

## **THE PRISON EPISTLES: NURTURE FOR OPPRESSED BELIEVERS**

### **III. Philippians: Nurture In Living In Preoccupation With Christ**

#### **G. Nurture In Living Godly Lives Aligning With God's Inner Influence To That End (Philippians 2:12-13)**

##### **I. Introduction**

- A. When the Apostle Paul wrote the Epistle to the Philippians, his readers were understandably concerned over his imprisonment as is evidenced by his remarks in Philippians 1:12-13.
- B. Paul in Philippians 2:1-11 had directed the Philippians believers to relate humbly with one another to foster a nurturing atmosphere in the church, but they needed practical encouragement to so.
- C. Philippians 2:12-13 provides insight that God is influencing the believer unto such godliness within him, encouragement for the believer to live a godly life, and we view it for our own edification (as follows):

##### **II. Nurture In Living Godly Lives Aligning With God's Inner Influence To That End, Philippians 2:12-13.**

- A. Philippians 2:12 begins with the Greek introductory particle, *hoste*, rendered "For this reason, therefore," (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 685; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 908), and it directs Paul's readers to the practical application of his Philippians 2:1-11 call to godly humility in their relationships.
- B. As such, Paul urged his beloved believing readers, as they had always obeyed him in his presence, and now much more in his absence, to "work out your own salvation" with fear and trembling, Philippians 2:12 KJV.
- C. This command does **NOT** mean one must work to *produce* the salvation of his soul from hell as many have errantly taught, for Paul countered that view in Ephesians 2:8-9, clearly teaching that salvation is by faith and not by man's works. Rather, Philippians 2:12 tells us to "work out" (*katergazomai*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 422-423) our salvation in the sense of putting into practice in daily living what God has positionally produced in us as believers by way the Holy Spirit's power, B. K. C., N. T., p. 655.
- D. In added evidence that Paul referred to living out the salvation God had already positionally produced within the believer, Paul wrote that **God** (the word *theos* for "God" is in the emphatic position as the subject, being placed before the verb) was the One Who was at **work** in them both to **will resolutely** (*thelo*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Theol. Dict. of the N. T., 1974, v. III, p. 49) as well as to **act or start to act, to set at work** (*energeo*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., Theol. Dict. of the N. T., v. II, p. 652-654) on behalf of (*huper*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., Theol. Dict. of the N. T., v. VIII, p. 508) His good pleasure (*eutokia*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., Theol. Dict. of the N. T., v. II, p. 746-747). This instruction has great and edifying ramifications for the conscientious, Holy Spirit-dependent believer (as follows):
  1. There is a tendency at times for many believers today so to doubt their own motives that they are afraid even pay attention to those motives out of questioning the purity of their motives involved.
  2. However, though it is true that all believers have sin natures and can and do sin (1 John 1:8-10), and though a believer can become hardened against the will of God (1 John 5:16; Hebrews 6:4-6), it is also a fact that if a believer relies by faith upon the indwelling Holy Spirit for behavior control as in Galatians 5:16, the Lord goes to work in him to make him subjectively resolutely want to do God's will, Phil. 2:13a.
  3. Also, the Holy Spirit-controlled believer is furthermore led of God to translate that initial resolute will into action, working cause him to start to act or set at work to perform what God willed, Philippians 2:13b.
  4. Exactly what that work of God is can be easily defined by Scripture, for that work will reflect the good pleasure or will of God as is revealed in His Word because God has magnified above all things His Name, representing His reputation as God, along with His Word, Philippians 2:13c with Psalm 138:2 NIV, ESV.
  5. In summary, then, if a believer trusts in the Lord in addressing any circumstance he faces in life that demands he make a decision of some kind, he can rest assured that God will work in him subjectively to will resolutely to decide to do what fits God's will, and also translate that decision into action, which activity will be clearly defined as godly as it aligns with the Scriptural will of God on the issue at hand.

***Lesson:*** *We believers in Christ can be SURE that what we WILL is GOD'S will PROVIDING we (1) rely on the Holy Spirit to will, (2) and see that will perfectly align with the dictates of God's written Word. In this way, we can live affirmative lives, assured of being in the will of God versus living in constant doubt regarding our motives.*

***Application:*** *(1) May we trust in Christ to be saved and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, John 3:16; Romans 8:9b. (2) As such, may we overcome unedifying, unsettling doubts of our motives or intents by (a) relying on the Holy Spirit by faith that He may cause us to (b) will and to (c) do God's perfect will (d) defined as such by God's written Word.*