

Philippians

Lesson #15, Chapter 4:1-7

As you prepare to study this passage, be sure to take time to seek the Lord's wisdom and help in learning from His Word.

1. Because Philippians 4:1 begins with *therefore*, we know we shouldn't consider its contents without taking into consideration what precedes it. To do that, let's take a moment and summarize in a word, phrase or sentence Paul's main point or focus for Philippians 3:1-7; 3:8-16; and 3:17-21.
2. What do you learn about those Paul is addressing from Philippians 4:1?
3. What command is given in Philippians 4:1?
4. Whatever else may follow, we know that Philippians 4:1 is clearly linked to Paul's closing comments in Chapter 3. Why would Philippians 3:17-21 be important to keep in mind as exhorts his beloved ones in Philippians 4:1?
5. What does it mean to *stand firm* [Strong's #4739 (NKJV *stand fast*)]? What else can you glean about what it means to *stand firm* and what it looks like in our lives? See 1 Corinthians 16:13; Galatians 5:1; Philippians 1:27; 1 Thessalonians 3:7-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15.

6. Philippians 4:2 reveals one of the ways the Philippian believers needed to live out the steadfast firmness of their faith. What is the situation?

7. Who is being called upon in verse 3? What are they to do?

8. What past history do these women share according to verse 3? Why is this situation especially poignant in light of the preceding context from Philippians 3:17-21 and even the tone of the whole book?

9. How would the scenario in Philippians 4:2-3 require steadfastness of faith on the part of the church leaders and church body?

10. *Based on what we've been studying and considering so far in our lesson*, how would you counsel two friends who have fallen into discord and out of harmony?

11. After reminding the Philippians to stand firm and help weak and sinning believers to repent, what does Paul exhort the believers to do next in Philippians 4:4? What observations can you make about verse 4?

12. *Why* should believers rejoice? See Romans 5:1-5; 12:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17; Titus 2:11-13 to get you started. Also consider what it says about us if we don't rejoice.

13. We often forget that Philippians 4:4 is a command. What are some resources God has given to help us obey this command more faithfully? What should we do if we haven't been obeying this command?

14. Not only are we to rejoice in the Lord, what else are we to do according to verse 5?

15. Define *gentle* [Strong's #1933 (NKJV *reasonableness*)]. The same Greek word is used in 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 3:2; James 3:17; 1 Peter 2:18. What else do you learn about the word, its meaning, and its bearing on our lives from those references?

16. Where do we get this kind of character quality? See Matthew 11:29; 21:5; 2 Corinthians 10:1; Galatians 5:22-23. Since we are new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), have been given a new heart (Ezekiel 36:26-27), and have God's help and resources available to us (1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Peter 1:2-4), is there ever a time when we *just can't* be patient, reasonable, or easy to get along with?

17. The word *known* in verse 5 refers to knowledge gained through experience, which has direct bearing in how we interact with others. What are some ways others would/could *experience* or come to know that we are reasonable and easy to get along with?

Let your sweet reasonableness, your forbearance, your being satisfied with less than your due, become known to all men. The Lord is near.¹ ~Kenneth Wuest's translation

¹ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 109.

18. Paul reminds his dear friends that *the Lord is near*, which is referring to the Lord's soon return. How can that truth be an encouragement and a motivation in living out the commands of this passage?

"He is happy who feels a jealous fear of doing wrong. Holy fear looks not only before it leaps, but even before it moves. It is afraid of error, afraid of neglecting duty, afraid of committing sin. It fears ill company, loose talk, and questionable policy."² ~Charles Spurgeon

19. We are to rejoice in the Lord, be sweetly reasonable because of the Lord's soon return, and now in the first part of verse 6, what are we to do?

20. What prescription does Paul give for the believer's anxiety? See verse 6 after the command.

21. How would applying this simple balm calm our worried and anxious hearts?

The Greek construction indicates that we have here a prohibition which forbids the continuance of an action already habitually going on. The Philippian saints were habitually worrying. Paul exhorts them to stop it. The word *nothing* is literally "not even one thing."³ ~Kenneth Wuest

22. What comes as a result of applying verse 6 in our lives? See Philippians 4:7.

² C. H. Spurgeon, *The Cheque Book of the Bank of Faith: Being Precious Promises Arranged for Daily Use with Brief Comments* (New York: American Tract Society, 1893), 253.

³ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader, vol. 5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 109.

“You can't see the peace of God, but like secret ink, when held to the fire, it reveals itself! e.g., Affliction frequently opens truths to us and opens us to the truth. Experience unlocks truths that were closed. Many passages of Scripture will never be made clear by the commentator, for these must be expounded by experience. Many a verse is written in a secret ink that must be held to the fire of adversity to make it visible. Affliction plows and opens our hearts, so that into our innermost nature the truth penetrates and soaks like rain into the plowed land.”⁴ ~Charles Spurgeon

23. What do you learn about the peace described in verse 7? List at least 5 observations that you notice from Philippians 4:7.
24. Though it's not immediately apparent, the details in our passage are tied to the thought that our Lord Jesus will soon return. Finish this thought with *at least 5 items* from Philippians 4:1-7: *Because our Lord's return is near, we should take care to ...*

“Anxious care often leads to acts of sin. He who cannot calmly leave his affairs in God's hand, but will carry his own burden, is very likely to be tempted to use wrong means to help himself. This sin leads to a forsaking of God as our counsellor, and resorting instead to human wisdom. This is going to the “broken cistern” instead of to the “fountain;” a sin which was laid against Israel of old. Anxiety makes us doubt God's lovingkindness, and thus our love to Him grows cold; we feel mistrust, and thus grieve the Spirit of God, so that our prayers become hindered, our consistent example marred, and our life one of self-seeking. Thus want of confidence in God leads us to wander far from Him; but if through simple faith in His promise, we cast each burden as it comes upon Him, and are “careful for nothing” because He undertakes to care for us, it will keep us close to Him, and strengthen us against much temptation. ‘Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.’”⁵ ~Charles Spurgeon

⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, *Beside Still Waters*, pg. 54.

⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1896).