

## Philippians, Chapter Two, Lesson Three

THE JOY OF OBEDIENCE Philippians 2:12-18

### STIMULATE

\*\* As our study together last week came to an end, we asked the Lord to help us find "**The Joy of Humility**" by following the example set for us by Jesus. How did your week go? Even though I know this is hard to answer, did others have the opportunity to see Christ in you because you had gone through a type of kenosis in your daily walk with Him?

Hopefully, we take to heart the examples that Scripture sets before us and strive to imitate the One who gave His life for us by serving others in His name.

### MOTIVATE

\*\* As children of God we are different than the world, but what is it about the Christian life that produces the most joy? Even during times of great testing or distress what causes our heart to leap with joy?

Please join me in Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 2, verses 12-18, where he teaches us about "**The Joy of Obedience**".

Read Passage: (V.12-13) (V.14-16) (V.17-18)

Opening Prayer

### *The Joy of Obedience*

### INVESTIGATE

**V.12** \*\* When studying the word of God it is always important to remember the source. Here the Holy Spirit inspired a letter from Paul and Timothy to "all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi" (Philippians 1:1). As you look at the opening of this passage, how did Paul feel about the Philippians?

He called them "my beloved", He was very possessive and protective regarding their soul's well being. His love for them was genuine and limitless.

\*\* Why does Paul begin this passage with the phrase "so then"?

He is looking back to the godly example we saw last week in Jesus Christ as He displayed true Biblical humility through obedience to the word of God in verses 5-8, and the joy that humility creates as we see His obedience bring glory to God (vv.9-11).

\*\* Here in verse 12, what rather startling appraisal of their Christian lifestyle does Paul make?

"just as you have always obeyed" cf. Philippians 1:5-7

\*\* Is he saying that they were perfect in their walk with Jesus Christ?

No - That would be impossible, he is referring to a visible or observable pattern that displays the stability of their Christian walk. cf. 1John 3:9-10

\*\* Does Paul want the Philippians' obedience to be in his presence only, so that he would be impressed?

No! In fact it should increase in his absence!

\*\* Before we continue discussing "**The Joy of Obedience**" which was found by the Philippian believers, let's consider this question. Is it possible to offer the Lord a false obedience?

Absolutely!

cf. Psalm 66:1-4 God's enemies, Psalm 81:11-15 Israel and Acts 5:1-11 even in the church!

\*\* What key motivator does Paul give to the Philippians for them to work out their salvation and avoid a false obedience?

"with fear and trembling" This term combines both the abject humility of the Christian and their utmost reverence towards God. When we obey the Lord from these two perspectives, we are offering to Him a genuine obedience.

\*\* The verb "work out", *katargazomai* in the Greek, is in the present tense and literally means "to continually be working to bring something to fulfillment or completion". Is Paul talking about the Philippians earning their salvation?

No - he is merely instructing them to live it out diligently before a holy God. He did not tell them to work "for" their salvation!

**V.13** \*\* What does Paul remind the Philippians of that would assist them in remaining humble before the Lord, while at the same time encourage them to succeed?

"it is God who is at work in you" - Remember Philippians 1:6

\*\* What two things in us does our Father in heaven want to conform to His good pleasure?

Our will and our work! "Will" speaks of our attitude in obedience, while "work" refers to the action of our obedience. Paul wants us to obey the Lord from the inside out. Paul prayed to that end in his letter to the Ephesians. Would you join me in Ephesians 3:14-19? Read passage.

In order for us to be "filled up to all the fulness of God" where does Paul say we must be strengthened and by Whom are we strengthened?

"strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man..." (Ephesians 3:16)

**V.14** \*\* So back in Philippians 2, we can see what Paul meant when he said that God is at work IN us. As he moves into verse 14, how far does he feel that our joyful obedience should reach?

"Do all things..." It should touch every area of our lives. All that we think, say and do!

\*\* If we are willing to "work" faithfully on our obedience and remember the strength available to us from within, through the power of the Holy Spirit, what two things will be removed from our lives?

"grumbling and disputing" - "attitudes and actions"

**Grumbling**, lit. muttering or murmuring, it betrays an inward sinful heart or attitude.

**Disputing**, lit. "a reasoning", this refers to an open argument or dissension.

\*\* Were there any in Philippi that may have had this problem as a pattern in their lives?

Yes! That is why Paul was giving them this specific instruction.

But for an example, see Philippians 4:2

**V.15\*\*** Why is it so important for Christians to do all things without "grumbling and disputing"? What five things have we got to prove?

1. We are blameless - in the judgement of others, we give no legitimate cause for offense. cf. 1Peter 2:12
2. We are innocent - lit. "unmixed", without evil cf. Romans 16:19
3. We are children of God - We should live our lives imitating Him, cf. Ephesians 5:1
4. We are above reproach - lit. without blemish, up against the fallen sinful world around us, which is both crooked and perverse. Our life must be noticeably different. cf. Romans 12:2
5. We are lights in the world - our obedience to the Word of God is a witness. cf. Matthew 5:14-16

**V.16 \*\*** As "lights in the world", while living a life of proof to God's grace, what are we to be holding forth?

"the Word of life"

\*\* If you were to use just one word to describe the "Word of life", what would it be?

The "gospel" - John 1:4 "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

Five years later the apostle John would write, "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life-" (1John 1:1)

Our joyful obedience to the word of God prepares us to be ready at a moments notice to share God's saving truth, unhindered by our own guilt or shame.

\*\* We are to tell the world the gospel! As we prove to be faithful to the call along with the Philippians, what impact will it have on the apostle Paul in the day of Christ?

He will have cause to glory because he "did not run in vain nor toil in vain."  
cf. 1Thessalonians 2:19-20

\*\* To what is Paul referring when he says, "in the day of Christ"?

This is a day for the church and Jesus only. It is when believers in the church age will stand before Jesus at the Bema seat for reward. cf. 2Corinthians 5:10

**V.17 \*\*** To what extreme is Paul willing to take his obedience to Christ?

"even if I am being poured out as a drink offering"

\*\*What was that?

As part of a final offering, Paul is referring to his life ending sacrifice on behalf of the Philippians' faith.

\*\* What attitude does Paul's willing obedience produce while viewing so great a challenge?

"...I rejoice and share my joy with you all".

\*\* Did you notice that Paul is not merely joyful? What did he do with that joy?

He shared it with other Christians!

**V.18** \*\* Finally, what lessons does Paul urge the Philippians to learn from this?

**First**, that they would rejoice when they live obediently to Christ and suffer for it.

**Second**, when they experience that joy, don't keep it to themselves but share it with others.

\*\* What depth of commitment is going to be needed for us to be able to follow Paul's pattern?

Total commitment, all the way to our thought life! Please turn to 2Corinthians 10:5

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul is arguing against those who were attacking his apostolic authority and the truth of God's message. Here in 2Corinthians 10:5 Paul gives us the secret to "**The Joy of Obedience**" even in the midst of the attack! (Read verse)

\*\* What impact did Paul have on "speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God"?

He was continually destroying them.

\*\* What practice in Paul's life was the backbone to his repeated victories?

"We are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." His and everyone else's!

Of course Paul would tell the Philippians to rejoice in the midst of trials, when he knew that a commitment to obeying Christ would produce that very joy!

## **EXTRICATE**

\*\* Alright, back in our Philippian passage, in Who's presence should we "work out" our obedience?

the presence of the God, with "fear and trembling" cf. V.12

\*\* What two things in us does our Father in heaven want to conform to His good pleasure?

Our will and our work! Our attitudes and actions! cf. V.13

## **DELINEATE**

\*\* From verse fifteen of today's passage, what five things have we got to prove for the sake of Jesus Christ and the glory of God?

1. We are blameless
2. We are innocent
3. We are children of God
4. We are above reproach
5. We are lights in the world

## **EVALUATE**

\*\*Am I obeying the Lord, even in my thought life, to the point that it is producing joy . . . no matter what my circumstances might be like?

## **ACTIVATE**

Lord help me to "...take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" so that I might experience "**The Joy of Obedience**" and be willing to share it with others for your Glory!

Closing Prayer