

Principles for Stability in Your Christian Life

Pt 8

Phil 4:1-9

⁹ The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Introduction:

This past week I ran into a good friend of mine at the sanctified christian meeting place of Duncan Donuts. In our conversation, he brought be up to date with some of the new trends in Modern church worship out there. I don't get the opportunity to visit many churches as a pastor, and based on what I heard I am not sure I would want to. The variety of approaches are from more traditional to bizarre. Some churches are taking the approach of bringing in secular rock music, such as one Baptist church did when it started its worship time with a song from the Beatles. I ask him, you don't mean the actual song do you. Surely it was one those christianized beatle songs where the personal pronouns refer to Jesus or The the song (All you need is Love) refers to God's Love? NO, he said, it was the actual song., also in told me of some of the approaches that the pastors are taking with what he called edgy sermons. Border line profane. Cursing and references to things that should not be referred too in the Pulpit.

He and I agreed that these trends were not Good, and it is the wrong way to go about preaching the gospel and church ministry. Only God know where we will be in the next 10 years

Truly there is a right way and a wrong way to do things.

I have learned this over the years

(lawnmower starter illustration)

Speaking of the right way to do things...in a recent issue of a magazine I never read called "Meat and Poultry," the editors quoted from another magazine I never read, "Feathers," that is the publication of the California Poultry Industry. But the following story was irresistible. It seems the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration has a unique way of testing the strength of windshields on airplanes. The device is a gun that launches a dead chicken right at the plane's windshield at approximately the speed the plane flies. The theory is that if the windshield doesn't crack from the carcass impact, it will survive a real collision with a bird during flight.

Well it seems the British were very interested in this and wanted to test a windshield on a brand new high-powered locomotive they're developing. They borrowed the FAA's chicken launcher, loaded the chicken and fired. The ballistic chicken shattered the windshield, went right through the heart of the engineer's chair, smashed the instrument panel behind him and imbedded itself in the back wall of the engine cab. The British were stunned and asked the FAA to recheck the test to see if everything was done correctly.

The FAA reviewed the test thoroughly and had only one recommendation..."Thaw the chicken."

Now I'm trying to make that into a parable for this sermon, you understand. So you have to come back from that hilarious scene.

There's a right way to do things. And if you do things the wrong way, the result is chaotic.

There are right means of pursuing Spiritual Stability in our lives and Paul in Philippians gives us the prescription

Review

- I. Pursue Harmony and Peace**
- II. Maintain a Spirit of Joy**
- III. Cultivate Humility**
- IV. Trust God**
- V. Thankful Prayer**
- VI. Godly Thinking**

Lesson

VII. Obedient Living

A crucial element of believers' working out their sanctification is understanding the need for obedience to the Lord. Paul encourages the Philippians to continue in faithful submission to God's will. "Obeyed" translates a compound verb composed of the preposition *hupo* and the verb *akouō*, from which we get the word *acoustics*. The compound verb has the basic meaning of placing oneself under what has been heard, and therefore of submitting and obeying. A believer obviously must listen to

God's Word if he is to be obedient to it, so this is indirectly an appeal for believers to continue to study and obey Scripture (cf. [Matthew 28:19–20](#)). God's command to Peter, James, and John on the mount of transfiguration is His command to everyone: "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!" ([Matthew 17:5](#)). To preach the gospel is more than merely sharing one's faith and offering an invitation; it is to call sinners to obey God, "to bring about the obedience of faith . . . for His name's sake" ([Romans 1:5](#)). To be saved is to "obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" ([2 Thessalonians 1:8](#)), a point emphasized by Christ's exhortation in [John 3:36](#): "He who *believes* in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not *obey* the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (emphasis added).

Believers are to "be careful how [they] walk, not as unwise men but as wise" ([Ephesians 5:15](#)). Paul wrote to Titus:

Concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men." ([Titus 3:8](#))

The writer of Hebrews charges fellow believers: "Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience" ([Hebrews 4:11](#)). Jesus' Great Commission includes the command to teach converts from "all the nations . . . to observe all that I commanded you" ([Matthew 28:19–20](#)). Obedience is essential to sanctification. True spiritual growth cannot take place without it.

Deut 10:12

¹² "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, ¹³ and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good?"

In other words, to boil it all down to one word, loving the Lord your God is a matter of obedience. It is a matter of doing that which He has commanded to be done, of serving Him with a whole heart

and a whole soul. Now there's no room for anything else and that's why it says in the book of James that anything less than total abandonment with God becomes a prostitution. He says that if you try to love God and love the world, you become an adulterer or an adulteress. You prostitute yourself off to an invasion into the unique and intimate and wholehearted relationship you're supposed to have with the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the bottom line.

Pentecost writes that...

In Scripture, a man who knows what he ought to do and does not do it is called a hypocrite. The sin of hypocrisy is constantly dealt with as one of the cardinal sins with which believers must come to grips. It is that which the apostle has uppermost in his mind as he pens the words of [Philippians 4:9](#) (Pentecost, J. D. *The Joy of Living: A study of Philippians*. Kregel Publications)

Learned (3129) (**manthano** related to the noun **mathetes** = disciple, literally a learner! The shut mind is the end of discipleship!) has the basic meaning of directing one's mind to something and producing an external effect.

Manthano refers to teaching, learning, instructing, and discipling. **Manthano** to genuinely understand and accept a teaching, to accept it as true and to apply it in one's life. It was sometimes used of acquiring a life-long habit.

Received (3880) (**paralambano** [word study] from **pará** = from or alongside, beside + **lambáno** = take, receive) characteristically means to accept a fixed tradition. This word in the Greek was used regularly of receiving truth from a teacher. In the present context, **paralambano** then stands for the accepted teaching which Paul had handed on to the saints at Philippi. In other words, the Philippians not only understand it clearly, but also give assent to it and in so doing they were now responsible to live out the truth. This is always the principle when we learn and receive truth from a pastor or a teacher. God will hold us responsible to live according to the light we have received.

Receiving truth should always accompany **learning** truth. It is one thing to learn a truth, but quite another to receive it inwardly and make it a part of our inner man. Facts in the head are not enough; we must also have truths in the heart. This is inner receipt of the Word is seen in the saints at Thessalonica, Paul writing

And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you **received** (paralambano) from us the word of God's message, you **accepted** (accepted deliberately and readily = you put out the welcome mat for the Word!) it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. ([1Thes 2:13](#))

Heard (191) (**akouo**) means to hear with attention or hear effectually as to perform or grant what is spoken. This could refer to what they heard Paul teach and also what they heard about Paul's impeccable reputation from others.

Eadie writes that **and heard and saw in me...**

...is connected with both verbs. The apostle has referred to his public instructions, and now he concludes with his personal example. What they heard in connection with

him is the report about him circulating in the church—the character which was usually given him. [Php 3:17](#)....

“**And saw in me**”—what they had witnessed in his conduct and character. His appeal is as in [1Th 2:9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#). The two first verbs seem to refer to his official conduct, and the two last to his private demeanor....

It is not simply Paul the teacher, but Paul the man, how he was reported of, nay, how he demeaned himself. It is not, do as I taught you, but also do as ye heard of me doing and saw me doing, in reference to all the elements of virtue and praise. ([A Commentary on the Greek Text - Online](#))

Seen (3708) (**horao**) describes not merely the act of seeing, but also the actual perception of the object. They had observed Paul's character during his time in Philippi, and they knew his walk matched his talk!

Personal example is an essential element of effective teaching. The teacher must demonstrate in action the truth he expresses in words. Lips and life should match.

As **A T Robertson** reminds us...

The preacher is the interpreter of the spiritual life and should be an example of it

Remember that before the completion of the New Testament Scriptures, the lives of the apostles furnished the main source of divine truth. The apostles were the source of doctrinal truth and also modeled the standards of Christian behavior (compare Paul's exhortation "join in following my example" [Php 3:17-note](#))

The saints at Philippi literally "read" the book of Paul's life. This dynamic is the essence of multiplication of disciples which Paul outlined for his young protégé Timothy emphasizing that...

the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. ([2Ti 2:2-note](#))

Edwards adds that...

Paul now covers the spectrum of things he wants them to do. We see Paul's great heart for discipleship here as well as his total commitment of life to Christ... The truth is first demonstrated, then declared. From that point the Philippians accept it and then finally embrace it. This ought to be our pattern of discipleship. We are responsible that the men we are working with see and hear the truth in us. Then they must respond by accepting and embracing the truth we have transmitted. The goal of all this, though, is that they do the truth they have embraced. It is not enough for us to accept and embrace the truth, we must be equally zealous to do it also.

Practice (4238) (**prasso**) refers to repetition or continuous action. Practice as a habit.

Paul uses the **present imperative** thus commanding believers to continually practice these things as their normal way of life.

This verb **practice** or "**do**" is the key word in this passage, for to hear truth and not to do it is to delude one's self as James says.

We must each...

prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ([James 1:21](#))

Our English word "practice" has a similar connotation for we speak of a doctor as having a practice, because his profession maintains a normal routine. Christians are to make it their practice to lead godly, obedient lives.

Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me—
All His wonderful passion and purity!
O Thou Spirit divine, all my nature refine,
Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me. —Orsborn

The Cost of Discipleship

because no one in a country where you pay a price for naming the name of Jesus Christ is going to do that unless they are willing to pay that price. There are no shallow, uncommitted believers. Why pay the price? And yet in our society here, we have developed this incredible theology that says you can be a Christian and not worry about being committed. In fact you can be a Christian and not even be a disciple.

One of the most widely read fundamentalist newspapers in America is a newspaper called "The Sword of the Lord."

states,

“Nowhere in the Bible is the sinner told to forsake all that he has to be saved.”

Discipleship... more than just being a learner, being an intimate follower, having an intimate relationship, following to the point where you would go as far as death out of love. There's no question about the fact that the only message Jesus ever proclaimed was a message of discipleship. The call that Jesus gave was a call to follow Him, a call to submission, a call to obedience. It was never a plea to make some kind of momentary decision to acquire forgiveness and

peace and heaven and then go on living anyway you wanted. The invitations of Jesus to the lost were always direct calls to a costly commitment.

Matt 13: 44

⁴⁴ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, ⁴⁶ who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Mark 10: 21. This is what that says. "Jesus looked at the rich young ruler and said, One thing you lack. Go and sell all you possess and give to the poor and you shall have treasure in heaven." Same message. You want eternal life? Give up all you have and take the treasure. **Matthew 10:32**, "Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will confess him before My Father who is heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, I will deny before My Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth, I didn't come to bring peace but a sword. I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. He who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. He who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it."

Luke's 14:25, "The multitudes were going along with Him, He turned and said to them," He's talking to the multitudes, "If anyone comes to Me and doesn't hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."

In **John 8:31**, Jesus said, "If you continue in My Word, then you're My real disciple." **John 15:8**, Jesus says, "My true disciples bear fruit." And every one of those contexts, Matthew 13, Matthew 10, Luke 14, John 8, John 15, are all contexts in which Jesus is calling men to salvation and still there are many who deny that there is any such call involved in salvation. They say, "Just believe and take the gift... just believe and take the gift."

reading from a book entitled "The Hungry Inherit," the author writes, "How fortunate that one's entrance into the Kingdom of God does not depend on his discipleship. If it did, how few would ever enter that Kingdom," end quote. Oh? Isn't that exactly what Jesus said? "Narrow is the gate and... what? Few there be that find it." But wanting to assume that more than a few are saved, these teachers say one can be a believer saved without being a disciple obedient. So they come up with two levels of spiritual life. Level one is an uncommitted disobedient, even unbelieving believer who made a momentary decision to receive salvation but has no desire to follow Christ and they often call him "the carnal Christian." Hopefully someday such a person will come to level two. Level two is disciple. And there you have the obedient, committed people who love and serve the Lord, who turned their back on their former life and longed to live the new life. They're not perfect but the desire of their heart and the fruit of their life shows the work of God.

Matt 7:13

¹³ “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

True Way into the Kingdom

Luke 6:46

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

Parable of the Two Builders

Luke 6:47–49

²⁴ “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

John Stott wrote in his helpful little book *Basic Christianity*, “The Christian landscape is strewn with the wreckage of derelict half-built towers. The ruins of those who began to build and were unable to finish. For thousands of people still ignore Christ’s warning and undertake to follow Him without first pausing to

reflect on the cost of doing so. The result is the great scandal of Christendom today, so called nominal Christianity. In countries to which Christian civilization has spread, large numbers of people have covered themselves with a decent but thin veneer of Christianity. They have allowed themselves to become somewhat involved, enough to be respectable but not enough to be uncomfortable. Their religion is a great soft cushion. It protects them from the hard unpleasantness of life while changing its place and shape to suit their convenience. No wonder the cynics speak of hypocrites in the church and dismiss religion as escapism,"

This same attitude of obedience submission continue in a believers life