

The Book of Philippians

“Light Bearers”

Text: Philippians 2:12-18

God works in us so that a transformed life is evident through us.

A Plea for Obedience:

Living obediently demonstrates faith in God (Phil. 2:12).

- Paul was not telling the Philippians to work for their salvation, but to express their transformation through intentional obedience to Christ.
- Those who are born again will practice righteousness (1 John 2:29), turn away from sin (1 John 3:9), and display the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).
 - Paul told the Philippians that their obedience to God should arise from their fear of the Lord.
 - What does it mean to fear the Lord? – *To honor and revere Him in our attitudes, lifestyle, and decisions, regardless of the cost.*
 - The fear of the Lord isn't about terror; it's about reverence that leads to obedience (Prov. 8:13, 16:6).

God gives us the grace to live obediently (Phil 2:13 NLT).

- Grace here implies desire and power.
- God changes a person's desires when they are born again; however, ongoing transformation occurs through our daily reading and application of the scriptures (Rom. 12:2).
- By renewing our minds through the scriptures and yielding to the Holy Spirit, we are transformed from the inside out, becoming stronger and more empowered to follow the Lord (1 Thess. 5:23; Gal. 5:24-26).

A Call to Shine:

Paul instructs the saints to live free of complaining (Phil 2:14).

- Complaining and discontent create division among believers, so they should be avoided at all costs.

- Complaining was a common trait among the children of Israel. God disapproved of this attitude, which led to their 40 years of wandering in the wilderness until that generation had passed away (Ex. 16:2-3; Num. 14:36-37; 1 Cor. 10:10).
- As followers of Christ, we should cultivate a thankful attitude, which is the remedy for complaining (Phil. 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:18).

Avoiding complaints and disputes keeps us blameless before the world (Phil. 2:15).

- **“Crooked and perverted generation”** closely echoes Deut. 32:5, which complains that rebellious Israelites are not God’s children; here, by contrast, believers are God’s children. Jewish tradition often compared the righteous to **“lights”** in a dark world; cf. especially Daniel 12:3 (the term Paul uses here was applied especially to heavenly bodies, reflecting an image like the one Daniel uses). **Craig S. Kenner, The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament, Second Edition (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2014), 561.**

The Philippian believers were to let their light shine in the midst of a morally dark world.

- Choosing to reflect God’s character through our actions shows the world the transformative power of Christ (Matt. 5:16).

Paul portrays his sufferings and imprisonment as a sacrificial drink offering to God (Phil. 2:17-18).

- Not only was Paul willing, but he was also glad to suffer for the gospel of Christ.

Call to Action:

1. Walk in obedience by allowing your lifestyle to reflect the change Christ has brought about in you.
2. Change your attitude by replacing complaining with gratitude.
3. Let your light shine by living in a way that shows the difference Jesus has made in your life.