

PHILIPPIANS: REPLACING SELFISH AMBITION WITH GODLY ACHIEVEMENT

Part XIV: The Missionary Giving God Richly Reimburses

(Philippians 4:14-23)

I. Introduction

- A. As we have often noted in this lesson series, the Philippian believers lived in a culture marked by selfish ambition and strife, what tempted them to relate to one another in a sinfully selfish way, cf. Philippians 4:2.
- B. However, in the realm of giving to missionaries like the Apostle Paul, these believers had so overcome selfish ambition that they set an example for believers throughout Church History. Indeed, God richly reimbursed these believers for that ministry, so we view the details of that work in Philippians 4:14-23 for our insight:

II. The Missionary Giving God Richly Reimburses, Philippians 4:14-23.

- A. Philippians 4:19 presents Paul sharing God's promise with his readers that God would supply all of their **material** needs (cf. v. 15) according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, and Dr. Ryrie notes, "The church that gives to missionaries will have its own needs met," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Phil. 4:19.
- B. Actually, the whole Philippians 4:14-23 context presents a number of qualifications that are needed for God to be so pleased with the donor and with his donations that He will respond by amply meeting the donor's every material need, so we view that passage for our insight and consequent edification (as follows):
 1. Paul's believing Philippian donors gave in special ways that God approved, Phil. 4:14-16, 18a, 21-22:
 - a. Paul's donors pleased God by addressing Paul's **material hardships**, Philippians 4:14:
 - i. Upon evangelizing these Philippian believers, Paul and Silas had their clothes torn off of them and were severely beaten and jailed before God had miraculously released them, cf. Acts 16:11-26.
 - ii. From there, they had traveled to Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and Corinth, facing repeat opposition (Acts 17:1-18:22), what would have led to rapid flights and food and other material lacks!
 - iii. Accordingly, these Philippian believers addressed these needs created by Paul's ministry troubles.
 - b. Paul's donors pleased God by giving **faithfully** to address Paul's material needs, Philippians 4:15-16:
 - i. The Philippians were the first and sole church to give to Paul when he left Macedonia, Phil. 4:15.
 - ii. When Paul was in Thessalonica, the Philippians repeatedly donated to meet Paul's needs, v. 16.
 - c. Paul's donors gave **ample** donations to address his material needs, Phil. 4:18a,b:
 - i. The apostle reported that the gifts he had received from the Philippian believers through the agency of Epaphroditus caused him to abound, eradicating his material needs, Philippians 4:18a.
 - ii. Accordingly, their donations were likened to a sweet odour God would smell upon accepting a man's sacrifice at the temple, meaning God was well-pleased with their ample donations, v. 18b.
 - d. Paul's donors gave toward an **effective missionary** in Paul, Philippians 4:21-22 with 1:12-14:
 - i. When closing his Philippian epistle, Paul sent greetings especially from believers in their emperor's own household, what would have greatly encouraged these Philippian believers, Phil. 4:21-22.
 - ii. Paul could share these greetings since he was instrumental in leading them to Christ through his exposure to the praetorium guards in Rome, the imperial guards, who were at times chained to Paul as a captive audience where he could evangelize them, Philippians 1:13; *Ibid.*, ftn. to Phil. 1:13.
 - iii. Thus, Paul was certainly a credible, effective missionary, worth his donors' financial support.
 2. God responded to such giving with ample material reimbursements for the donors, Phil. 4:17, 18b, 19-20:
 - a. God kept an account of the donations by Paul's Philippian readers, Philippians 4:17, 18b.
 - b. Accordingly, God promised to supply all of the material needs of Paul's donors, Philippians 4:19.
 - c. In the end, God would be eternally glorified in such giving by formerly lost Philippians to a formerly lost Paul, for their lives and deeds had been transformed by the salvation that is in Jesus Christ, Phil. 4:20.

Lesson: Paul's readers gave to address his material needs wrought in the hardships he faced in his missionary ministry, doing so faithfully, amply and that given to an effective, reputable missionary. The Lord kept a record of it all and thus amply reimbursed all the material needs of Paul's donors to the glory of the grace of God toward all.

Application: (1) To give to missionaries in ways that God will amply bless by way of material reimbursement, we need (a) to give to meet real needs that counter hardships in the ministries that missionaries face, (b) to give faithfully, (c) to give an ample supply to address the missionaries' needs and (d) to give to spiritually effective, credible servants of God. (2) God keeps a record of all such factors in our giving and reimburses us as donors to meet all of our own material needs in accord with His great grace toward all involved.