

## THE PRISON EPISTLES: NURTURE FOR OPPRESSED BELIEVERS

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

#### O. Gaining Inner Peace That Heals Troubled Relationships

(Philippians 4:5-9)

#### I. Introduction

- A. After directing Euodias and Syntyche in Philippians 4:1-4 to have a selfless ambition to live peaceably with one another, Paul in Philippians 4:5-9 addressed their need to diffuse the inner unrest each lady had, which unrest had spawned the self-centered ambition that had led them into a troubled relationship with one another.
- B. We view Philippians 4:5-9 to see how to gain inner peace that results in healed troubled relationships:

#### II. Gaining Inner Peace That Heals Troubled Relationships, Philippians 4:5-9.

- A. In Philippians 4:5, Paul called for a forbearing, non-retaliatory attitude (*epeikes* in the Greek), Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 663. Since he had just addressed the troubled relationship between Euodias and Syntyche, urging them to "agree with each other" (NIV) in Philippians 4:2, Paul was thus *continuing* to *deal* with that problem in the church at Philippi in his instructions on acquiring peace in Philippians 4:5-9.
- B. Thus, Philippians 4:6-9 tells **how** a forbearing, non-retaliatory, selfless attitude arises in gaining inner peace **BECAUSE gaining inner peace diffuses selfish ambition that causes troubled relationships** (as follows):
- Philippians 4:6-7 reveals that gaining inner peace starts by emptying the mind of errant, faithless anxieties:
    - Paul taught that his readers, including Euodias and Syntyche, were to have a forbearing, non-retaliatory, selfless attitude by way of not being anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to let their requests be made known unto God, giving their burdens to Him, Phil. 4:6.
    - Once this commitment of taking the anxious burdens one bore to God in prayer was made, Paul taught that the peace of God that surpasses all understanding would "keep" (KJV) one's heart and mind in Christ Jesus, the KJV word "keep" translating the Greek verb, *phroureo* that means "a garrison [of soldiers] keeping ward over a town," Phil. 4:7; Moulton & Milligan, The Voc. of the Grk. N. T., 1972, p. 677.
    - In other words, committing what concerned the inner man unto God in prayer would lead to the Lord's provision of peace that would protect that heart from the need to take on more restless, unbelieving care.
  - Yet, a mind emptied of anxious care can be tempted to retrieve those removed, anxious thoughts if that mind is not filled with new, edifying thoughts, so Philippians 4:8-9 directs believers on what to think:
    - Paul then called his readers to have a forebearing, non-retaliatory and selfless attitude in thinking on what was (1) true (*alethe*) and not dishonest or unreliable, on what was (2) noble (*semna*), worthy of respect, on what was (3) right (*dikaios*), conforming to God's standard, on what was (4) pure (*hagna*), wholesome, not mixed with moral impurity, on what was (5) lovely (*prospfile*), what promotes peace rather than conflict and on what was (6) admirable (*euphema*), what was positive and constructive, not negative and destructive, Ibid., Bib. Know. Com., N. T., p. 664; U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 690; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 194-196. Indeed, Paul added that anything that was excellent or worthy of praise was something the believer should focus on in his thinking, Philippians 4:8.
    - Once this commitment to fill the mind that had been emptied of anxious thoughts unto the Lord in prayer was filled with thoughts of these other virtuous entities, Paul's readers were to apply in their lives what they had learned, received, heard and seen in his own personal life and ministry, Philippians 4:9a.
    - In filling the mind with upright thinking and performing upright acts, Paul claimed the "God of peace would be with" his readers, Phil. 4:9b. This is a great climax: (1) emptying the mind of anxious thoughts by prayer leads to the **peace** of God *guarding* one (Phil. 4:7), but (2) in **further** filling that emptied mind with righteous thoughts and busying one's self in doing what was right, the "**God** of peace would be **with** them," and the word "with" translates the Greek preposition *meta*, meaning "in the company of," Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 509-511. Filling the mind with God's thoughts and applying them in one's life would lead to blessed, intimate fellowship with the Lord, producing great inner peace.

***Lesson:*** *Gaining inner peace to diffuse the inner unrest that spawns selfish ambition behind troubled relationships occurs as a believer (1) empties his mind of anxious thoughts by giving them in prayer to God to address, and then (2) filling that emptied mind with Biblical, edifying thoughts and (3) applying one's self to do edifying acts in life.*

***Application:*** *May we heed the Philippians 4:5-9 directive to replace our inner unrest that harms our relationships with inner peace that edifies first our own inner man, and that in turn leads to edifying relationships with others.*