

THE PRISON EPISTLES: NURTURE FOR OPPRESSED BELIEVERS

III. Philippians: Nurture In Living In Preoccupation With Christ

H. Nurture In Living OPPOSITE and BEFORE The Unedifying Outside World (Philippians 2:14-16)

I. Introduction

- A. When the Apostle Paul wrote the Epistle to the Philippians, his readers were concerned over his imprisonment for his Christian faith by the outside world, a fact that is evidenced in Paul's words in Philippians 1:12-13.
- B. Accordingly, to nurture his readers, Paul in Philippians 2:14-16 directed them to live lives that both **edified each other** *opposite* their **unedifying exposure** to the **world** and that **also testified effectively** of the truth to that **world**, and we view this passage for instruction and application in living effectively in our era:

II. Nurture In Living OPPOSITE and BEFORE The Unedifying Outside World, Philippians 2:14-16.

- A. Paul wrote that his believing readers might live in **contrast to** the lost nation about them with its "perverse; turning from the truth" (*skolios*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 685; Moulton & Milligan, The Vocab. of the Grk. N. T., 1972, p. 578) apostasy and its "twisted in inner nature" (*diastrepho*, *Ibid.*, p. 154), Phil. 2:15a,b.
- B. This involved living without complaining and arguing with one another to edify one another from exposure to the lost, unedifying, evil world from which believers needed to find reprieve in the Church, Philippians 2:14:
 1. Paul's readers were to live without "complaint" (*goggusmos*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 163), to keep themselves from voicing unedifying annoyance to one another, Phil. 2:14a.
 2. Also, Paul's readers were to live without "disputes; arguments" (*dialogismos*, *Ibid.*, p. 185), to keep themselves from voiding unedifying annoyance to one another, Philippians 2:14b.
 3. This would nurture one another from their exposure to the unedifying, godless world outside the Church.
 4. [To achieve this lifestyle, Scripture elsewhere teaches Paul's readers had to live in reliance on the Holy Spirit to avoid belief error and living by their sinful natures, Gal. 5:16-23; 2 Tim. 1:13-14; Rom. 7:15-8:4.]
- C. However, beyond edifying one other in the Church, Paul's readers shone as lights in the world (Phil. 2:15c), to live before the lost in an effective testimony (Phil. 2:16a), so they had to go beyond just being "right" in their beliefs to **live outstanding** lives before the lost to have an effective testimony as taught in Philippians 2:15a,b:
 1. Paul wrote that his readers were to shine as lights in the world (Phil. 2:15b), and living without complaint and arguments would testify of their love to each other in a good testimony, Philippians 2:15a; John 13:35.
 - a. Living without complaints and disputes leads one to "become" (*ginomai*, *Ibid.*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 685; *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 157-159) "blameless, faultless" (*amemptos*, *Ibid.*, p. 44) as even the lost world views him so that the world has no reason to view him as sinful, Philippians 2:15a!
 - b. Living without complaints and disputes causes one to be "free of contamination" (*akeraios*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 29; R. C. Trench, Syns. of the N. T., 1973, p. 205-206), Phil. 2:15a! A believer might hold to a "correct" belief on an issue, but if he complains and argues with others, the onlooking world will not accept his beliefs due to his bad attitude.
 - c. Paul thus noted that besides holding to a "right" belief system, the believer must not complain and argue in relating especially to other believers to keep his testimony before the world free from being sabotaged by an evidently sinful attitude, Philippians 2:15b! The believer who thus lives uprightly will live as God's "unblemished" child (*amomos*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 47) in even the viewpoint of the apostate, wickedly twisted world around him, Philippians 2:15b.
- D. Living this way then effectively equips the believer to hold forth the Word of God with impact before a world that needs the salvation offered by God through faith in His Word, Philippians 2:16.

Lesson: *Lost men in the world have gone apostate from the truth coupled with their twisted sin natures, so (1) we believers must rely on the Holy Spirit FIRST to stay faultlessly innocent to edify each other from our unedifying exposure to the apostate world through our not complaining and arguing with one another (2) and SECOND live this way in order not to give the desperately needy, lost world reason to discredit the truth we uphold before them.*

Application: *(1) May we believers rely on the Holy Spirit to live faultless lives in not complaining and arguing with each other so as to edify each other against our unedifying exposure to the wicked outside world. (2) May we also keep the truth we uphold and herald before the lost stay believably credible in even the lost world's viewpoint by so living without complaints and arguments in relating with one another as the display of our Christian love that our testimony might indeed have real impact before the lost.*