local church, we should become more and more like-minded as we mature in our faith [1 Cor 1:10; 2 Cor 13:11; 1 Pet 3:8-9].
- This like-mindedness should result in an accord within the body as believers focus in unison on bringing glory to God [Rom 15:5-6; 1 Cor 10:31].
- As a body of believers strives toward a common goal it is critical that everything they do is done in the sphere of love or it will all be empty and profit them nothing [1 Cor 13:1-3].

Principles of Philippians 2:3-4

- The ways of the world tell us that we have to promote ourselves in order to get ahead.
- In God's plan for believers, there is no place for self-promotion [Jas 3:13-17].
- In fact, Scripture advises us to not even associate with selfish people [Prov 23:6-8].
- The protocol for the believer is to humble himself before the Lord who will exalt him at the proper time [Matt 23:12; Jas 4:10; 1Pet 5:5-6].
- This is a mindset of humility for the believer that includes not thinking too highly of himself [Pr 3:7; Rom 12:3, 16; 1 Cor 8:1-2].
- This Christ-like attitude views others as more important than ourselves, giving preference to one another in brotherly love [Rom 12:10].
- The goal in all of this is to edify our brothers and sisters in Christ [Rom 14:19; 15:1-2; Eph 4:12, 29].
- This takes thoughtful consideration because not everything we do will edify [1 Cor 10:23-24].

Principles of Philippians 2:5-8

- Jesus Christ is absolutely divine in essence, but He could not become God through efforts of the flesh – He is eternally God [John 1:1].
- He also has a human soul and spirit which means that Jesus is both God and man – undiminished deity and true humanity in hypostatic union.
- This permanent union of Christ’s deity and His human soul and spirit took place at the beginning of time (long before the immaculate conception or virgin birth took place) when His humanity was begotten of God [Ps 2:7; Col 1:15].
- As a result, Jesus Christ is a unique member of the human race and the Trinity.
- Even though Christ holds this unique position, He willingly set aside His privileges as God during His first advent [2 Cor 8:9].
- He lived His life functioning solely in His humanity so that He might taste death for everyone and be our faithful High Priest [Heb 2:9-18].
- During His first advent Jesus relied upon the Holy Spirit as He functioned in His capacity as a Jewish prophet [John 1:32; Luke 4:1-18; 24:19].
- Even though He was on the earth prior to the Church, His reliance upon the Holy Spirit still serves an example to us [Gal 5:16].
- Jesus’ life on this earth was characterized by humility – He did not demand to be served, but instead served others [Mark 10:45].
- Christ is the perfect example of a bond-servant...
 - His bond-service was unto His Father [Matt 26:39; John 6:38].
 - Our bond-service is unto Him [Gal 1:10; Rev 1:1].
- As we mature in our faith we should attain to this Christ-like mindset of humility [Matt 11:29-30; 20:26-28; Luke 22:27; John 13:14-15].
- This humble mindset will be part of an overall mental attitude which is shaped and molded by Christ’s ἀγάπη love resulting in willing obedience of God’s commandments [1 John 2:4-6].

Jesus' 1st advent in light of the Kenosis

- Increasing in wisdom [Luke 2:40-52].
- Being tempted in the wilderness [Luke 4:1-13].
- Turning water into wine [John 2:1-11].
- Calling out the woman at the well [John 4:5-19].
- Healing the nobleman's son [John 4:46-54].
- Healing a demoniac (and others) [Luke 4:31-40].
- Raising a widow's son [Luke 7:11-17].
- Calming the sea [Luke 8:22-25].
- Walking on the water [Matt 14:22-33].
- Feeding multitudes [Matt 15:32-39; Luke 9:12-17].
- Foretelling His death/resurrection [Luke 9:21-25].
- Healing the man born blind [John 9:1-34].
- Raising Lazarus [John 11:1-46].
- Healing the 10 lepers [Luke 17:12-19].
- Healing blind Bartimaeus [Mark 10:46-52].
- Foretelling the future [Matt 24:1-51; 25:31-46].
- Revealing the betrayer [John 13:21-30].
- Hanging on the Cross [Luke 22:33-46].

Principles of Philippians 2:9-11

- Because of the humility of Jesus displayed during His first advent, God the Father has exalted Him to the place of highest honor [Col 1:18].
- As God Jesus did not need to be exalted, but as the unique God-man He has been exalted above all of God's creatures [Heb 1:9].
- In His exaltation Christ has been given the name which is above every other name [Eph 1:18-21].
- This is not simply a title that has been freely given to Jesus – this refers to His person, His reputation and His position of honor [1 Sam 18:30; Acts 5:41; Heb 1:3-4].
- His exaltation is to the place of highest honor such that every volitional creature will one day bow before Him [Rom 14:11].
- This includes fallen angels, demons, and people who have rejected Jesus as Savior – no creature will be exempt [John 5:22-23].
- In addition, every creature will profess that Jesus Christ is Lord over all [Acts 10:36; Rom 14:9].
- For the holy angels and born-again believers this will be done joyfully, but for all other creatures it will be done begrudgingly from a position of shame [Isa 45:23-24].
- For unbelievers, this will take place at the Great White Throne when they are resurrected for judgment [Rev 20:11-15].
- The Bible does not tell us when the fallen angels and demons will prostrate themselves before Jesus and declare Him as Lord.
- Interestingly, when the Jews are brought to repentance during the Tribulation they will profess that Jesus is Lord of all [Rom 10:8-13].
- This is in recognition of the fact that Jesus is Yahweh (God) just as He told them and that their rejection of Him as God was in error [Mt 26:59-66].

Principles of Philippians 2:12-13

- Paul had great affection for the believers in Philippi and was not shy about expressing it to them.
- Likewise, we should show our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ [Ro 12:10; Gal 5:13; Eph 4:2].
- The Philippians had been obedient to God's word at all times – not just when Paul was with them.
- In a similar way, believers today should not honor God through obedience to His word only when at church or when in the company of their pastor.
- We must always remember that our service is unto the Lord, not men [Eph 6:5-8; Col 3:22-24].
- This includes earthly “masters” [Eph 6:9; Col 4:1].
- As believers we have work assignments prepared especially for us to do [Eph 2:10].
- We should carry out these work assignments in accordance with our salvation [Col 2:6] as unto the Lord [Col 3:17; 1 Cor 10:31].
- This is not done to earn God's favor, but from a humble heart [Acts 20:17-21; 1 Pet 5:1-5].
- This humility stems from a proper reverence for God Almighty whom we serve [Heb 12:28-29].
- It is important for us to keep in mind that, when we are bearing true spiritual fruit in our lives, God is the one accomplishing the work in and through us [1 Cor 12:6; 15:10; Heb 13:20-21].
- When we humble ourselves and allow God to accomplish His work in us, we will be walking according to His will and His purpose for our lives [2 Thess 1:11-12; 2 Tim 1:8-11].

Principles of Philippians 2:14-16

- As believers who are objects of God's amazing grace, we are already abundantly blessed and should be to go through life without grumbling about anyone or anything.
- The ability to have contentment in any and every circumstance of our lives is something we have to learn as we grow spiritually [Phil 4:11].
- This contentment stems from knowing that God is always with us [Heb 13:5] and will shower us with His grace, abundantly supplying all of our needs in this life [2 Cor 9:8; Phil 4:19].
- The believer who is continually discontent will be unsettled in his soul and have a tendency to be argumentative about things (including doctrine).
- God's will for believers (especially within a local church) is that they have fellowship with one another [1 John 1:7], not bickering and disputes.
- As we shine the Light of Christ in the midst of this morally corrupt and deprave generation, we show that we are indeed children of God who remain uncorrupted by the world [Jas 1:27; 2 Pet 1:4].
- We must rely upon God's wisdom and strength to avoid becoming entangled in the defilements of the world [2 Pet 2:20-22].
- This requires that we fix our attention on the word of God and hold firmly onto the things we have learned from it [2 Pet 3:1-2; Jude 17-21].
- Likewise, we should remember those who have led us in our spiritual growth and imitate their walk of faith [Heb 13:7].
- Our spiritual leaders will rejoice in seeing our growth and, in the day of Christ, will boast in what God has accomplished in our lives [1 Cor 1:30-31; 2 Cor 10:8-17].
- It is encouraging to those who teach God's word to see the word performing its work in those who believe so that they will know that they have not been toiling for nothing [Gal 4:9-11; 1 Thess 2:13].

Principles of Philippians 2:17-18

- At the time of the writing of this letter, Paul was facing circumstances far more difficult than anything we will likely face in our lifetimes.
- Those circumstances did not dictate Paul's mental attitude as he was able to rejoice over the faith of the Philippians.
- Paul had offered himself as a sacrifice to the Philippians through his ministry to them which had resulted in the sacrificial service of their faith.
- It was because of Paul's service to the Philippians (and others) on behalf of Christ that he had been thrown into prison.
- Though he expressed confidence that he would be released from prison [vv. 1:24-26; 2:23-24], Paul knew that he might die in prison.
- He had willingly offered himself as a sacrifice for them in his life and would rejoice even if he were to die because of his ministry to them [2 Cor 12:15].
- Paul wanted to share his joy with the Philippians so that they would not be discouraged because of his circumstances or their own.
- He also wanted them to have a desire to share their joy with him so that he would be encouraged by their walk of faith [v. 19].
- We, like Paul, should be able to rejoice in the Lord always regardless of the circumstances we face in this life [1 Thess 5:16].
- And, like Paul, we should desire to share our joy with others so that we might be a source of encouragement and an example to them when they encounter difficulties and suffering in this life.

Principles of Philippians 2:19-24

- Paul loved the Philippians and wanted to know that they were doing well.
- Because of his incarceration he was unable to come to them right away, so he was going to send someone who would bring back a report.
- The only person who was with him at the time that deeply cared about the Philippians was Timothy.
- Paul trusted in God and believed that he would be released from prison, but if his release did not happen immediately he would send Timothy.
- Making such a backup plan is not the product of doubting, but shows an orientation to God's sovereignty and our need to make plans within the limited scope of our understanding.
- Paul taught Timothy [2 Tim 2:2] and trusted him to be his representative [1 Cor 4:17; 1 Thess 3:1-2].
- However, asking Timothy to travel to Philippi as his representative was no small thing...
 - the trip to/from Philippi was about 2,000 miles.
 - the highways were not safe (bandits, etc.).
 - the ships were not always seaworthy.
- Timothy was a young man, but was willing to make such a difficult trip because he was interested in pursuing God's will rather than his own interests.
- Timothy was well spoken of even in his youth [Acts 16:2] and had proven his character while serving with Paul [1 Cor 16:10; 2 Tim 3:10-11] as his true spiritual child [1 Tim 1:2].
- Paul was released from prison, but the Bible does not record his release.
- Paul was later imprisoned again in Rome where he wrote his last epistle – 2nd Timothy.
- There is no record of Paul revisiting Philippi, but he certainly could have during his time of freedom from jail.

Principles of Philippians 2:25-30

- The Philippians had sent Epaphroditus to Paul to bring a gift [Phil 4:18] and to stay and assist him.
- While staying in Rome with Paul, Epaphroditus became physically ill and almost died.
- The news of his illness had made its way back to Philippi and he was distressed knowing that the believers there were quite concerned about him.
- God had shown Epaphroditus mercy in restoring his health and His act of mercy blessed Paul who was grieved about Epaphroditus being ill and the effect that news must have had on the Philippians.
- Paul knew that Epaphroditus longed to see the Philippians, so he sent him to Philippi so that they might rejoice in seeing that he was doing well.
- Paul was concerned that the Philippians might perceive Epaphroditus' return as an indication of some sort of failure, so he made sure they knew how highly he regarded him.
- Paul knew what kind of risks Epaphroditus had taken on when he agreed to be the courier for the Philippians.
- Paul also knew that Epaphroditus was devoted to the Lord and that the work he was doing for Christ nearly cost him his life.
- Paul had sent Epaphroditus back to Philippi before writing this letter, but hoped that when they received this letter they would realize that they should rejoice in his return.
- We do not know the timing of when the letter was delivered versus when Epaphroditus arrived in Philippi, but Paul's message to the Philippians was pertinent either way.
- In either case, Paul loved Epaphroditus and the Philippians and wanted his return to bring them all much joy.

Principles of Philippians 3:1-6

- No matter what we might be going through in our lives, we can always rejoice because of who we are in the Lord [Ps 32:11; 37:4; Rom 5:11; Phil 4:4; Jas 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6-8; 4:12-13].
- It should be joyful, not tedious, when we are reminded of the things we have learned from the Scriptures [Rom 15:14-15; 2 Pet 1:12-15; 3:1].
- When we hear the precepts of God's word taught over and over again it solidifies our understanding of God and is a safeguard for our souls [Jas 1:21].
- This is an integral part of the process of maturing in the faith which should result in a renewal of our mind and transformation of our lives [Rom 12:1-2].
- The Philippians were being disturbed by Judaizers who were trying to convince them that they needed to conform to the strict requirements of the Law.
- These men went so far as to preach that physical circumcision is a requirement for salvation, but the true circumcision – the one that really matters – is the circumcision of the heart [Rom 2:25-29].
- These men were evildoers who were preaching legalism rather than grace [Rom 4:13-16; 6:14].
- We should beware of such false teachers today [Ps 119:115; 2 Cor 11:13].
- As an example, there are denominations today that falsely teach that water baptism is a requirement for salvation.
- The true baptism – the one that really matters – is the baptism of the Spirit [Acts 11:16; 1 Cor 12:13].
- It is by means of the Spirit that we are able to truly worship God in holiness [Rom 8:1-8; Gal 5:16].
- Whatever "righteousness" we might think we have in our humanity, it does not measure up to God's standard of righteousness [Isa 64:6; Phil 3:7-9].
- Paul had a very impressive list of human credentials such that he, of all people, might even put confidence in his human abilities.
- But Paul was actually a very humble man who knew that human effort alone was vain and that human wisdom could not possibly compare to God's wisdom [1 Cor 3:18; 8:2].
- Paul knew that he must labor for the Lord, but could not accomplish anything meaningful apart from His power [Col 1:29].
- Paul understood the grace of God and conducted his life in accordance with that grace [1 Cor 15:10; 2 Cor 1:12; Gal 2:19-21].

Principles of Philippians 3:7-11

- The greatest thing we have accomplished on our own in our lives is nothing when compared with the things that God has accomplished in our lives.
- The sum total of all of the things we have accomplished on our own in our lives is nothing when compared with what Jesus Christ did for us on the Cross of Calvary.
- At one time in his life, Paul had taken great pride in the myriad of things he had accomplished in the power of the flesh.
- But on the road to Damascus, Paul realized that Jesus was indeed the Messiah and that he had been persecuting the followers of the true Lord [Acts 22:1-10; 26:1-18].
- Because his eyes had been opened, Paul came to view all of his fleshly accomplishments as worthless (even excrement) compared to knowing Jesus Christ his Lord.
- As he followed Jesus and proclaimed Him to others, Paul suffered the loss of everything that had previously been valuable in his estimation.
- Paul knew that the real gain in his life was his relationship with Jesus Christ and possessing God's righteousness through faith in Him [Rom 4:5-16; 9:30-33; Heb 11:7].
- Paul wanted to truly come to know Christ as he matured in the faith [Eph 4:11-16] and shared in His sufferings [Rom 8:16-18; 1 Pet 4:12-14].
- We, too, need to understand that all of our worldly credentials and all of our good works do not gain us anything in regards to our relationship with God.
- All of those things may have value with family, friends, co-workers, employers, etc., but in order to be saved we must humble ourselves and realize that none of that is able to reconcile us to God.
- God Himself had to accomplish that reconciliation through Christ [2 Cor 5:18-19; Col 1:19-20].
- Likewise, we must humble ourselves and realize that our daily walk will be righteous before God only as He accomplishes His work in and through us [1 Cor 12:4-6; 15:10; 2 Cor 3:5; Phil 2:13].
- Paul wanted to fully understand the power of Christ's resurrection, knowing that he would one day be resurrected in His likeness [Rom 6:5].
- He even hoped that he might live long enough to experience the power of Christ's resurrection while still alive by being transformed in the twinkling of an eye [1 Cor 15:50-53; 1 Thess 4:15-18].
- There is nothing wrong with hoping to be alive at the Rapture, but we should not discount the blessing of experiencing dying grace [Ps 116:15; Acts 7:55-60; Rev 14:13].

Principles of Philippians 3:12-14

- Paul was a very mature believer when he wrote this letter to the Philippians, but he had enough humility to recognize that he had not attained his goal of coming to know Christ to the fullest.
- Paul understood that he had to continue his walk of faith with determination and persistence in order to accomplish all that Christ had for him to do.
- Likewise, no matter how far we may have come in our own walk of faith, our sights should always be set upon reaching the next objective God has in His plan for our lives [1 Cor 9:24-25; Heb 12:1-2].
- Fundamental to this endeavor is to continue to grow spiritually [Heb 6:1-2], taking hold of the eternal life we have been given [1 Tim 6:12-19].
- Paul knew that there was nothing to gain by wasting time dwelling upon our past [Luke 9:62].
- Spending time dwelling upon past failures might lead to feelings of guilt and spending time dwelling upon past accomplishments might lead to arrogance [Rom 12:3; 1 Cor 4:7; 10:12].
- Furthermore, dwelling upon our past does not make any sense because our sins will not be taken into account at the Judgment Seat of Christ and God can keep track of our deeds just fine without any help from us [1 Cor 3:11-15 cf. Rev 20:11-15].

Principles of Philippians 3:15-16

- As maturing believers, we should have the mindset of forgetting what lies behind and focusing on moving forward with what God has before us.
- This mindset comes from recognizing that our sins of the past have been forgiven [1 John 1:9] and our accomplishments of the past will be fairly evaluated at the Judgment Seat [1 Cor 3:11-15].
- If we tend to struggle with dwelling on the past rather than looking forward, God will make us fully aware of this as the Holy Spirit uses His word to correct us [2 Tim 3:16-17].
- This correction of our thinking comes about as we seek God's wisdom [Pr 2:3-6; Jas 1:5] rather than relying upon our own understanding [Pr 3:5-6].
- The moment we placed our faith in Jesus Christ we received (by grace) the righteousness of God, a righteousness we could not attain through any other means [Rom 3:21-24; Phil 3:9].
- At the same moment, we were called to live a life which is in accordance with that righteousness [Eph 4:1; 1 Thess 2:12].
- To live in this manner requires that we walk by grace through faith [Col 2:6; Eph 2:8-9] rather than by the energy of the flesh [Rom 8:4-5].
- As we continue to live in this way and mature spiritually to the point that we are filled with the knowledge of God's will, we will walk in a manner that pleases Him in all respects [Col 1:9-11].

Principles of Philippians 3:17-19

- God has blessed us by providing spiritual mentors for us in this life.
- We should follow the example they offer as they demonstrate for us how we can be imitators of Christ [1 Cor 4:16; 11:1] which will allow us to experience the peace of God [Phil 4:7-9].
- As we mature in our faith we should endeavor to be examples for others to follow [1 Tim 4:12; 1 Pet 5:1-3].
- Unfortunately, the world is full of many people (unbelievers and believers walking in carnality) who offer us the wrong kind of example.
- Paul was concerned about false teachers who had been trying to influence the Philippians.
- These men were following after their own lusts, glorying in their sins, and encouraging others to indulge in shameful deeds of the flesh [Psalm 52:1; Rom 1:28-32].
- These false teachers were unbelievers – enemies of the cross of Christ and, as such, headed for eternal destruction, away from the presence of God and His glory [2 Thess 1:8-9].
- We were once hostile toward God as well, but have been reconciled through Christ [Col 1:21-22].
- As a result of our new position in Christ we should be following godly examples, not worldly ones.
- As long as we are in this world, we will be exposed to worldly examples (from Hollywood, etc.), but we should ignore those examples and focus on people who imitate Christ by having their minds set on the things of the Spirit [Rom 8:5-8].

Principles of Philippians 3:20-21

- As Americans we take great pride in being citizens of the greatest country in the world.
- If you were blessed to be born in Texas, you take even greater pride in being a Texan.
- Likewise, the Philippians took great pride in their Roman citizenship.
- In the Philippians case, they were a remote colony of Rome wherein their citizenship was vested.
- This reality gave them a clear picture of their new citizenship in Christ: they were now citizens of heaven living in a “remote colony” here on earth.
- Our earthly citizenship is temporal, but our heavenly citizenship is everlasting [Col 3:1-3].
- That heavenly citizenship is due to our relationship with Christ who currently resides in heaven at the right hand of the Father [Mark 16:19; Rom 8:34].
- We should live every single day of our lives with eager anticipation of His return from heaven when He comes to rescue His Church from the wrath to come [1 Thess 1:10; Heb 9:28].
- At Christ’s return every member of the Church will see his natural, perishable body of dishonor replaced by a spiritual, imperishable body suited for eternal glory [1 Cor 15:42-53].
- This incredible act is accomplished in accordance with the power Christ has to bring everything into subjection [1 Cor 15:25-28; Heb 2:8].

Principles of Philippians 4:1-3

- Paul expressed his love for the Philippians and told them he longed to be with them.
- Likewise, we should express our love for our fellow believers and desire to be with our spiritual family.
- The Philippians were Paul's pride and joy...
 - He had led them to faith in Christ.
 - He had helped them grow in the faith.
- Paul told the Philippians that they needed to stand firm in the Lord according to the reminders he had given them in chapter three.
- Likewise, we should stand firm in the Lord on the basis of all we have learned about God which is resident in our souls [1 Cor 15:58; 16:13; Eph 6:10-17; 1 Thess 3:6-13].
- As we stand firm in the Lord we will be like-minded in the Lord which leads to spiritual harmony rather than discord [Rom 12:16-18; 15:5-6].
- Two women in Philippi, Euodia and Syntyche, had failed in this regard and had become contentious toward one another.
- This kind of dissention occurs when believers lose their objectivity and allow personal differences to create a division between them.
- What can start as a minor conflict between two believers can end up causing a schism in a local church and eventually lead to a church split.
- Because Paul knew that such conflicts can deeply divide a local church, he asked a loyal friend, Syzygus, to help these women to see past their differences and recognize the objective reality of their common faith in Christ.
- Paul reminded Euodia and Syntyche that they had been his fellow-workers in the gospel ministry.
- They were both believers, after all, who should have been rejoicing together that their names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life [Rev 21:27].
- If they had been looking for new heavens and a new earth [2 Pet 3:13] rather than focusing on their differences, perhaps they would have been content rather than contentious.

Principles of Philippians 4:4-5

- As believers, we have many reasons to rejoice because of our standing in the Lord.
 - Christian joy is not the same thing as happiness.
 - Christian joy is inner tranquility and contentment that comes from God [Rom 15:13; Gal 5:22].
 - Happiness is an ephemeral emotion based upon circumstances and conditions.
- When we center our lives in the Lord, we will find joy every day by walking in His perfect will.
- Since no one can take Christ away from us, no one can steal our joy if we are focused on Him.
- When Christians have joy in their hearts, they are predisposed toward harmony with others rather than discord [Rom 12:18; 14:19; Heb 12:14].
- Along with inner joy, gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit [Gal 5:23].
- Joy is resident in the soul and may not be obvious to others, but gentleness is something which can be observed [Titus 3:1-2].
- Gentleness is a quality which tends to calm unrest rather than provoke it [Pr 15:1].
- Knowing that Jesus could return for His Church at any moment, we should be joyfully and gently building one another up in the faith rather than engaging in disputes [Heb 10:23-25].

Principles of Philippians 4:6-7

- As believers who are cared for by God Himself, we should not be subject to worry [Matt 6:25-34; Luke 8:4-15; 12:11-12; 21:34-35].
- Instead, we should take everything that could cause us worry and give it over to the Lord in prayer requests [1 Jn 5:14-15].
- God knows what we need even before we ask [Matt 6:8], but if we do not express our requests to God, then we may end up lacking [Jas 4:2c; 5:16].
- All of our prayers, including our supplications, should always be offered with a heart of gratitude [1 Thess 5:16-18].
- If we humbly cast our worries upon God who cares for us [1 Pet 5:6-7], He will sustain us [Ps 55:22] and we will experience His peace [Isa 26:3].
- This is the peace which sustained Jesus during His 1st Advent [John 14:27] which He wants us to have regardless of circumstances [John 16:33].
- This peace comes from knowing that God is our caregiver who will supply all of our needs [Phil 4:19; 2 Cor 9:8-11] and provide for us even beyond what we might ask or even think [Eph 3:20].
- God's peace gives us a calm spirit of contentment and together with His wisdom provides protection for our souls [Pr 4:5-6; 2 Cor 2:11; 1 Pet 1:2b-7].

Principles of Philippians 4:8-9

- The world is full of negatives...
 - lies
 - disrespect
 - wrongdoing
 - immorality
 - anger and conflict
 - shameful behavior
- If we dwell on such things we can easily develop a negative mental attitude and become discouraged, pessimistic, cynical, etc.
- To help us maintain the proper mental attitude, God has graciously given us His word which teaches us about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.
- From God's word we can learn about...
 - truth
 - dignity and respect
 - righteousness
 - purity
 - love, joy and peace
 - admirable behavior
- This list gives a pretty good summary of the character of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- This list also represents characteristics that are the fruit of the Spirit [Gal 5:22-23].
- We cannot walk by means of the Spirit [Gal 5:16] when our minds are occupied with the sin and unrighteousness that characterizes the world.
- All of us have a choice regarding what type of things will occupy our minds [2 Cor 10:5].
- If we are fixing our eyes upon Jesus [Heb 12:1-2] then our thoughts are guaranteed to be focused on that which is excellent and worthy of praise.
- Our focus on Christ is based upon what we have learned about Him from the Bible.
- When we learn God's word and/or the principles derived from Scripture, we will profit spiritually only if we accept those things as true [Heb 4:2].
- Therefore, our spiritual growth comes about as a result of rejecting the worldly, fleshly garbage we are constantly being inundated with and accepting the things of God's word.

- Sometimes we can learn biblical principles by observing the behavior of other believers.
- This can occur through personal observation as well as hearing about the faith of others in action [Eph 1:15-16; Col 1:3-4; 1 Thess 3:6-7; Phlm 4-7].
- No matter how we learn God's truth, it is critical for us to put these things into practice [2 Pet 1:2-10].
- If we know God's truth and do not live accordingly, we are effectively deluding ourselves [Jas 1:22].
- If we act upon what we have learned from God's word, we will be building up a foundation in our souls that will be unshakeable [Luke 6:46-49].
- Living according to biblical principles also allows us to experience God's peace [2 Cor 13:7-11].

Principles of Philippians 4:10-13

- Paul was very thankful for the support (prayer and financial) he had received from the Philippians.
- They always had the desire to support Paul, but circumstances had prevented them from having the opportunity to provide him with support.
- As soon as the opportunity presented itself, the Philippians stepped up [Phil 1:3-7].
- Likewise, as long as we have opportunities to support missionaries we should do so through prayer and/or financial contributions.
- Paul never begged the Philippians for their support because he knew God would provide for his needs no matter what circumstances he might encounter.
- Paul could survive just fine with very little and he could maintain his humility and integrity when he had an abundance.
- He had been “initiated” through his experiences into the “secret” of living with plenty of food and living without much to eat at all.
- Life had taught Paul to be “self-sufficient” in the sense that he had come to know that God’s matchless grace was sufficient [2 Cor 12:9-10].
- What allowed Paul to handle both abundance and need was not his own strength, but the strength that God supplied [Eph 3:16; Col 1:11].
- The strength which God supplies is sufficient for the task at hand and increases in proportion as we continue in the faith [Acts 9:20-22].
- True contentment in our lives will come as we learn this “secret” of relying upon God to supply increasing wisdom and strength to accomplish the work assignments He gives to us [Eph 2:10].

Principles of Philippians 4:14-18

- Even though Paul had learned how to get along no matter what the circumstances, he was grateful for the support he received from the Philippians.
- Those who serve in ministry should do their work as unto the Lord, not for money [Eph 6:7-8; Col 3:23-24; 1 Pet 5:1-3].
- At the same time, believers should desire to support those who minister to them [1 Cor 9:14; Gal 6:6; 1 Tim 5:17-18; Heb 13:15-16].
- The Philippians had this desire and had supported Paul financially on multiple occasions.
- Paul rejoiced in this because they were bearing spiritual fruit in giving [2 Cor 9:10-13; Titus 3:14].
- The relationship between local churches and missionaries is truly a partnership wherein both parties benefit from their participation in ministry.
- After Paul fled Philippi and came to Thessalonica, the Philippians sent support to him.
- These grace gifts came while Paul was working to support himself [1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:7-9].
- The Thessalonians were wealthy and could have supported Paul, but instead it was the Philippians who stepped up and supported him.
- It is not wealth that makes a giver – giving is a function of a spiritually healthy soul [Mk 12:41-44].
- When we give from the heart, it results in eternal rewards [Matt 6:2-4] and pleases God [Eph 5:1-2].

Principles of Philippians 4:19-20

- The Philippians provided for Paul's needs more than once and this was a source of joy for him.
- Paul reassured the Philippians that his God (and theirs) would fully supply all of their needs.
- This includes material needs and, even more importantly, spiritual needs.
- We know God will faithfully provide for our material needs, but our focus should be on His abundant supply for our spiritual needs [Eph 3:14-21].
- In the face of opposition [1:27-30] God will supply exactly what we need (joy, encouragement, hope, etc.).
- In the need for unity in our mindset [2:1-4; 4:2] God will provide growth (through teaching and testing) which will lead to an attitude of grace and humility.
- Instead of an attitude of grumbling [2:14] and anxiety [4:6] God will give us peace in our hearts which surpasses comprehension [4:7, 9].
- Everything which God supplies, whether material [Ps 50:10] or spiritual [Eph 1:3], is according to His glorious riches based upon our position in Christ.
- If we understand that all of our blessing are from God (even if people are His instruments), then all glory and honor goes to Him [Rom 11:36].

Principles of Philippians 4:21-22

- Paul's affection for the Philippians is evident throughout this letter and he emphasizes that once again as he asks for each believer in Philippi to be given a warm greeting individually ("every saint").
- The believers who were with Paul at the time of the writing of this letter also sent their greetings.
- In fact, Paul made sure the Philippians knew that all of the saints (believers) in Rome wanted to send their warmest greetings.
- As we have learned before, it is important for us to express our affection to other believers as it will be a source of encouragement for them [Heb 3:13].
- Significantly, Paul sent greetings from the Roman Praetorian Guard [1:13].
- One of the sources of opposition for the Philippians was due to the fact that, as a Roman colony, there were many in Philippi who believed Caesar was Lord (the Son of God), not Jesus.
- Paul wanted the Philippians to know that some of the highest ranking individuals in the Roman culture (which largely opposed Christians) were born-again believers who cared about them and were on their side in the spiritual battlefield.
- This message was not lost on the Philippians.

Principles of Philippians 4:23

- In opening and closing this letter (and others), Paul emphasizes the grace of God.
- The grace of God is a core operating principle for the Christian life.
- It is important to remember that His abundant grace is available to us because we are in Christ.
- It is also important to remember to recognize God's grace provisions in our lives.
- For the grace of God to be with our spirit, we must recognize His grace provisions and put those provisions to use in our daily activities so that His grace is fully operative in our experience.