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## STAND FAST

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Wasn't last week a great look at the Believer's Crowns? Having looked at the victor's crowns that we are to receive at the judgment seat of Christ, I'm so grateful that we will be declared victors on that glorious day, all because of Christ. The works we accomplish under His power and the maturity that we gain as we learn from His word are only possible through His sacrifice and the gift of His Spirit in us. We have so much to thank God for today. What a wondrous gift He has given us. For He has given Himself to us, mere mortals, His created beings.

Our verses today are Philippians 4:1-3,

"Therefore my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown,  
in this way stand in the Lord, my beloved.

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in  
the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also  
and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life."

Having spoken about what a joy this group of people is to Paul, he continues to exhort them to stand firm in the Lord. Remember his goal here is to encourage them, spur them on to spiritual maturity. He's explained so much doctrine to them, and he says, now, stand in what I've taught you.

The language develops it even further as it's broken down, Paul's saying,

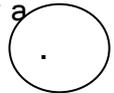
"Keep on (continuously) standing firmly in your resolve".

You see, this congregation had resolved to follow Christ, wholeheartedly, so when he says "stand firm in your resolve" he's actually saying, continue to keep on standing firm in Christ. Be resolute about it. Don't waver from that devotion. I hope you can catch the emotion behind Paul's words. Think about those whom you love, would it not be with a heart longing for them to follow Christ above all else? That's what Paul desires, above all, make Christ your life. It's my heart's desire for you as well.

Koine` Greek, which most of the New Testament was written in, is an amazing language. Much more precise than our English language. Much more descriptive with fewer words. Their description of what happens at salvation is that there are two spheres that identify our Christian faith as we are placed INTO Christ. Spheres within the sphere of Christ.

The first is the sphere of our Relationship - acquired at salvation as we are born spiritually and placed into the body of Christ; the second sphere is our Fellowship - acquired by then allowing the control of the Holy Spirit in our life. Let's take a brief look at them both.

1) The first sphere is our Position in Christ. It's an eternal sphere, meaning there is no opening in it. We are placed there at salvation and sealed for eternity. It's represented by a dot (the one saved) in the sphere (Christ). Relationship in Christ



**Read the following verses and note what you find regarding what takes place at salvation:**

**(a). Identity Of Position - Titus 2:14**

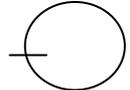
**(b). Sealed in Christ - 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 4:30**

**(c). Benefits Of Position - Ephesians 1:3-14**

Once we are saved we can never be removed from the body of Christ, we belong to Him.  
We are no longer our own.

2) Fellowship With The Lord - This is a conditional sphere based on either our submission to the Spirit in our life, or our carnality (sinful living). The Greeks describe this sphere with a line going in and out, meaning, we can be in or out of fellowship with the Lord.

Fellowship with Christ through His Spirit



**Read the following verses and note the instructions for us, as believers:**

**(a). Ephesians 5:18 (Note: "filled" means to be saturated to the point of control like a sponge that cannot contain anymore, it overflows.)**

**(b). Galatians 5:25**

**(c). By this time you are familiar with I John 1:9 but it's good to see the protocol for what to do when we are out of fellowship. What happens when we follow the instruction of this verse?**

Regrettably, we still live with an old sin nature while we are on this earth. While we are no longer slaves to that nature because Christ has made us new creatures, our flesh is still something that has to be brought into submission to the Spirit, daily, minute by minute.

**If we are to remain resolute, standing firm in our fellowship we must exercise our free will and do the following:**

**James 1:14-15, 4:7**

**Ephesians 5:18 (This is where our spiritual maturity really shows itself)**

**I John 1:5-7**

**Romans 12:1-2**

**Galatians 5:22-25**

Paul's admonition to stand fast in the Lord is followed up in chapter four verse two asking for two women to unite. Apparently they were standing firm but in their own differing opinions. As long as there are people in churches there will be conflict because we are all human. Paul urges these believers to help a couple women to get along. But he does it in such a sweet way, doesn't he? Talking about how helpful they have been, but.... they need a bit of help in living in harmony. It's quite easy to begin serving God and the next thing you know, you find yourself wanting things done your way (which of course is the right way, right?) uh huh.

Personal preferences can often lead to disagreement and disharmony. As sisters in the Lord, let's be careful to not find ourselves in the position of receiving a public reprimand, but rather let's remain humble and obedient, seeking harmony with our sisters in the Lord, helping one another to succeed in our walk with Christ, rather than being competitive. Check our motives and allow God to work through us. Allow Him to work through others, too.

Comparing ourselves to others and to their gifting can cause division. We need to be mindful that we are ONE in Christ. He gifts different ones in different ways so that we can reach different people.

Preferences in worship and teaching styles are as vast as the sand on the shore. Only God can decide what true worship is because only He can see the hearts and minds of those

worshipping, and only He can discern the motives behind it. Let's be careful not to impose our shaping of worship on to others, rather, let's just be mindful to live a life of worship!

We don't know the exact details of these ladies' disagreement, but we do know the differences that have come up in churches we've seen, so we can understand the application Paul is seeking. Jesus prayed for our unity; it was His great desire. It should be ours as well. That doesn't mean we don't speak the truth in love. Where there are doctrinal differences we must know what we believe and why. But let it be approached in love. The good news is, if we approach it in love, and by the leading of the Spirit, then we can know we are speaking truth.

The good news is that these women both have their names written in the Book of Life. They are both citizens of the same kingdom, and will spend eternity together. They might as well begin getting along now! The idea of "gracing" others is brought into view again.

Let's take a brief look at the Book of Life.

There is a lot of misunderstanding concerning the Lamb's Book of Life. Some teach that a believer's name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life at the point of his salvation, if that were true we would have an irreconcilable problem with the established doctrine of Eternal Security, because the Bible reveals that some names are blotted out of the book.

### **Read Exodus 32:33 and Psalms 69:28**

Therefore, if the names are written in the book at the moment of salvation, eternal security is not a reality. Yet, scripture after scripture, syntax and grammar of the original languages, all affirm the doctrine of eternal security.

The Bible tells us that every person who would ever be born and live upon the earth was written in the book before the foundation of the earth. Some argue that Revelation 13:8 and 17:8 both indicate that not all the names were written before the foundation of the earth.

However, a careful study shows that is not the case. The word "written" is translated from the Greek word "gegraptai". Hang with me here as we look at the language, it's important for us to understand -

"Gegraptai" is a perfect tense construction of the Greek word "grapho". The perfect tense identifies a completed action in past time with the results continuing forever. The word "written" is accompanied by the negative in this verse in Revelation 13:8, meaning that although it was written it did not stay written, so we can know that all names are written in the book, some in a completed action with results continuing forever, and others in a temporal way that would be blotted out. God's desire was that all would be saved, and He wrote every name in the Book of Life, but because of free will, some will choose to reject His plan, and their names will be blotted out. The way to keep your name from being blotted out is to simply believe in (put your dependency upon) the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 5:4-5)

You see, God in His foreknowledge of who would and would not accept Christ as Savior, knowing those who would be IN CHRIST, were the ones chosen before the foundation of the earth, predestined to adoption, as described in Ephesians 1. In His omniscience God knew whose names would be written into eternity, and whose names would be blotted out because of their rejection of the Savior. Without the original language we would not have understood this principle. With the language, we find the principle so simple. Those who are IN CHRIST are the ones chosen by God to be holy and righteous. Are you in Christ? Have you chosen to give yourself to the One who died for you? Or, will your name be one that is blotted out?

We're told that Euodia and Syntyche have their names written in the Book of Life but they still need encouragement to live in harmony with one another. It shouldn't be hard to get along with other believers, but it can be. You probably wouldn't have to think too long for someone in the body of Christ to come to mind that you might need this reminder for? The reminder is to treat them in the grace that you yourself have been blessed with. And then, encourage

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others to live in harmony and walk in fellowship with God, as well. You don't even have to use words for that, just example that in your own walk.

I had a particular person that was my "thorn in the side" until a retreat speaker suggested that I take Psalm 139 and insert that person's name in the text. It really did help me to see that person differently. Loving became easier. Perhaps that would be of benefit to you as well.

Dear One, you are His, and He is yours. Do your best to live in harmony within His body, relying on His grace and extending His grace to others, be alert to encourage those around you to live in harmony, as well.

REVIEW

~ Keep on standing firm (Philippians 4:1)

~ Spheres in Christ: Relationship, Fellowship (Titus 2:14; Ephesians 1:3-14; 4:30, 5:18; 1 John 1:9; James 1:14-15, 4:7; I John 1:5-7; Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:22-25)

~ Lamb's Book of Life (Exodus 32:33; Psalms 69:28; Revelation 13:8, 17:8)

~ Live in unity (Philippians 1:2-3)