

Philippians, Chapter Four, Lesson Three

LOVING TO SHARE Philippians 4:14-23

STIMULATE

** In last week's study, the apostle Paul showed us that part of the godly Christian life is the process of "**Learning to be Content**". Do you recall the "secret" behind our ability to be content?

Philippians 4:13 - "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me".

** At the conclusion of that study, we looked at three different passages which all referred to the power resource that every Christian has, do you remember those passages?

2Corinthians 12:9 - "power perfected in weakness"

Ephesians 3:16 - "be strengthened with power"

Colossians 1:10-11a - "strengthened with all power"

Hopefully we remember the tremendous power available to us in our effort to live out godly, contented lives for the sake of Jesus Christ.

MOTIVATE

** As we close out our study of Paul's letter to the Philippians, we want to learn God's perspective of Christians giving to each other and caring for each other. Why are we to do it? What will it accomplish?

Paul answers those questions and more as he shows us how much the Philippians were "**Loving to Share**" all that the Lord had given to them. Please turn in your Bibles to Philippians 4:14-23 and let's enjoy this last passage together.

Read passage (V.14-18) (V.19-23)

Opening Prayer

Loving to Share

INVESTIGATE

V.14 ** You will recall in verse eleven of our last study that Paul had learned something, what was it?

He had "learned to be content".

** Since that was true, was there any value in the Philippians efforts to share with Paul in his affliction?

Yes! Paul says, "Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction."
cf. Philippians.1:5

Even though Paul had learned to be content, it was a very good thing for the Philippians to share with him during a time of pressing need.

V.15 ** In verse 15, Paul mentions his departure from Macedonia. What main cities of record would we find there?

Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica and Berea.

** The two most noted churches in the Macedonia region were Philippi and Thessalonica. Do you think that the saints in Philippi needed another church to follow, in order to learn how to give to the apostle's needs?

No - "...no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone."

** How many ministry efforts outside of Macedonia was Paul able to start before the Philippians were there to help?

None, he said, "...at the first preaching of the gospel..." or literally, at the beginning of the gospel. cf. 2Corinthians 11:7-9

We too should be eager to help one another, as well as those who spread the marvelous truth of the gospel.

V.16 ** Well, we have seen that the Philippians would not let Paul even get started in Achaia (Athens and Corinth) without helping him. But did they even wait for him to leave their Macedonia?

No - They helped him "even in Thessalonica". Right next door, approximately 100 miles from Philippi, they wanted to send help.

** Was this just a one time, flash in the pan, type of gesture?

No, again - They "sent a gift more than once" for the needs of Paul. These beloved people would not be denied from their passion of wanting to be a part of what God was doing through Paul. cf. 2Corinthians 8:1-5

V.17 ** Was Paul looking for gifts from people?

No - he had learned to be content! He says, "Not that I seek the gift itself..."

** Then for what was Paul seeking?

"...the profit which increases to [the Philippian's] account..."

** What does that mean? Is giving just a self-serving, self-glorifying exercise?

No - Let's examine what happens on an eternal scale when we give our lives and resources to others in the name of Christ.

1) Profit (karpos) - lit. fruit, charged to our account. cf. John 15:16

2) Rewards - cf. 1Corinthians 3:10-15, 2Corinthians 5:6-10

3) That still sounds self-serving, what is the ultimate goal? Glory to God!
cf. Revelation 4:10-11 "casting our crowns" John 15:8 "By this is My Father glorified"

When our "account" increases, it simply means that our ability to bring glory to God has increased.

V.18 ** Being amazingly sensitive, what does Paul do to insure that the Philippians aren't discouraged by his statement about not seeking the gift?

He makes three distinct statements about the sufficiency of their loving gift.

- 1) I have received everything in full
- 2) I have an abundance
- 3) I am amply supplied (lit.-made full)

All because of their generosity and "having received" what they had sent through Epaphroditus.

**** With what threefold, supernatural insight does Paul encourage the Philippians? Or to put it another way, what was God's perspective of their gift?**

It was...

- 1) a fragrant aroma
- 2) an acceptable sacrifice
- 3) well pleasing to God cf. Hebrews 13:16

Now we know that their giving wasn't self-serving, but rather it was God serving!

V.19 ** What is God's response to someone who has this pattern of giving? If we are "Loving to Share" with others around us, what will God do?

He will supply all your needs. cf. Matthew 6:32

**** Is there any limit to God's resources from which He will meet our needs?**

Absolutely not! It is "according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."
cf. Hebrews 6:10, Romans 8:32

V.20 ** When Paul reflects upon the vast goodness of God and the limitless resources He has at His disposal for blessing us, what does that cause the apostle to do?

Break forth in praise! A doxology or praise saying!

**** What is the content of Paul's praise?**

Glory to God! All see - Revelation 5:12-14

**** Now, back in Philippians 4:20, how long should this God glorifying praise continue?**

"...forever and ever..." We will join in that praise, perfectly, throughout all eternity.

V.21 ** As we have learned over the past four months, Paul and the saints at Philippi had a very close, loving and strong relationship. Was that a closed relationship, excluding other believers?

No - While Paul wishes to greet "every saint in Christ Jesus" there in Philippi, he also wants them to understand the love for the Philippians which was demonstrated by those brethren who were with him in Rome. The Body of Christ and the love it shares is not exclusive, but inclusive. It is dearest to those who are of like precious faith, but extends even to our enemies.
cf. Matthew 5:43-44

V.22 ** How far did Paul's circle of Christian love expand?

"All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's (Nero) household.

** What is unusual about that statement?

In Rome, you were to do as the Romans did! Worship Caesar - not Jesus Christ. It is truly amazing that people employed in Caesar's household would have given their hearts to Christ and want to share their common love for the Savior and other Christians, with the saints at Philippi.

V.23 ** Paul finishes this masterpiece the same way it began, with the grace of the Lord Jesus (Philippians 1:2). Why is that so important?

All that has been said in this wonderful letter has been authorized by, sustained by, energized by and fulfilled by God's grace. If the Philippians or even ourselves are to be changed by what Paul has written, we are totally dependent upon the "grace of the Lord Jesus Christ".

If we are people, called children of God, who are "**Loving to Share**" all that God has done for us, it is only because of his "Amazing Grace"! It is very fitting for the grace of God to be the bookends of this epistle.

EXTRICATE

** What kind of people had the Philippians become as Christians "in the matter of giving and receiving"?

These were amazingly generous people, who by God's grace even begged for the privilege of giving their own lives and resources for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

** Were they just a flash in the pan, giving only to partake in the latest trend?

No - They gave from their heart, prompted by God, over and over again.
They would not be denied!

DELINEATE

** Why should I want to be this kind of giver? What will it accomplish if I am genuine?

- 1) Fruit that remains!
- 2) Glory to God for all eternity!

EVALUATE

** If all of us as Christians are "**Loving to Share**" what God has given to us, what impact does that have on the relationships within the Body?

We continue to form an extremely close bond and love for one another. Everyone looking out for the interest of others.

** How am I doing? Am I open to any opportunity that the Lord places in my path for me to give of myself or my resources?

If we can learn from Paul and the Philippians the art of "**Loving to Share**", the answer will be a resounding "yes"!

ACTIVATE

** As we leave this wonderful study behind us, let's commit to the Lord our availability to Him - so that He will have the freedom to reinforce all of the marvelous lessons we have learned together.

Closing Prayer