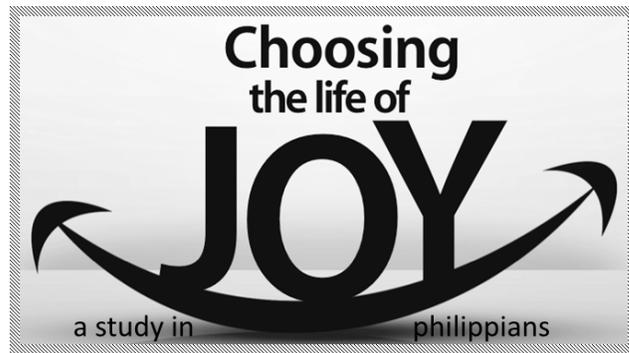


# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, October 24, 2018 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



## CHOOSING THE LIFE OF JOY

A Study in Philippians

“The Conduct of Joy”

*Philippians 1:27-30*

*“<sup>27</sup> Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, <sup>28</sup> and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. <sup>29</sup> For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, <sup>30</sup> having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.” – Philippians 1:27-30*

**“worthy of the gospel”** – Believers are to have integrity, I.E. to live consistent with what they believe, teach and preach (see Ephesians 4:1 Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12, Titus 2:10, 2 Peter 3:11,14)

**“one spirit... one mind”** – This introduces Paul’s theme of unity that continues through 2:4. His call for genuine unity of heart and mind is based on (1) the necessity of oneness to win the spiritual battle for the faith (vv. 28-30); (2) the love of others in the fellowship (2:1-1); (3) genuine humility and self-sacrifice (2:3-4); (4) the example of Jesus who proved that sacrifice produces eternal glory (2:5-11).

**“striving together”** – Literally means “to struggle along with someone.” Paul changed the metaphor from that of a soldier standing at his post (“stand fast”) to one of a team struggling for victory against a common foe.

**“the faith of the gospel”** – The Christian faith as revealed by God and recorded in the Scripture (Jude 3, Romans 1:1, Galatians 1:7).

**“proof of perdition”** – When believers willingly suffer without being “terrified,” it is a sign that God’s enemies will be destroyed and eternally lost (see notes on 2 Thessalonians 1:4-8).

**“granted... to suffer”** – See notes on 3:10, 1 Peter 2:20-21 (See also Matthew 5:10-12, Acts 5:41) The Greek verb translated “granted” is from the noun for grace. Believers’ suffering is a gift of grace which brings power (2 Corinthians 7:9-10, 1 Peter 5:10) and eternal reward (1 Peter 4:13).

“*same conflict*” – The same kind of suffering Paul had experienced (vv.12-14, Acts 16:22-24).

“*you saw*” – This refers to what the Philippians witnessed when Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippians (Acts 16:19-40).

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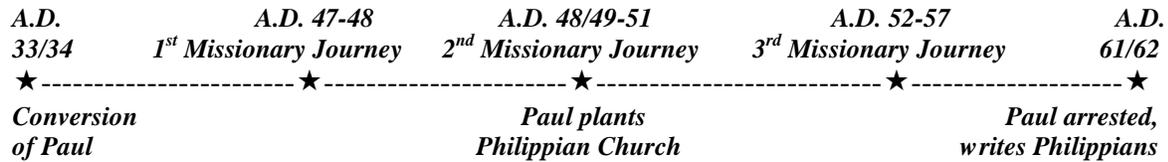
As we have been saying, Dr. Warren Wiersbe calls the book (letter) of Philippians, “a personal manifesto on how to live a life full of joy.” We began our verse by verse study of the book of Philippians a couple of weeks ago entitled, “Choosing the Life of Joy; A Study in Philippians.” The book is a book of joy, and that is surprising given the circumstances surround the book.

Just for review let’s be reminded of some of the more interesting facts about Philippians that we have been looking at as a background to the book.

**5 Important Background Facts on the Book of Philippians:** *\*these may be some things that set the book of Philippians apart from Paul’s other letters and writings*

1. **The book of Philippians is written by the Apostle Paul** – The apostle Paul wrote the book as clearly stated in Philippians 1:1-2, “<sup>1</sup>Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: <sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
2. **The book of Philippians is written to believers/Christians at the church at Philippi** – As already stated Philippians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul during his Roman imprisonment to a group of people that were very special to him. These at Philippi had come to know the Lord Jesus through Paul’s witness to them during his “Second Missionary Journey,” and in response to the “Macedonian Call” of Acts 16. Notice who Paul identifies as the recipients of this letter in verses 1-2, “<sup>1</sup>Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: <sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
3. **The book of Philippians is actually a letter written by Paul to the church at Philippi** – The apostle Paul wrote this as a letter to the Christians in Philippi, from Rome. Paul ministered at Philippi during his second missionary journey, spending about three months in the city. The ministry at Philippi marked Paul’s entrance into Macedonia (Greece, Europe), which came about as a result of a vision he had in the city of Troas, just across the northeastern corner of the Aegean Sea from the port city of Neapolis and its close neighbor Philippi (Acts 16:8–12). During this first stay in Philippi—he later briefly visited the city on his third missionary journey (20:6)—Paul brought to faith in Christ people who would form the core of the burgeoning congregation in the city. Among them were Lydia, a businesswoman who opened her home to Paul and his coworkers (16:13–15), and the Philippian jailer, who was converted under Paul’s ministry after an earthquake miraculously broke open the prison (16:22–34).
4. **The book of Philippians was written around A.D. 61/62** – Of the four Prison Epistles, Paul likely wrote Philippians last, near the end of his Roman imprisonment in AD 61 or 62. Paul sent the other three Prison Epistles—Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon—by the hand of Tychicus, as their destinations were near one another. However, the letter to the Philippians was to be delivered by Epaphroditus, who had come to Paul in Rome with financial help from the church at Philippi (Philippians 2:25; 4:18). But during his time in Rome, Epaphroditus took ill, which delayed his return home and, therefore, the delivery of the letter (2:26–27).

### *Philippians Timeline*



5. **The book of Philippians is called a prison epistle, because Paul write the letter while he was imprisoned for his faith in Rome** - The book of Philippians is actually one of four “prison epistles” (or letters) and most likely the last of the four written by Paul. As stated, Paul wrote Philippians while he was in prison in Rome. The four “prison epistles” are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. Given the theme of the book it is significant that Philippians was written by Paul at a particularly difficult time in his life... while he was in prison.

Along with these essential background facts surround this letter written by Paul, we have also sated these interesting fact about the book/letter of Philippians:

#### **5 Interesting Facts about Philippians:**

1. **The book of Philippians has no Old Testament quotes** – This is distinction that not only sets it apart from Paul’s other writing in the New Testament where Paul is said to have quoted the Old Testament as many as 500 times, just not in Philippians. The Old Testament is quoted more than 1,000 time in the New Testament with half of those being found in Paul’s writings. The lack of Old Testament quotes in Philippians could be as simple as Paul’s purpose in writing. It is a more practical letter.
2. **The book of Philippians contains little historical or theological material, and is primarily a practical (*relevant, everyday, pragmatic, useful*) letter** - The only exceptions to this are the historical biographical material contained concerning Paul’s life in prison during his Roman imprisonment. And Philippians, chapter 2 that describes the humiliation and exaltation of Christ in theological terms. Philippians is the only of Paul’s letter that was not written primarily to address doctrinal, theological issues. The apostle Paul did not write Philippians in response to a crisis (caused by false teachers and false teaching), as he did with Galatians and Colossians. And, in fact, it may be the most practical of Paul’s 13 New Testament books/letters. What do we mean by practical? We mean that of all of Paul’s letters, Philippians in it purpose and content is the most pragmatic and common every-day letter he wrote. We will get more into this as we progress through our study, but suffice it to say that the very reason Paul wrote the letter is simple, every-day in it application.
3. **The book of Philippians is essentially a thank you letter** – This itself sets Philippians apart as the most unusual of Paul’s letters. Instead of writing to correct doctrinal matters, he writes a “thank you” letter to the church at Philippi that had been so generous in supporting him over the years. He primarily wrote to express his appreciation and affection for the Philippian believers. More than any other church, the believers in Philippi offered Paul material support for his ministry. Paul’s affection for these people is clear through the letter as he encouraged them to live out their faith in joy and unity.
4. **The book of Philippians contain the word “joy” in some form at least 16 times** – With the common occurrence of this word in some form repeated throughout the letter, it make it clear that this is the theme of Paul’s letter to the Philippians and to us. And as stated above this theme of “joy” is particularly astounding given the fact that it is a prison epistle, written while Paul was incarcerated and being persecuted for his faith.

5. **The book of Philippians was written to a church and Christians that represent the one of the most important advancements of the Gospel to the west, particularly Europe** - Paul's "Macedonian Call" in Troas during Paul's 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey led him to his work in Philippi and the planting of the church there. Philippi was located in Macedonia, in northern Greece, on the continent of Europe. So the "Macedonian Call" and the planting of this church in Philippi through Paul's second missionary journey, and Paul's letter to the church at Philippi are very significant because they represent the advancement of the gospel further west, into Europe and ultimately to the entire world through Europe. It is not to be missed that the first converts on the continent of Europe were Lydia and her household, a demon possessed girl, and a Philippian jailer.

**With these important facts about the book of Philippians let's probe a bit deeper into our study by looking at verses 12-18 (READ: Philippians 1:27-30)**

## CONDUCT THAT AFFECTS OUR JOY

### The Believer's Joy Amidst Difficulties

Dr. John MacArthur says, "A believer's spiritual maturity can be measured by what it takes to steal his joy."

New Christians will quite often have misconceptions about God, the Christian life and other believers and the things we face in this life... namely the struggles, the problems, the trials this life can hold, and when those trial and struggles strike they may cause one to lose their joy, or for their joy in their Christian life to be stolen away. They may be left floundering in their faith and wondering, "where is God in all of this?" Has He left me? Why are all of these bad things happening to me.

But that is not only a reality for new Christians, many who have been Christians for years may carry these misconception tucked neatly in their back pocket and when trial, and difficulties, challengers and hardships come... when things don't go as they expected in their Christian world these misconceptions may reveal themselves in a lack of joy and victory in their walk, in their life and witness, and even in their spirit and disposition communicated to others. Ever wonder why some who call themselves Christians look so miserable, unhappy, and downcast... and it may even be reflected in how they treat others? Again, MacArthur's statement says, "A believer's spiritual maturity can be measured by what it takes to steal his joy."

*What are some "joy stealers" that we allow to rob us of our joy... particularly in the Christian life? In the space provided below see if you can list what you believe are some "joy stealers." Be prepared to explain you response.*

### **JOY STEALERS**

*ex. doubt*

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Think about it... Why do many Christians fail to experience real joy, which is listed as a fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22? In his book *Laugh Again*, Charles Swindoll suggests three common "joy stealers"

### **3 Common Joy Stealers:** (“*Laugh Again,*” by Dr. Charles Swindoll)

1. **Worry** = “*an inordinate anxiety about something that may or may not occur*” - And it usually doesn’t... happen that is!
2. **Stress** = “*intense strain over a situation we can’t change or control*” - But God can change our situation and circumstances and He is in control!
3. **Fear** = “*dreadful uneasiness over danger, evil, or pain*” - And fear magnifies our problems... and steals our joy.

Charles Swindoll says (in his book) that to resist these “joy stealers” we must embrace the same confidence that Paul expressed in his letter to the Philippians. After giving thanks for the Philippian believers (1:3-5), the apostle assured them “that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (v.6). Whatever causes you worry, stress, and fear cannot ultimately keep God from continuing His work in you. With this confidence we can begin each day knowing that He is in control. We can leave everything in His hands. Resist those “joy stealers” by renewing your confidence in God each morning. Then relax and rejoice. **Happiness depends on happenings; joy depends on Jesus.**

*Although our joy will wane at times  
From worry, stress, and fear,  
God keeps on working in our heart  
And tells us He is near. —D. De Haan*

**Key Thought:** In all circumstances the Spirit of God produces joy, so there ought not to be any time when we're not rejoicing in some way.

Still, though we should not allow circumstances to make us sullen, bitter, or negative, or “joy-less.” We ought to expect trouble. Again, Jesus said, “*In the world you [will] have tribulation*” in John 16:33. The apostle James as we have seen said it, “*Consider it all joy ... when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance*” in James 1:2-3. God has His own profound purpose in our afflictions, but it's never to take away our joy. To maintain our joy we must adopt God's perspective regarding our trials. When we yield to the working of His Spirit in our lives, our difficulties will not overwhelm us.

But facts remain that the Christian life is not playground... it is a battleground. We are in a battle... a daily battle, and Scripture doesn't try to disguise or pose a blurred picture of the fact. Living the Christian life is a daily struggle, a daily battle... it is spiritual warfare. Many believers may fail to recognize it, or may choose to wear “rose colored glasses,” but the reality is being a Christian is hard... harder than we ever imagined.

There are two primary errors when it comes to spiritual warfare...

### **2 Primary Errors Christians Make When it Comes to Spiritual Warfare:**

1. **An over-emphasis on spiritual warfare** – Some blame every sin, every conflict, and every problem on demons that need to be cast out.
2. **And under-emphasis on spiritual warfare** - Others completely ignore the spiritual realm and the fact that the Bible tells us our battle is against spiritual powers.

**The Key to Spiritual Warfare:** The key to successful spiritual warfare is finding the biblical balance. Jesus sometimes cast demons out of people; other times He healed people with no mention of the

demonic. The apostle Paul instructs Christians to wage war against the sin in themselves (Romans 6) and warns us to oppose the schemes of the devil (Ephesians 6:10–18).

### **Some Important Truths for Spiritual Warfare that Need to be Remembered:**

1. **The spiritual battle is real and the enemy is out to destroy you (John 10:10/1 Peter 5:8-10)** – Jesus warned us of our enemy, Satan, even calling him a thief in **John 10:10** and warning us, **“The thief (Satan/our enemy) does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy...”** And Jesus would often remind his disciple of Satan’s desire to destroy, deceive and destroy them. He warned Peter in **Luke 22:31**, **“... Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.”** Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, one of Jesus closest disciple, Peter, warns us of the reality of the spiritual warfare believers are in and who our adversary is, and the grave danger he poses in **1 Peter 5:8-10**, **“<sup>8</sup> Be <sup>u</sup>sober, be <sup>u</sup>vigilant; <sup>u</sup>because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. <sup>10</sup> But <sup>u</sup>may the God of all grace, who called <sup>u</sup>us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, <sup>u</sup>perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. <sup>11</sup> To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”**
2. **Our strengthen in victorious spiritual warfare only comes from the Lord and His power, not in ourselves (Ephesians 6:10)** – **“<sup>10</sup> Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”**
3. **This spiritual battle is ultimately against spiritual forces of evil in the world (Ephesians 6:11-12)** – And we need to recognize it! **“<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”**
4. **God provides us with all we need for victorious spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:11-18)** – **“<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup> above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. <sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; <sup>18</sup> praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”** It is God’s armor that protects us. Ephesians 6:13–18 is a description of the spiritual armor God gives us. We are to stand firm with the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, and by praying in the Spirit. What do these pieces of spiritual armor represent in spiritual warfare? We are to know the truth, believe the truth, and speak the truth. We are to rest in the fact that we are declared righteous because of Christ’s sacrifice for us. We are to proclaim the gospel no matter how much resistance we face. We are not to waver in our faith, trusting God’s promises no matter how strongly we are attacked. Our ultimate defense is the assurance we have of our salvation, an assurance that no spiritual force can take away. Our offensive weapon is the Word of God, not our own opinions and feelings. And we are to pray in the power and will of the Holy Spirit.
5. **Jesus is our ultimate example of resisting temptation in spiritual warfare (Matthew 4:1-11)** – Remember how Jesus handled direct attacks from Satan when He was tempted in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1–11). Each temptation was combatted with the words **“it is written.”**

**6. The Word of the living God is the most powerful weapon against the temptations of the devil and in this spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:11-18/Psalm 119:11)** - Notice the unique tie to the Word of God that each of the pieces of spiritual armor mentioned by in Ephesians 6 has. Know, heeding, doing, following, being grounded in God's Word is one of the most powerful and important weapons we have in this spiritual war we are in. As Psalm 119:11 says it, *"Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You."*

A word of caution concerning spiritual warfare is in order. The name of Jesus is not a magic incantation that causes demons to flee from before us. The seven sons of Sceva are an example of what can happen when people presume an authority they have not been given (Acts 19:13–16). Even Michael the archangel did not rebuke Satan in his own power but said, *"The Lord rebuke you!"* (Jude 1:9). When we start talking to the devil, we run the risk of being led astray as Eve was (Genesis 3:1–7). Our focus should be on God, not demons; we speak to Him, not them.

In summary, what are the keys to success in spiritual warfare? We rely on God's power, not our own. We put on the whole armor of God. We draw on the power of Scripture—the Word of God is the Spirit's sword. We pray in perseverance and holiness, making our appeal to God. We stand firm (Ephesians 6:13–14); we submit to God; we resist the devil's work (James 4:7), knowing that the Lord of hosts is our protector. *"Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken"* (Psalm 62:2).

It is crucial that every Christian understands that he/she is in a spiritual battle. There is no way to get out of it. Awareness of the spiritual battle around us is very important. Not only awareness, but vigilance, preparedness, courage, and the right weaponry are crucial elements of engaging in spiritual warfare.

In the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:3–5, *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."* It is clear that "our warfare" as Christians is spiritual. We are not fighting a physical battle or a human battle. It is on a spiritual level—its enemies, its prerogatives, its fortresses, and its weapons are all spiritual. If we attempt to fight the spiritual with human weapons, we will fail and the enemy will be victorious.

## CONDUCT OF JOYFUL BELIEVERS

The Christian life is not a playground... it is a battleground. As believers/Christians, we are sons (children) in the family, enjoying the fellowship of the gospel (Philippians 1:1-11), believers are also seen as servants sharing in the furtherance of the gospel (Philippians 1:12-26), and as Christians/believers we are also soldiers defending the faith of the gospel. And the believer with the single mind can have a deep seeded "joy"... the joy of the Holy Spirit even in the midst of battle.

The "faith of the gospel" is that body of divine truth given to the church. Jude called *it "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"* (Jude 3). And Paul warned in 1 Timothy 4:1 that *"in the latter times some shall depart from the faith."* God committed this spiritual treasure to the Apostle Paul (1 Timothy 1:11), and he in turn committed it to others, like Timothy (1 Timothy 6:20), whose responsibility was to commit this deposit to still others (2 Timothy 2:2). This is why the church must engage in a teaching ministry, so that each new generation of believers will know, appreciate, and use the great heritage of the faith.

But there is an enemy who is out to steal that treasure from God's people. Paul had met the enemy in Philippi, and he was now facing him in Rome. If Satan can only rob believers of their Christian faith and joy, the doctrines that are distinctively theirs, then he can cripple and defeat the ministry of the gospel. It is sad to hear people say, "I don't care what you believe, just as long as you live right." What we believe determines how we behave, and wrong belief ultimately means a wrong life. Each local church is but one generation short of potential extinction. No wonder Satan... the enemy attacks our young people in particular, seeking to get them away from the faith.

How can a group of Christian fight this enemy? As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10:4, "For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh". Peter took up a sword in the garden, and Jesus rebuked him (John 18:10-11). We use spiritual weapons... the Word of God (the Bible), and prayer (Ephesians 6:11-18, Hebrews 4:12), and we must depend on the Holy Spirit to give us the power that we need. But an army must fight together, and this is why Paul sent these admonitions to his friends at Philippi. He was explaining in this paragraph that there are three essentials for victory in the battle to protect the faith.

### **3 Essential Elements in Joyful Conduct of a Believer: (Philippians 1:27-30)**

- 1. Consistency (Philippians 1:27a)** – Notice what Paul says in **Philippians 1:27**, "*Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ...*" The most important weapon against the enemy is not a stirring sermon or a powerful book... it is the consistent walk, behavior, conduct of in the life of a believer. It's not saying your Christian, the profession of your lips, lip service to being one. It's living it. Does your life... the way you live, and what you profess... what you say, jive? Someone has said, "*Your life speak so loud, I can hear what you are saying!*" What do you think that means?

The verb Paul used is related to our word "politics" (that's very interesting). He was saying "Behave the way citizens are supposed to behave." **Paul was suggesting that we Christians are the citizens of heaven, and while we are on earth we ought to behave like heaven's citizens.** He brought this concept up again in **Philippians 3:20** saying, "*<sup>20</sup> For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*" It would be a very meaningful expression to the people in Philippi because Philippi was a Roman colony, and its citizens were actually Roman citizens, protected by Roman law. The church of Jesus Christ is a colony of heaven and earth. And we ought to behave like the citizens of heaven.

- ➔ "**Am I conducting myself in a manner worthy of the gospel?**" is a good question for us to ask ourselves regularly. How do you "conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel? How do you do that? What did Paul have in mind here? Well perhaps he gives us an idea of what he has in mind in some of his other writing.

### **3 Keys to Conducting Yourself in a Manner Worthy of the Gospel:**

- 1. Worthy conduct has to do with our treatment of other believers/Christians (brothers and sisters in the faith)** – Paul write in **Ephesians 4:1-5**, "*<sup>1</sup>I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, <sup>2</sup>with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup>endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup>There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*"
- 2. Worthy conduct has to do with who you are seeking to please with your life** – Here is Paul in **Colossians 1:9-14**, "*<sup>9</sup>For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; <sup>10</sup>that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being*

fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. <sup>13</sup> He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Remember it was Paul who said in **Philippians 1:21**, “For to me is Christ and to die is gain.” Elsewhere he would put it like this in **2 Corinthians 5:9**, “Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.” One translation has it, “I make it my ambition to please the Lord.” Some of Jesus’ sharpest rebukes came to the (Jewish) religious leaders of his day who were more interested in pleasing men than God. He said of them in **Matthew 23:5**, “<sup>5</sup> But all their works they do to be seen by men...” Paul said in **1 Thessalonians 2:4**, “But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.”

- 3. Worthy conduct has to do with how we walk in our life each day** – Listen to Paul in **Ephesians 5:1-17**, “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. <sup>3</sup> But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; <sup>4</sup> neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. <sup>5</sup> For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. <sup>6</sup> Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. <sup>7</sup> Therefore do not be partakers with them. Walk in Light <sup>8</sup> For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light <sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), <sup>10</sup> finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. <sup>11</sup> And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. <sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. <sup>13</sup> But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. <sup>14</sup> Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.” Walk in Wisdom <sup>15</sup> See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, <sup>16</sup> redeeming the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” Notice how many times the word “walk” is used in these 17 verses. The word “walk” may be translated “live” and refers to how we actually go about living our lives each day... in other word our behavior... specifically our daily “conduct.” We do not behave (walk) in order to go to heaven, as though we are could be saved by our good works, but we behave because our names are already written in heaven, and our citizenship is in heaven.

It is worth remembering that the world around us knows only the gospel that it sees in our lives...

*You are writing a gospel, a chapter each day,  
By the deeds that you do and the words that you say.  
Men read what you write, whether faithful or true;  
Just what is the gospel according to you?  
-Author Unknown*

“The gospel” is the good news that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:1-8). There is only one “good news” of salvation... any other gospel is false (Galatians 1:6-10). The message of the gospel is the good news that sinners can become the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, God’s Son (John 3:16). To add anything to the gospel

is to deprive it of its power. WE are not saved from our sins by faith in Christ plus something else; we are saved by faith in Christ alone.

Paul write in 2 Corinthians 3:2, *"You are our epistle (letter) written in our hearts, known and read by all men."* What was he saying? He was saying that the best literature in the world is not substitute for your own life, lived out in your faith for all to see and read. Others ought to be able read your life... the conduct of your life... the consistency of your life and know what it means to believe and receive and be changed by the gospel... the good news of Jesus Christ and a personal relationship with Him. Let other see Christ in your behavior (conduct), and this will open up opportunities to share Christ's gospel with them.

The greatest weapon against the devil is a godly life. And a local church that practices the truth, that "behaves what it believes," is going to defeat the enemy. This is the first essential for victory in this battle.

2. **Cooperation (Philippians 1:27:b)** – Notice verse 27 again... Paul writes, *"<sup>27</sup> Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."* Paul now changes the illustration from politics (citizenship) to "athletics." The word translated as "striving together" give us our English word athletics. Paul pictured the church as a team... an athletic team, and he reminded them that it is a team work that wins victories.

Keep in mind that there was division in the church at Philippi. For one thing, two women were not getting along with each other (Philippians 4:2). Apparently the members of the fellowship were taking sides, as is often the case, and the resulting division was hindering the work of the church.

### **What effects does division in the church have?**

1. **Hinders worship (Matthew 5:23-24)** – *"<sup>23</sup> Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."*
2. **Sows discord (Romans 16:17/1 Corinthians 1:10/1 Corinthians 11:17-19)** – Paul write in Romans 16:17, *"<sup>17</sup> Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them."* And as Paul noted the division in the church at Corinth he wrote to them in 1 Corinthians 1:10, *"<sup>10</sup> Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all <sup>11</sup> speak the same thing, and that there be no <sup>12</sup> divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."* And in 1 Corinthians 11:17-19, *"<sup>17</sup> Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. <sup>18</sup> For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. <sup>19</sup> For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be <sup>20</sup> recognized among you."*
3. **Destroy witness (1 Thessalonians 4:9-12)** – *"<sup>9</sup> But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; <sup>10</sup> and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; <sup>11</sup> that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, <sup>12</sup> that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing."* Paul implies that we are to love one another (v.1), in other words not division and infighting, not getting along in order that we may win a positive witness before those who are "outside." As Paul says in

Colossians 4: 5 we are to, *“<sup>5</sup> Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. <sup>6</sup>Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.”*

The enemy is always happy to see internal division in the local church and between believers. “Divide and conquer!” is his motto, and too often he has his way. It is only as believers stand together as a team (team unity) that they can overcome the wicked one. “United we stand, divided we fall!”

Throughout this letter (Philippians), Paul used an interesting device to emphasize the importance of unity. In the Greek language, the prefix “sun” means “with or together” and when used with different words, strengthens the idea of unity. It is somewhat like our prefix “co.” At least 16 times Paul use the prefix “sun” in Philippians, and his readers could not have missed the message. In Philippians 1:27, the Greek word is “sunathleo” = “sun athletes” = “with/together athletes” = “with/together team” = “striving together” as athletes.

Sometimes in athletics a sports team may have a “glory house,” a “show boat”, a person who has to be in the spotlight and get all the praise. Usually he make it difficult for the rest of the team. They aren’t working equally together but are working to make one person look good... themselves. It is this attitude that make for defeat. Unfortunately, we have “glory hounds” in the church. The Apostle/Disciple John had to deal with a man named Diotrefes because the man loved “to have the preeminence” (3 John 9). Even the apostle James and John asked to have special thrones (Matthew 20:20-28). The important word is “together” in second half of **verse 27**, *“... that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”*

It would not be difficult to expand this idea of the local church as a team of athletes. Each person has his assigned place and job, and if each one is doing his or her job, it helps all the others. Not everybody can be captain or quarterback. The team has to follow the rules, and the Word of God is our rule book. There is one goal... to honor Christ and do His will. If we all work together, we can reach the goal, win the prize, and glorify the Lord. But the minute any one of us starts disobeying the rules, breaking training (the Christian life does demand discipline), or looking for glory, the teamwork disappears and division and competition takeover.

In other words, Paul was reminding us again of the need for the simple “single mind.” There is no joy in our lives, even as we battle the enemy, if we live for Christ and the gospel and practice Christian teamwork. To be sure, there are some people with whom we cannot cooperate (see 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, Ephesians 5:11), but there are many with whom we can... and should!

We are citizens of heaven and therefore should walk consistently. We are members of the same “team” and should work cooperatively. But there is a third essential for success as we face the enemy...

3. **Confidence (Philippians 1:28)** – Paul writes in the first part of **verse 28**, *“<sup>28</sup>And not in any way terrified by your adversaries...”* The word Paul used picture a horse shying away from battle. To be sure, nobody blindly runs into a fight, but then, no true believer should deliberately avoid facing the enemy. In these verses, Paul gave us several encouragements that give us confidence in the battle.

### **3 Encouragements that Give us Confidence in the Battle:**

- (1) **These battles prove that we are saved (v.29)** – We not only believe in Christ but also suffer for Christ. Paul called this “the fellowship of his sufferings” (Philippians 3:10). For some reason, many new believers have the idea that trusting Christ means the end of their battles. In reality, it means the beginning of new battles. Jesus even tell us in **John 16:33**, *“<sup>33</sup>These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”* And Paul said in **2 Timothy 3:12**, *“<sup>12</sup>Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”*
- (2) **These battles are seen/counted as a privilege in Scripture** - The presence of conflict (this battle) is “a privilege”... we suffer “for His sake.” In fact, Paul told us that this conflict is “granted” to us... it is a gift! If we were suffering for ourselves, it would be no privilege, but because we are suffering for and with Christ, it is a high and holy honor. After all, He suffered for us, and a willingness to suffer for Him is the very least we can do to show our love and gratitude.
- (3) **These battles are a common experience among genuine believers** – A third encouragement is this... others are experiencing the same conflict (Philippians 1:30). Satan wants us to think we are alone in the battle, that our difficulties are unique, but such is not the case. Paul reminded the Philippians that he was going through the same difficulties they were experiencing hundreds of miles from Rome! A change in geography is usually no solution to spiritual problems, because human nature is the same wherever you go, and the enemy is everywhere. Knowing that my fellow believers are also sharing in the battle is an encouragement for me to keep going to pray for them as I pray for myself.

## **FINAL REMINDERS OF OUR JOY IN THE MIDST OF THE BATTLE**

### **3 Reminders of Where to Joy in the Battle:**

- 1. Remember, going through spiritual conflict is one way we have to grow in Christ -**
- 2. Remember, God gives us the strength we need to stand firm against the enemy -** And this confidence is proof to him that he will not be lost and we are on the winning side (Philippians 1:28). The Philippians had seen Paul go through conflict when he was with them (Acts 16:19ff), and they had witnessed his firmness in the Lord, the word “conflict” give us our word “agony” (agonia), and is the same word that is used for Christ’s struggle in the garden (Luke 22:44).
- 3. Remember, when the enemy sees our God-given confidence, it make him fear -** As we face the enemy and depend on the Lord, He gives us all that we need for the battle.

So the single mind enables us to have “joy” in the midst of battle because it produced in us (1) consistency, (2) cooperation with other believer, and (3) confidence for the battle. We experience the “joy” of “spiritual teamwork” as we strive together for the faith of the gospel.

*“<sup>62</sup>My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup>knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup>But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” – James 1:2-4*

