

Counsel for Every Christian

Philippians 4:1-9



Apostle Paul (~ 5 – 67 A.D.)
By Andrei Rublev (1410)

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Introduction



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Introduction

- There is lot to be said for being great at the basics.
- Musicians have to practice their scales.
- Basketball players have to dribble, pass and shoot.

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Introduction

- Christians have their own set of basics they need to be strong in.
- Taken in isolation, they are not so exciting.
- But if we are good at them all, they can make all the difference in the world.

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Introduction

- The church in Philippi was one of the best around.
- They were active and generous and supported Paul's missionary endeavors.

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- Still, as he closes this letter, Paul reminds them of the basics.
- Diligence or carelessness in these areas is often the difference between a strong church and weak one.

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Philippians 4:1



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Philippians 4:1

- **Therefore** points back to **3:20-21**.
- This is what is behind all that Paul is about to say.

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Philippians 4:1

- **Thus** points forward to our passage.
- This is what it means to **stand firm in the Lord**.

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- Notice also Paul's obvious affection for the Philippians.
- Clearly, all he is about to say he says out of love.

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Philippians 4:2-3



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Philippians 4:2-3

- I entreat Euodia and ... Syntyche to agree in the Lord.
- The problem does not pertain to doctrine or any grave sin.
- Paul doesn't indicate that either is right or wrong.
- It seems to be more of a personality clash.

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Philippians 4:2-3

- Paul asks for help from his “true companion.”
- The word means “true yokefellow” and might be a proper name – *Syzygus*.
- The narrative in **Acts** might point to **Luke** – who stayed behind in Philippi when Paul moved on.

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Philippians 4:2-3

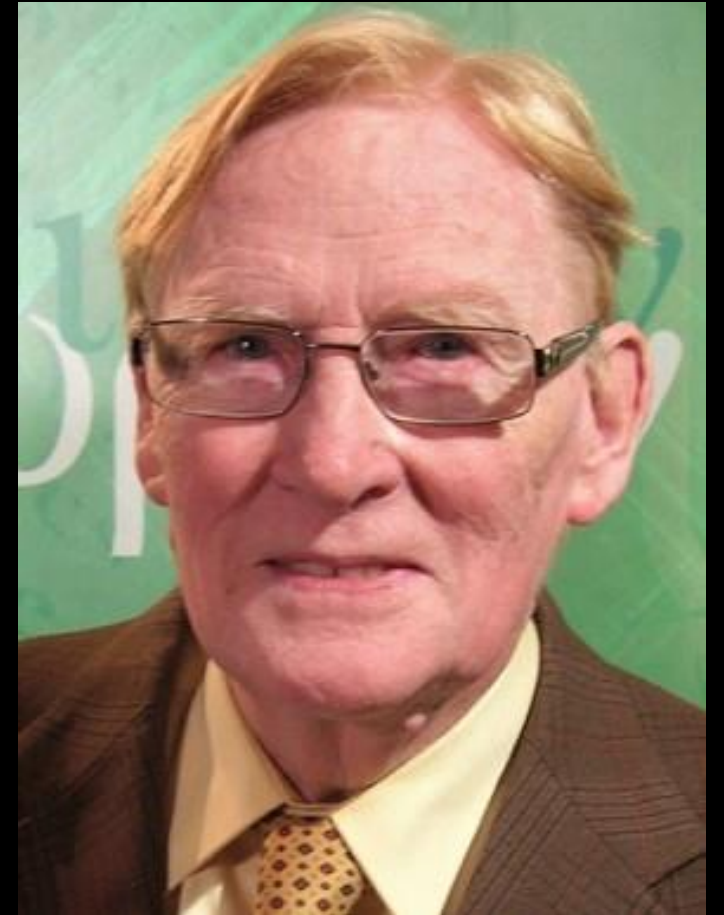
- In any event, these two women were an important part of the Philippian ministry team.
- They need to get along. **Unity is one of the basics.**
- The late Alec Motyer put unity in perspective.

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Philippians 4:2-3

Where there is agreement as to what the gospel is and what ought to be done with it, there is no room for personal disagreement. The one ought to exclude the other ...

*– J. Alec Motyer (1924 – 2016),
Dublin-born pastor and educator*

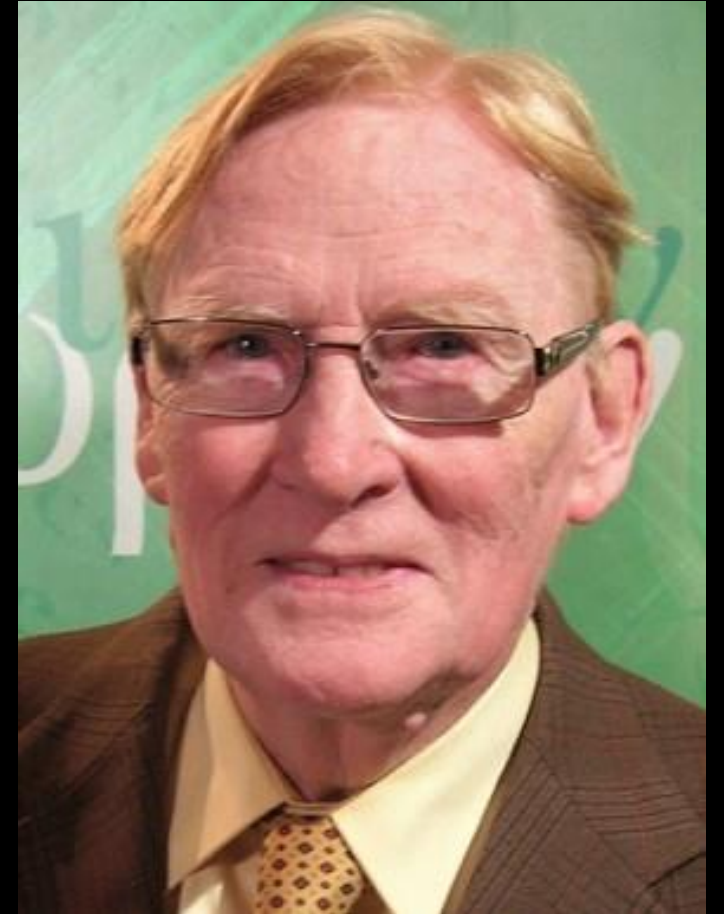


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To agree on what the gospel demands in its proclamation to the world is to cement unity by common action. The singleness of the task ought to be reflected in the singleness of the workers.

*– J. Alec Motyer (1924 – 2016),
Dublin-born pastor and educator*



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Philippians 4:4



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Philippians 4:4



The keynote of this epistle is joy. In the form of either a verb or a noun, the word 'joy' is found sixteen times.

*– Eshetu Abate,
Ethiopian theologian and
church leader.*

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Philippians 4:4

- 1:4
- 1:18 (2x)
- 1:25
- 2:2
- 2:17-18 (4x)
- 2:28-29 (2x)
- 3:1
- 4:1
- 4:4 (2x)
- 4:10

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Philippians 4:4

- Joy is one of the basics.
- The Book of **Psalms** uses a similar words over 100 times!
- For example, take **Psalms 5:11**.

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Philippians 4:4

- Psalm 5:11 (ESV)

But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;
let them ever sing for joy,
and spread your protection over them,
that those who love your name may exult in you.

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Philippians 4:4

- Psalm 5:11 (ESV)

But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;
let them ever sing for joy,
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- Remember too the words of Peter.

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Philippians 4:4

- 1 Peter 1:6-9 (ESV)

⁶ In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

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Joy is the serious business of Heaven.

*– C. S. Lewis (1898 – 1963),
In Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer*

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Philippians 4:5



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Philippians 4:5

- Paul asks them to be noticeably reasonable.
- From Vincent's word studies:
- *mild, yielding, indulgent ... not being unduly rigorous:*
"Wherein not strictness of legal right, but consideration for one another, is the rule of practice" (Alford).
- *According to Aristotle, the word stands in contrast with one who is exactly just, as one who is satisfied with less than his due.*

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Philippians 4:5

- Being reasonable is one of the basics.
- It is a building block to unity.
- When seen in leaders, it makes them easy to be around.

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Philippians 4:6-7



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Philippians 4:6-7

- According to Paul, prayer is the cure for anxiety.
- He is not so much encouraging us as instructing us.
- The sentence is in a command form.

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Philippians 4:6-7

- Paul is not saying there is nothing to worry about, or that we don't have to worry.
- His point is that we should not worry, but we should pray.

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Philippians 4:6-7

- There is a right way and a wrong way to handle troubles.
- We can worry, which is wrong; or we can pray, which is right.

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Philippians 4:6-7

I have yet to meet a perennial, worrying, uptight person who has a good prayer life. There may be one, but I haven't yet met them.

*– Don Carson,
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*



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- According to the [Online Etymology Dictionary](#), our word worry comes from a German root meaning “to strangle.”
- Jesus drew a similar comparison in His parable of the sower.

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- **Matthew 13:22** (ESV)

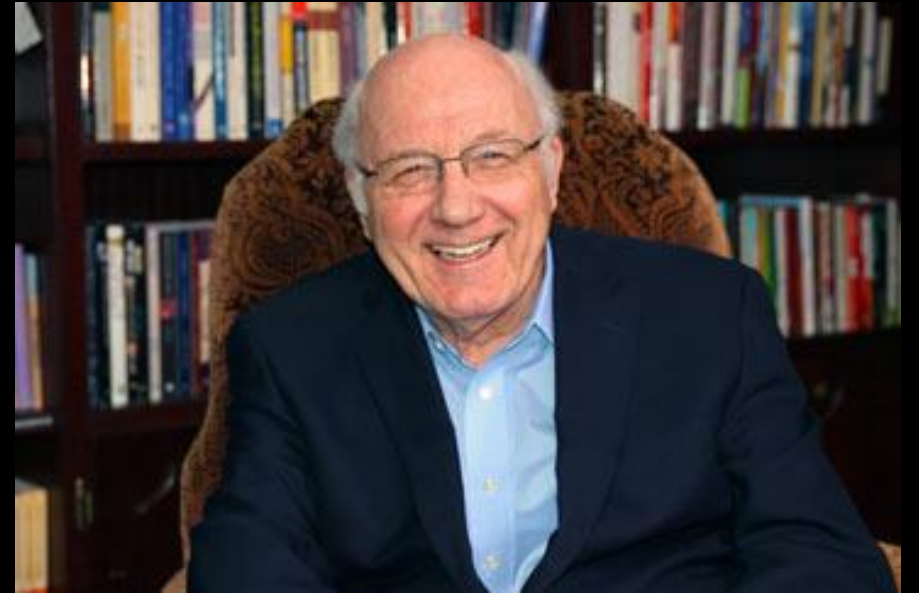
As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world [the worries of this life (NLT)] and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.

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Philippians 4:6-7

Many events in life ... create anxiety that can never be relieved through a purely rational and logical approach to problem-solving. True Christianity is reflected when a believer is able to trust God ... even when it is beyond his human ability to understand.

*– Gene Getz,
In The Measure of a Christian*



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Philippians 4:6-7

- Persistent prayer leads to God's peace, which "will guard our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
- Prayer is one of the basics, and its result is God's peace.

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Philippians 4:6-7

*This peace of God transcends all understanding, that is, it is beyond man's ability to comprehend. This peace guards the believers. **Guard** ... translates a military term which means "to protect or garrison by guarding." ...*

*– Robert Lightner,
in the Bible Knowledge Commentary*



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Philippians 4:6-7

*Like soldiers assigned to watch over a certain area, God's peace garrisons the **hearts and... minds**, that is, the emotions and thoughts, of God's children.*

*– Robert Lightner,
in the Bible Knowledge Commentary*



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Philippians 4:8

- Think about these things.
- Paul's **Christian Meditation** is not mind-emptying, as some other forms.
- Rather, we intentionally fill our minds with right thoughts
- We focus on God or on things that are pleasing to Him.

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- Psalm 119 (ESV)

²⁷ Make me understand the way of your precepts,
and I will meditate on your wondrous works.

⁹⁷ Oh how I love your law!
It is my meditation all the day.

⁹⁹ I have more understanding than all my teachers,
for your testimonies are my meditation.

¹⁴⁸ My eyes are awake before the watches of the night,
that I may meditate on your promise.

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- Psalm 19:14 (ESV)

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

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Philippians 4:8



Wrong thinking leads to wrong feeling, and before long the heart and mind are pulled apart and we are strangled by worry. We must realize that thoughts are real and powerful, even though they cannot be seen, weighed, or measured. We must bring “into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).

– Warren Wiersbe

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- Thinking right thoughts is one of the basics.
- Changing your thoughts can literally change your life.

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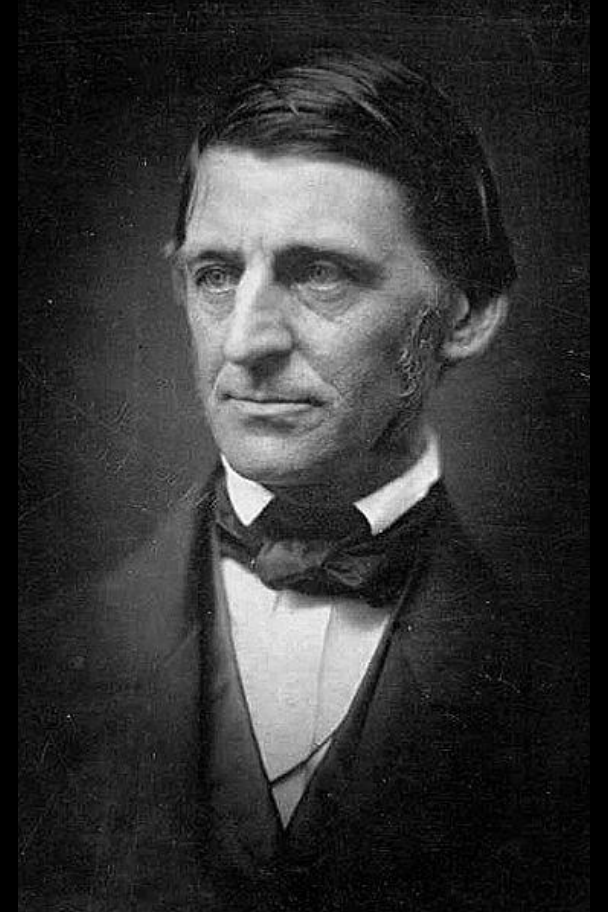
Sow a thought, reap an action.

Sow an action, reap a habit.

Sow a habit, reap a character.

Sow a character, reap a destiny!

– Ralph Waldo Emerson 1803-1882



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Philippians 4:9



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- Paul offers his own apostolic example as a model.
- We should always be willing to learn from others more experienced or mature than ourselves.
- Being teachable – having a willingness to learn – is one of the basics.

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- Hebrews 13:7 (ESV)

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

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Conclusions



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Conclusions

- Paul points out several things – the basics – that all of need to keep practicing.

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Conclusions

- Paul points out several things – the basics – that all of need to keep practicing.
 - Get along with others in the church.
 - Be joyful.
 - Be reasonable (not unduly rigorous) toward others.
 - Pray, but don't worry.
 - Meditate on right thoughts.
 - Be teachable and learn from good examples.

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Conclusions

- Choose something to pray about with others as we close.
 - Get along with others in the church.
 - Be joyful.
 - Be reasonable (not unduly rigorous) toward others.
 - Pray, but don't worry.
 - Meditate on right thoughts.
 - Be teachable and learn from good examples.