

Philippians 2026 Series -Lesson 16
“The Purpose of Developing a Christlike Mind”
Spheres of Grace Ministries International, Inc.

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Text: Philippians 2:12-13

12 *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye 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.*

13 *For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.*

Introduction:

This passage deals with the believer’s proper representation of God as His sons “...*in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.*” During our study we will see that God provides both the desire and the resources which enable us to accomplish this proper representation and live out our personally designed ministry.

Let’s look at it...

I. The Command: Carry Your Salvation to Its Ultimate Conclusion:

Verse 12:

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye 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.

Wherefore, This is a reference to our previous study. In that study we saw that we are to have the same mind that Christ has – because we are to have a mind that is shaped by an attitude of humility, self-sacrifice and doctrinal truth.

my beloved, This passage is addressed to believers by use of the masculine gender. (αγαπαετοι) This is a vocative plural masculine adjective. The Vocative Case is the case of address – I call it the “Hey! You! Case. **Hey, You, my beloved brothers...**

The adjective is used instead of a noun to identify by characteristic – Paul is emphasizing that they are brothers in Christ.

“as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence,”

Paul calls upon them to continue to be obedient to God. He indicates that the believers at Philippi had been obedient during Paul’s ministry while he was there with them. Remember, he is writing this letter from prison and cannot be there to oversee their spiritual growth and obedience to God. So, he admonishes them to be even more obedient in his absence.

obeyed (hup-ae-kousin) **listened, accepted, and submitted ...**

verb- expresses action (there is action required in spiritual service)

Indicative Mood - the mood which expresses reality

Aorist Tense - a point of past time - when Paul was there with them

Active Voice - each one of them was producing this action

Third Person- they

Plural - all of them were obedient

Paul is talking about listening, learning, and applying the Word of God - those at Philippi were doing this when Paul was there with them. His concern is that their listening and applying the Word might stop now that he is no longer present with them. So, he says...

but now much more in my absence,

but (alla) **But..**

this is the strongest conjunction of contrast in the Greek language and Paul uses it for emphasis

now much more (nun)(polloh)(mallon) **Now much more...**

This is an idiomatic phrase used to add emphasis and stress in a comparison. So, Paul indicates that **ESPECIALLY NOW** they are to...

work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

If salvation is by grace through faith as stated in Ephesians 2:8; and if salvation is not of our ourselves, not of works as stated in Ephesians 2:8-9; then, this instruction - *“...work out your own salvation....,”* cannot refer to an unsaved person doing good works in order to acquire salvation. And, it must also be remembered that this letter is written to those who are already saved at Philippi.

There are some who have attempted to explain this by saying that it means, that the believer is to “out work” an “in worked” salvation. They explain, that at the point of their cry to God for salvation, that God gave them the means of living in

such a way that they could conform to His requirements and eventual be saved. They base this view on a misunderstanding of the phrase “*work out.*”

Titus 3:5-7 says,

- 5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit;*
- 6 *Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;*
- 7 *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

So, it is evident that Paul is not talking about working ‘for’ your salvation. So, let’s see what it does mean to, “*...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*”

work out (kater-gadz-esthe) = continually participate in bringing to the outside that which is on the inside...

Verb- expresses action

Imperative Mood – this is a command

Present Tense – this is to be a continuous action

Middle Voice – subject (the believer) participates in the action

Now, follow this very close... In our previous study we observed that we are to develop the mind of Christ. Here, in the context, Paul has spoken of listening to, accepting, and applying the Word of God. Now.... the grammatical form of this Greek word “**katergadzesthe**” means, participate in the process of bringing to the outside that (doctrine) which is on the inside.

What is to be on the inside?? The Word of God, Bible Doctrine- The mind of Christ!!!

This phase, “*...work out....*” is idiomatic for using basic principles to carry something to its ultimate conclusion. It is used of solving a math problem. That is, using the principles of mathematics to solve a math problem - addition, multiplication, division, and subtraction all have basic principles. You are able to use those principles to carry a problem to its ultimate conclusion.

Example:

2 plus 4 is 6.

6 times 2 is 8.

8 divided by 3 is 2.6666666667

1 subtracted from 2.6666666667

Equals 1.6666666667

Through the use of the mathematical principles of addition, multiplication,

division, and subtraction we are able to arrive at the proper mathematical conclusion. Thus, we are to use biblical principles we have learned to carry the result of our salvation to its natural, intended conclusion.

your own salvation

In the same way we would use the principles of math to solve a math problem, the believer is to use the principles of God's Word, the mind of Christ, to carry his salvation (which he already possesses) to its proper conclusion - good works. Basic Biblical Principles (The Mind of Christ) are discovered in our study of the word and are cycled to our "Frame of Reference" (our norms and standards) by our personal acceptance of them as truth.

Ephesians 2:10 says,

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Thus, we are to use the principles of God's word, which we have accepted, to carry our salvation to its ultimate conclusion - the performance of good works, proper conduct in serving God, and living out our designed ministry in representing Jesus Christ to a world that has become estranged from God. We are called Christians which literally means -little Christs or Christ like. Our "***good work***" is living out the designed ministry God has assigned each of us through the provision of spiritual gifts and the manipulation of our daily circumstances. We don't get to see the blueprint for that ministry but are required to be submissive every day to His guidance through circumstances to perform our "***good works.***"

The degree of our peace and joy and the degree of effectiveness of our service to God; is dependent upon our understanding, accepting, and applying Biblical principles related to The Doctrine of Bibliology, The Doctrine of God, the Doctrine of The Angelic Conflict, The Purpose of Man, The Doctrine of Dispensations, The Doctrine of Grace, The Doctrine of Faith, The Doctrine of Redemption, The Doctrine of Positional Truth related to Salvation and Fellowship, The Doctrine of Adoption, The Doctrine of The Old Sin Nature, The Doctrine of The Will of God and Divine Guidance, The Doctrine of Divine Discipline, The Doctrine of Spiritual Maturity, The Doctrine of Spiritual Gifts, and The doctrine of Eschatology.

These doctrines are just a brief catalog of what the Bible teaches about the principles we are to use in living life here on the earth. The principles related to Grace and Faith are foundational to all other biblical principles and so we have spent considerable time stressing living in the sphere of gracing others with childlike faith while living the Faith/Rest life.

So, we are to develop the "Mind of Christ" in order to have the principles by which we can "***work out our own salvation,***" that is, by which we are able to achieve our purpose as Believers.

But we note that this command is in the “Middle Voice” in the original Greek text which means we don’t do it alone, nor is it done for us, but we are to participate in working out our own salvation. Who do we participate with - the Holy Spirit and the doctrine resident in our minds - these enable us to properly represent God. And we are to do so ...

with fear and trembling - an idiom meaning, **with radical and total dependency that manifest a reverential awe of respect and allegiance.**

fear (phobou) = **reverential awe**

Noun – person, place, or thing

Genitive Case - genitive of description

Masculine Gender - reverential awe is to be the initiator of our service

This is not a “**fear**” that causes one to cower back but a reverence that draws one to Him in respect and submission.

Notice this? The initiator of our representation of God is a reverential awe for God which motivates us to apply what we know of the Word of God to our lives. The degree of our service is a reflection of our “fear of God,” the degree of our awe and reverential respect for Him.

I shared the speaker’s platform at the First Annual Peace Leadership Conference in Los Angeles a few years ago with the former president of Guana. He began his speech by saying, I don’t fear God! Then he restated it more forcefully saying, No! I don’t Fear God! After a few moments that seemed much longer than they were, he said, “NO! I don’t fear God, I love God! I Love Him because He loves me.” I was tempted to rewrite my speech that followed to point out that if we love God we will “fear Him.” But not to shrink back from Him in terror, rather, to be drawn to Him in honor and humility. But my time was limited and so I challenged that assembly of international educational, and governmental dignitaries that if we truly want to change society, we must re-educate our people on our origins, stating that if we simply evolved from a cosmic accident in space we had no hope of our behavior rising above the level of animals. But if civilization was to be tamed and peace was to be achieved, we must get back to teaching that we are created beings with destinies assigned by God!

Here in our text we are told to “**...workout our own salvation with an honor and respect that draws is to God.**” And then, Paul adds the word “**trembling.**”

trembling (tromou) **trembling from exertion...**

Noun- person, place, or thing

Genitive Case - genitive of description

Masculine Gender - initiator of representation

This phrase is used in the Greek to express radical and total dependency - that is faith - faith is radical and total dependency.

Expanded Translation of Verse 12: *“Because of this my beloved, as you have always listened, applied, and submitted, not in my presence only, But especially now in my absence, participate in carrying to its ultimate conclusion your salvation with a radical and total dependency.*

A. This Involves Carrying Salvation to Maturity:

- (1). Thus it Requires Knowledge of The Word in the Right Frontal Lobe
- (2). Thus it Requires Application of Knowledge To Experience

B. This Involves Carrying Salvation to Service:

- (1). It Requires Knowing Your Gifts
- (2). It Requires Using Your Gifts

II. The Potential - God Provides Both the Will and the Ability:

Verse 13:

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.

For it is God (theos)(gar)(estin) **For God keeps on being...**

This verb, (estin), is in the Present Tense (continuous action), Active Voice (God the subject produces the action of being, Indicative Mood (mood of reality).

which worketh (ho)(en-ergon) **the one continually operating ...**

Participle- as a matter of principle

Present Tense - continuous action

Active Voice – the subject (God) produces the action

Nominative Case – case of identification

Masculine Gender- initiator of the action

This word is the one from which we get our English word ‘**energy.**’ The participle here identifies a principle of continuous operational energy.

in you (en)(humin) **within you...**

Noun – person, place, or thing

Dative/Locative/Instrumental Case- dative of advantage and means

God has taken up residence in the believer to provide the operational energy necessary to represent Him properly. The emphasis of the Dative indicates it is to your advantage to have Him providing the operational energy. The emphasis of the Locative identifies where God provides that operational

energy - in you. The emphasis of the Instrumental indicates He has provided the means by which we can serve Him. God works within us to *both will and do...*

both (kai) both...

There are two specific things that God places in operation in us....

to will (the-lein) to desire as a matter of purpose

Infinitive - denotes purpose

Present Tense - continuous action

Active Voice - God enables us to have the desire

When we have listened, applied, and submitted God is able to develop in us His will for our lives. Each of us should be reminded that God has a plan for our representation of Him and He will provide the desire.

and to do (energein)(huper) and to operate on behalf of as a matter of purpose

Infinitive - denotes purpose

Present Tense - continuous action

Active Voice - God enables us to produce the action

The use of this infinitive with the word 'huper' indicates that God as a matter of purpose enables us to produce the action on His behalf.

***of [his] good pleasure* (eudokias) of that which will bring approbation**

Noun- thing (approbation -Praise)

Genitive Case - genitive of description and possession

Feminine Gender - response (the response to our desire and action will bring Him praise)

Expanded Translation of Verse 13: *For God keeps on being the one continually operating within you both to desire as a matter of purpose, and to operate on behalf of that which will bring [Him] approbation.*

A. God Keeps Operating in Us:

(1). He keeps giving us the desire to live for Him

(2). He keeps giving us the ability to live for Him.

B. If we lack either the desire or the ability it is because we do not have His Word residing in us and are not carrying it to its ultimate conclusion.

C. With our free will we can yield to Him or to our Old Nature.

(1). Our Old Sin Nature has its own desires - Ephesians 2:3

Among whom also we all had our conversation [manner of conduct] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh

and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others

(2). Our Old Sin Nature has its own way - Isaiah 55:8

For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Conclusion:

The expanded Greek text says,

Expanded Translation of Verse 12-13: : *“Because of this my brothers, as you have always listened, accepted, and submitted, not in my presence only, But especially now in my absence, participate in carrying to its ultimate conclusion your salvation with a radical and total dependency. For God keeps on being the one continually operating within you both to desire as a matter of purpose, and to operate on behalf of that which will bring [Him]approbation.*

So, we are to use the Word which resides in our right frontal lobes in an applicational way to carry our salvation to its ultimate conclusion - desiring and doing that which will bring God praise.

The purpose of our developing the mind of Christ is that that mindset will result in behavior that will manifest itself in our desire to both will and to do God’s good pleasure. That will result in our experiencing the joy God has designed for us as we live life with a purpose and the Word of God becomes our compass, as God manipulates the circumstances we experience in our living along side of the locals to do the King’s Business.

But it All Begins at Salvation:

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...

With the heart man believes unto righteousness...

But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!

“... and your joy no man taketh from you...”

(Luke 16:22)