

Philippians 2:14–18 (NASB 2020)

¹⁴Do all things without complaining or arguments; ¹⁵so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, ¹⁶holding firmly the word of life, so that on the day of Christ I can take pride because I did not run in vain nor labor in vain. ¹⁷But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. ¹⁸You too, *I urge you*, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

- 1) Paul, unlike the last passage begins with what seems to be a simple command – basically, don’t complain or argue.
- 2) He goes on to tell us here that if we do these things, there are some things that are given:
 - i) We – Prove ourselves to be blameless, innocent, children of God, and above reproach.
 - ii) We become – Lights in the world holding to the word of life.
- b) That’s a lot to pin on a couple of “DON’Ts!
- 3) The obvious question is “how do we do this?” – as selfish humans, “doing everything without complaining or arguing” is not easy.
 - a) There are several things that we can turn to which will help us:
 - i) Putting others first
 - ii) being tolerant
 - iii) Not being provocative
 - (1) If you know something is going to upset someone try not to broach that subject – you are both better off for it.
 - iv) Practicing what James says, “everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger”. (Jam 1:19)
 - b) Again, this is primarily the idea of taking self out of the situation and of practicing self control.
 - c) For some folks this is easier than for others.
- 4) Leaving the details of the “HOW” as something each of us has to answer for ourselves, let’s take a look at a couple of questions about the impact of obeying these two difficult commands.

1st – How would our own lives be impacted if we set our minds and hearts to and actually accomplished this?

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- 5) Personally, I know from the times I succeed, if I could (and I am trying) accomplish this in my life all the time, I would be happier and more at peace.

Second question –

How would the kingdom, the immediate portion, our brothers and sisters be affected?

- 6) Our brothers and sisters don't like to hear us complain.
- 7) They especially do not want to hear us argue.
- a) Regardless of the subject it is disconcerting so for their part, I am sure it would be better.

How about those we are attempting to bring into the kingdom how would they be affected?

- 8) For those whom God puts in our path to whom we are trying to show Christ – there is no doubt that their impression of “Christ living in us” would definitely be more like what it should be.
- a) I like the idea of being a light and not causing people to think wrongly about Christ or His message.
- 9) So, basically we win if we just do this. Too bad it is so hard!!!
- 10) Except for the “Too bad it's so hard” part, I think the result is exactly what Paul is telling the Philippians in his last statements.
- 11) In essence, if they do this:
- a) He will be able to take pride in them.
- b) He will not have labored in vain.
- c) He can rejoice and share his joy over them and with them.
- d) And finally, they too can rejoice in themselves and share with him.
- 12) The last item here calls for another question – perhaps obvious but maybe not. Paul says in verse 18

¹⁸ You too, *I urge you*, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

When we succeed in getting something “right” – does it allow us to become prideful or boast? Of course not! the question then becomes...

Is there a marked difference in being prideful and rejoicing over getting it right?

- 13) These last two items bring out another facet of Paul's desires for them.
- a) That is the joy that those who love us and set examples for us is increased when we follow what they have taught us.
- b) And this in turn will bring a joy to our hearts knowing that they have joy.
- c) It all fits together but properly, without the wrong kind of pride or boasting.

14) Moving on to the next passage, Paul talks about plans ...

Philippians 2:19–30 (NASB 2020)

Timothy and Epaphroditus

¹⁹ But I hope, in the Lord Jesus, to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. ²⁰ For I have no one *else* of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. ²¹ For they all seek after their own *interests*, not those of Christ Jesus. ²² But you know of his proven character, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child *serving* his father. ²³ Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things go with me; ²⁴ and I trust in the Lord that I myself will also be coming shortly. ²⁵ But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need, ²⁶ because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. ²⁷ For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly, so that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned *about you*. ²⁹ Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold people like him in high regard, ³⁰ because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to compensate for your absence in your service to me.

- 1) At the writing of this letter, Paul’s plans are built around two fellow workers and brothers in Christ.
- 2) First, there is **Timothy**.
 - a) Trusted companion and someone whom Paul considered to be his “son in the faith”
 - i) Paul had helped Timothy to accept the Lord on his first missionary journey.
 - ii) It is important to remember also that Timothy was with Paul, Silas, and Luke when the Church at Philippi was founded.
 - (1) This of course means that Timothy has a familiarity with these folks and they with him that makes him the perfect choice for this ministry.
 - (2) Not to mention the fact that Timothy has matured – he has been a Christian for at least 14 years at this point
 - b) The indication Paul is giving here is that he will be sending Timothy but not right away.
 - i) As he says, he will be waiting a bit to “see how things go with (*him*) me.”
 - ii) Additionally, from his comment in verse 19...

“that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition,”

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... Paul is indicating that he expects to stay in Rome at least long enough for Timothy to get to Philippi and send word back to Paul about the church’s condition.

iii) Once that has taken place then Paul plans to wrap up things in Rome and come to Philippi himself.

3) The other person Paul mentions is **Epaphroditus**.

a) Paul obviously has high regard for him as well.

b) He is from Philippi and was sent to Paul by the congregation as a messenger and probably also as a helper.

i) As we will learn in chapter 4, he also brought financial help from Philippi for Paul.

c) One big item here is that he became very ill during his stay in Rome and from what Paul says here, he almost died.

d) What is not stated outright but is a fact none the nonetheless is that Epaphroditus is leaving immediately and carrying this letter back to his congregation.

4) By sending Epaphroditus immediately and promising to send Timothy, Paul is letting these folks know that all he has been telling them about how he feels toward them is true.

a) He is backing that up with actions.

5) I think we can rest assured when they see Epaphroditus in person and are able to hear this letter read they will truly be doing exactly what Paul tells them to do next – rejoicing!

6) Moving now into chapter 3 verse 1 to 6

Philippians 3:1a (NASB 2020)d

The Goal of Life

¹ Finally, my brothers *and sisters*, rejoice in the Lord.

1) As we have discussed, the overall tone of this letter is one of joy and being joyful.

2) Paul just finished speaking about two men in whom he and the Philippians took great joy.

3) It is not surprising then that he would make a strong statement like this.

4) It is interesting to note here that verse 1 has two basic and differing thoughts and purposes.

¹ Finally, my brothers *and sisters*, rejoice in the Lord.

5) Which we have just discussed, then he begins a new idea by saying:

^{1b} To write the same things *again* is no trouble for me, and it is a safeguard for you.

6) In my opinion, the idea of rejoicing is tied to Paul’s previous comments.

a) It is a fitting conclusion to his explanation of his plans to send Epaphroditus, the letter, and later Timothy to them followed by himself.

b) That is the reason for his imperative “rejoice.”

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- 7) The idea of being a “safeguard” does not really apply to saying for them to rejoice.
 - a) It also does not apply to any of the information he has relayed concerning his plans to send the letter, Epaphroditus, Timothy, or come himself to Philippi.
- 8) However, if he had (and he probably has) told them about these men who he is about to tell them to watch out for, it makes sense for that statement to be made here.
- 9) Equally obvious is that telling them before must be outside the scope of this letter because looking back over what he has covered so far, he really makes no reference to what we are getting ready to hear.
- 10) So, as we continue, we read what will be the safeguard for them?

Philippians 3:1b–3 (NASB 2020)

- ^{1b} To write the same things *again* is no trouble for me, and it is a safeguard for you.
- ² Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;
³ for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and take pride in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh, ...
- 11) Paul begins with a list of three imperatives.
 - 12) Each “beware” points out a characteristic of folks the Philippians should be on the lookout for and to avoid.
 - 13) All three are referring to the same group of people – just highlighting different characteristics.
 - 14) Actually, warnings ...
 - a) First of dogs.
 - i) Sometimes this term is used by the Jews to refer to Gentiles in general.
 - ii) However, that does not appear to be the case here, since Paul is addressing predominately gentiles in the church at Philippi.
 - iii) In the overall context, this is a warning against Judaizers.
 - (1) Probably, but not absolutely, limited to Jewish Christians who are trying to bind circumcision and obedience to the Mosaic Law on these Christians in Philippi.
 - iv) As we know, this is not a new situation for Paul to address.
 - v) It seems to be something that appears in virtually every church that he plants.
 - b) Second – evil workers.
 - i) These are folks who, even though they may be Christian, are performing works for the wrong reasons or with wrong motives.
 - ii) Again – keeping the Law as a means to an end – salvation or some twisted view of it.
 - iii) Trying to bring others to the same wrong point of view.
 - c) Finally, those “of false circumcision.”

- i) I think we must assume here that, as in other places Paul is talking about those who are trying to convince the Philippians that they must be circumcised to become Christian.
 - ii) The word translated false circumcision is unique to this letter. It appears no where else in all the New Testament.
 - iii) Some of you may have translations which use the term ***mutilation*** instead of false circumcision.
 - d) The meaning and intent are truly the same, to let these folks know who he is talking about.
- 15) Verse 3 stands alone as bringing the proper perspective to and highlights the absolute difference between them and these Judaizers.
- ³ for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and take pride in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh, ...