



**World Christian Fellowship**

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## **Book of Philippians**

### **Lesson 17**

#### **Application of Working out your salvation**

**Philippians 2:12-13**, *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

Apostle Paul told the Philippians that they must,

- Work out what the lord had put in them
- Work it out continually to fulfilment.

#### **1. Being an Example**

**V12** starts with '*Therefore*' which is the previous section of **Philippians 2:5-11**.

**V 5**,

Paul introduced Christ as the model of

- humility,
  - obedience, and
  - submission.
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- ✓ **V6**, Christ did not regard Himself being equal with God.
  - ✓ **V7**, Christ emptied Himself.
  - ✓ **V8**, Christ humbled Himself.
  - ✓ **V9**, Christ exalted by God.

Jesus Christ is the model.

Paul starts “Therefore, work out your own salvation.”

Just as you have seen the example of what a saved person is to be like.

- Jesus was obedient, be like Him.
- Jesus was humbled, be like Him.
- Jesus was submissive, be like Him.
- Jesus showed the path of exaltation, be like Him.

In short ‘Be like Him’

Remember when Paul showed his heart to the churches in Galatia in his epistle?

**Galatians 4:19,**

John told the disciples walk like Jesus Christ.

**1 John 2:6,**

## **2. Understand His love**

You need to understand that you are loved.

**Why?**

Because in the process of endeavouring to work out your salvation and be all that you can be, you are going to fail.

The apostle Paul says to them, my beloved.

We can see there was a patience in his heart that reflected the patience of God.

There was a mercy in Paul that was the mercy of Christ.

There was a grace in Paul that was the grace of Christ.

When Paul says to them, “my beloved,” he was saying there’s some space in my relationship with you, and some space for your failure.

**Philippians 4:2,** *I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to agree in the Lord.*

There was Euodia and there was Syntyche and they were fighting one another. There was obviously some pride in the Philippian church. Otherwise he would not have spoken of humility so strongly. There was some discord there and disunity.

But in all of it, they were still his beloved.

**Philippians 1:8,**

This love that he had for them was a love that went from his heart.

**Philippians 4:1,**

There was deep affection, in that love and in that affection, there was space for failure. This reflects the heart of God.

Within the framework of love of God there is forgiveness, mercy, grace, and restoration.

Aren't you glad that you serve kind God?

I am sure that we are so glad that we don't live under the bondage of fear to those deities who cannot be properly appeased because there is no grace.

This is no abusive command.

This is no indifferent military directive.

This is the loving passionate heart of a pastor saying to his people, “I care about you. I understand. There’s some room for failure,”

Thus, does he reflect the heart of Christ.

Working out your salvation, understand that you are loved.

### **3. Obedience**

**V12,**

Just as you have always obeyed. Therefore he identifies a pattern of conduct in spiritual life.

**Ephesians 2:10,**

The Christian life is basically a pattern of obedience.

You have always had that attitude.

When Paul came to the region of Philippi, he preached the gospel and Lydia listened. She not only listened, but she believed, and it says the Lord opened her heart.

**Acts 16:11-15,**

Then the slave girl with demon she was fortune telling made huge profit. Paul casted the demon out of her and they were jailed.

At midnight Paul and Silas were singing and praising God the prison doors were opened and earth shook.

**Acts 16:32-33,**

The gospel was preached to the Philippian jailer and his entire household, and they too listened, and they too believed.

In both cases, as that church of Philippi was being born, there was obedience.

They obeyed the word which they heard.

What is the word of the gospel?

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. The word of the gospel comes and says turn from your sin and turn to Christ. Stop following self and follow the Lord Jesus. That is a command.

The gospel is a command.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” is an imperative.

### **Matthew 17:5,**

When the Father said, “This is My beloved Son, hear Him,”

- God commands the world to hear Christ.
- Christ commands the world to believe.
- The apostles and the preachers command the world to believe on Christ so that any moment of salvation is a moment of obedience to a command.

We often talk about sharing our faith. We very seldom talk about commanding people to believe. We are doing more than sharing something, we are reiterating a command.

Jesus ministered the following pattern.

- ✓ Believe,
- ✓ Repent,
- ✓ Follow Me.

That is precisely why the apostle Paul articulates apostleship as calling the Gentiles to obedience of faith.

### **Romans 1:5,**

Faith is an act of obeying a command to repent and believe. Then ushers one into a life of obedience so that

most characteristic of a Christian's life is obedience to God, obedience to Christ.

Paul says that you have always obeyed.

Sometimes your obedience is erratic.

There are times of disobedience for which you are glad that you understand you are loved, as we just noted.

But nonetheless, our spiritual life is characterized by obedience.

### **2 Thessalonians 1:8,**

Receiving Christ is an act of obedience to a divine command. At salvation you are acknowledging Jesus as Lord because in believing Him you are submitting to a command. That initiates a life of obedience.

### **2 Thessalonians 3:14,**

Paul is there talking to believers and so we understand that though we were saved by an act of obedience into a life of obedience. It is possible for us to be disobedient.

So, we must understand that we are called to a life of obedience. That is the pattern of our life from the moment of salvation.

**1 Peter 1:2**, *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father and set apart by the Spirit for obedience and for sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you.*

That is the heart of our Christian experience.

We are called to obedience. That is why in the great commission we are told to make disciples by going and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have Commanded you.

**Matthew 28:18-20**,

It is a life of obedience. Salvation is a command. The very basic definition of our spiritual life is that we are under orders to obey a commander. To fail to understand that is to fail to understand the most basic element of salvation. It is an act of obedience.

So, if we are to work out our salvation, it requires that we understand our example, Christ, so we called to obedience.

#### **4. Resource and Responsibility**

Working out our own salvation we need to understand our personal resources and responsibility.

We are very prone as sinners to blame other people for our problems.

Self-justifying.

So, Paul reminds us here that we are responsible because we have the personal resources for our own spiritual wellbeing.

**V12,**

Paul says that he saw the pattern of obedience when he was there. Also, he wants to see much more of it now that he is not there.

The assumption here is that they need to do it on their own.

They loved him.

**Philippians 1:7-8,**

They had a very unique relationship. There was never at that time, and perhaps never will be in the history of the church, a greater man of God than Paul. Certainly, never a greater teacher of the Word of God because he was inspired in much of what he said which became a great portion of the New Testament.

This is a unique man of God who could, build a tremendous dependency, and he did.

But at the time he writes this letter he is imprisoned as a prisoner and he is saying to them, “In my presence you obeyed, much more you must now obey in my absence, you may not have me again.”

They had the duty and the responsibility because they had the resources to work out their own salvation.

Sometimes people do blame it on the church on the leaders for their lack of spiritual growth.

We have in us the Holy Spirit of God. It is a great boon to be in an environment where your spiritual life is stimulated, but sometimes it becomes an environment where your spiritual life is artificially propped up.

It is immaterial, who your pastor is or leader is and who is watching over you.

While you can count yourself rich for being in a stimulating environment, you can't blame any of your shortcomings on the absence of such environment.

Paul says, “I want to see more obedience in my absence, even than I saw in my presence.”

You must be independent of your teacher.

You must be independent of your pastor.

**Philippians 1:27**, *Just one thing: Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, working side by side for the faith that comes from the gospel,*

Whether I'm around or not, that's what I want to hear.

Why?

Because you must understand that you have the responsibility and the resources for working out your own salvation.

## **5. Consequences of Sin**

You must understand the consequence of your sin.

**V12,**

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

The word “fear” in the Greek, **‘phobos’** we get phobia from it.

The word “trembling,” **‘tromos’** we get trauma from it.

Paul is saying that there should be a healthy fear in your heart of offending God.

There should be a shaking.

There should be a shaking when you contemplate the consequences of such an offense.

This is a proper reaction. It's a proper reaction to our weakness and our inadequacy.

It's a healthy anxiety to do what is right.

Fear means godly awe, growing out of recognition of our weakness and the power of temptation.

It's a healthy fear that puts you on guard so that you don't stumble and lose your joy,

you don't offend the one you supremely love,  
you don't violate your testimony to an unbelieving world,  
you don't negate your usefulness in the body of Christ and ministry there.

Fear and trembling are a proper reaction to our weakness and the power of temptation.

**Psalm 111:10,**

**Proverbs 9:10,**

**Isaiah 66:1-5,**

Do you tremble at God's Word?

Do you have a healthy fear of dishonouring Him because you do not want to dishonour the one you love?

Working out our salvation is hard.

It's hard for me.

Failure is very much possible. One of the things that holds back that failure is a healthy fear, an awe, a respect of God.

Those who name the name of Jesus Christ, who say we belong to God need to fear God.

Fearing God simply means that I don't want to offend Him. I know He is holy and as a holy reaction against sin, I don't want to do anything to offend Him,

Why do I fear sin?

Because I am weak in my flesh, because temptation is powerful, and because I don't want to offend God.

In order to have that fear, you have to do more than acknowledge that you are a sinner.

In order to have that fear, your mind must be filled with a deep and settled conviction that sin is great offense against God.

If you really love God, it would be impossible not to repent, because you would have to repent.

God is calling us to have a holy fear of sin and to understand its seriousness.