

## PHILIPPIANS

### CHAPTER FOUR

1. How are the Philippians described?

He called them, *“my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown”* and repeated *“beloved”* (Philippians 4:1). Clearly, brotherly love defined this relationship. Moreover, Paul considered this church a shining achievement of his; the church in Thessalonica is the only other to be described as his *“crown”* (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 2:19-20).

2. What were they told to do?

Paul told them to *“stand fast in the Lord”* (Philippians 4:1). This is a common admonition throughout the New Testament (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 16:13; Galatians 5:1; Philippians 1:27; 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 3:8; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians 2:15). It is a call to be resolute, determined, unwavering from the goal.

3. Why are they to do so?

It begins with, *“Therefore”* (Philippians 4:1), which makes it depend on the foregoing promise of heavenly transformation (Philippians 3:21). Because of what awaits in heaven, there is good cause to be steadfast.

4. What did Euodia and Syntyche need to do?

*“I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord”* (Philippians 4:2). Agreement is essential to brotherhood (Amos 3:3; Psalm 133:1). Paul had, evidently, received a report that these sisters were not getting along as well

as they should and so implored them to improve. He did not elaborate as to the nature of their disagreement and seems satisfied this mild rebuke would suffice to rectify the situation. That is how strong the church at Philippi was. The only corrective remark in the epistle has to do with two individuals, not the whole congregation or even factions within, and the admonition required nothing further than a single sentence, indicating Paul expected these women to straighten up quickly.

5. Who was the “*true companion*” and what was his task?

*“And I urge you also, true companion, help these women”* (Philippians 4:3). The “*true companion*” is unidentified, but would most likely have been Epaphroditus (2:25-30; 4:18). His role was to help Euodia and Syntyche, which, in context, might mean mediating their dispute in order to resolve their disagreement.

6. How does Paul describe Euodia and Syntyche, along with Clement and others?

He describes them as those “*who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life*” (Philippians 4:3). Despite their lack of unity, Euodia and Syntyche were still regarded by the apostle as his coworkers and, more than that, as eternally saved. It is possible for Christians to pursue the same goals separately (Acts 15:36-40) without jeopardizing their souls.

7. What was so important that he told them twice?

*“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”* (Philippians 4:4). What he has told them several times in this epistle already, he now tells them twice in one verse. Despite disagreements, despite persecutions, despite whatever the world would do to us, Christians are to be a joyful people because we are enrolled in the Book of Life!

8. What were the Philippians to let everyone know?

*“Let your gentleness be known to all men”* (Philippians 4:5 NKJV), or your *“moderation”* (KJV), *“forbearance”* (ASV), *“forbearing”* (NASB), or *“reasonableness”* (ESV). Essentially, their courtesy and fairness were intended to be visible to all. Perhaps this quality was lacking between Euodia and Syntyche, but we cannot be sure.

9. Why were they expected to visibly demonstrate that quality?

*“The Lord is at hand”* (Philippians 4:5). This might refer to the omnipresence of the Lord (Proverbs 15:3; Matthew 28:20b) or it could refer to His imminent return (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4:7). In either case, it serves as a reminder of accountability.

10. What should a Christian be anxious about?

*“Be anxious for nothing”* (Philippians 4:6). Jesus was straightforward in saying that worry has no place in the life of a Christian (Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 10:38-41).

11. How can anxiety be solved?

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:6-7). The word *“but”* provides contrast; instead of worrying, we need to pray (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:6-7). The outcome will be hearts and minds guarded by God’s peace!

12. How should requests be presented in prayer?

*“With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God”* (Philippians 4:6). Not one soul has any right to make demands of God. What requests we offer must be accompanied by gratitude for all that has already been given. We must always be thankful (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:18).

13. What should a Christian think?

*“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things”* (Philippians 4:8). True submission to Christ includes every thought that passes through our minds.

14. What should a Christian do and what would be the result?

*“The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you”* (Philippians 4:9). Once again (3:17), he sets himself forth as an example to be emulated. Everything about his behavior and speech which could be observed needs to be practiced. The outcome is God’s peace!

15. Why did Paul rejoice greatly?

*“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity”* (Philippians 4:10). He was appreciative not only of the financial support they provided, but, more so, the

expression of their care, which care he recognized transcended their ability (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 8:12).

16. What had he learned?

*“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need”* (Philippians 4:11-12). It takes learning to know how to be abased and to know how to abound. Being abased requires cutting out all unnecessary expenses – used cars, no Starbucks, buying groceries from the dollar store with nickels and dimes – and it can be difficult to become accustomed to. Abounding requires a different kind of restraint, still avoiding unnecessary expenses, but in this case to prevent wasting it all (Proverbs 25:16).

17. In what context did the apostle write, *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me?”*

Immediately before this, he mentioned learning to abound and to suffer need, having learned how to be full and how to be hungry. That is precisely what he had in mind when mentioning all the things he can do through Christ’s strength. He was not saying that he could do some dangerous stunt and the Lord would be obliged to protect him (Luke 4:9-12).

18. What had the Philippians *“done well”* in?

*“Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress”* (Philippians 4:14). Although he had learned to abound and to suffer, he was not dismissing the fact that their relief was both needed and appreciated.

19. What had Philippi been doing since “the beginning of the gospel?”

*“Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities”*  
(Philippians 4:15-16).

By “the beginning of the gospel,” he does not refer to the actual start of John’s ministry (Mark 1:1), but means the beginning of Philippi’s obedience to it. They had been sharing with him from the start (Philippians 1:5).

They were the only church sharing with him when he left their country, and in fact, were already sharing with him while still in Macedonia, but already departed from Philippi, being in Thessalonica (cf. Acts 16:39-17:4).

20. What was Paul seeking?

*“Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God”*  
(Philippians 4:17-18). The pleasant aroma of a burnt offering to God has long been an indication of His acceptance of the same (Genesis 8:20-21). What they were doing for Paul’s account materially meant a great deal for their spiritual accounts.

21. What would God do for them?

*“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). Giving helps the giver most of all (Acts 20:35; Malachi 3:10; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 9:6-15).*

22. Who greeted whom?

*“Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen” (Philippians 4:20-23).*

Paul sent greetings to all the saints (4:21) again (1:1). So did all the brethren who were in his company and that included those who lived in the emperor’s house (4:22)! He was effective with the gospel even as a prisoner.