

GEMS FROM THE ENDINGS OF THE EPISTLES
Part XII: Gems From The Ending Of Philippians, A. D. 60-61
(Philippians 4:10-23)

I. Introduction

- A. The epistle of Philippians was written by the Apostle Paul from Rome during his first Roman imprisonment around A. D. 60-61 (Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 434, 647).
- B. Paul wrote this letter “as both a thank-you note and as a word of greeting and exhortation” (Ibid., p. 664). The Philippian believers had sent Paul a financial gift through their messenger Epaphroditus, so the ending of the epistle not only expressed Paul’s thanksgiving for that gift, but it also taught valuable truth on the relationship of believers to finances and financial provisions in general and to believers’ donations to missionaries.
- C. We thus view Philippians 4:10-23 for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. Gems From The Ending Of Philippians, A. D. 60-61; Philippians 4:10-23.

- A. Philippians 4:10-14 teaches the proper view that a believer should have of financial and material possessions:
 - 1. Paul expressed his joy that his Philippian readers had revived their concern for his welfare so as to contribute financially to meeting his material needs as a prisoner of Rome, Philippians 4:10a.
 - 2. This concern by his readers had persisted for some time, a fact that Paul mentioned, but the believers at Philippi had formerly lacked opportunity to express their concern with financial contributions, Phil. 4:10b.
 - 3. However, since Paul was not like a false teacher who sought financial donations as a goal (cf. Philippians 3:18-19), he was quick to balance his expression of appreciation for his readers’ donation with his godly view of material provisions in Philippians 4:11-13 as follows:
 - a. Paul did not want his readers to think that he was suffering undue anxiety or pain just because he had lacked material or financial provisions, Philippians 4:11a.
 - b. To explain why he was unmoved by even a lack of material or financial provisions, Paul wrote that he had “learned . . . less through instruction than through experience” (*manthano*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 491) in his life as an apostle that in whatever material or financial state he faced, and regardless where he was at the time, how to be “content, self-sufficient” (*autarkes*, Ibid., p. 122) in that state, Philippians 4:11b-12.
 - c. The enabling for such contentment and self-sufficiency amid all material and financial states grew out of Paul’s reliance on Christ through Whom he could achieve such contentment and self-sufficiency, v. 13!
 - 4. On the other hand, Paul did not want his readers to think that he did not appreciate their donation just because he knew how to be self-sufficient without it, so he added that his readers had done well in sending him their donation to ease his material affliction in his imprisonment, Philippians 4:14 with 1:13.
- B. Paul then gave invaluable instruction on believers’ donations to missionaries like himself, Philippians 4:15-20:
 - 1. The apostle reminded the Philippian believers that in the beginning of his gospel ministry, when he left Macedonia, no other church had donated to his material needs except them, Philippians 4:15.
 - 2. Indeed, even when he was in Thessalonica, the Philippians believers had donated twice to Paul’s ministry, and Paul mentioned this not that he lusted after their gifts, but because he desired spiritual fruit on the part of his donors before the Lord, Philippians 4:16-17. This statement reveals that those who donate to missions are credited by the Lord for their donations as a valuable ministry in itself.
 - 3. Paul expressed his testimony that the latest gift of the Philippians sent to him by Epaphroditus amounted to a spiritual sacrifice before the Lord, what was pleasing to Him, Philippians 4:18.
 - 4. Accordingly, Paul stated that God would supply all the material and financial needs of his donors according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, Philippians 4:19. Thus, “(t)he church that gives to missionaries will have its own needs supplied,” Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Philippians 4:19.
 - 5. Paul then gave a short doxology to the Lord for His glory in such financial transactions, Philippians 4:20.
- C. The Apostle Paul then closed his Philippian epistle with a short salutation, calling for the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ to be will all of his readers, Philippians 4:21-23.

Lesson: (1) *Whether they face material and financial lack or bounty, believers will be self-sufficient if they depend on the Lord.* (2) *Nevertheless, it is always pleasing to God for believers to donate to the material and financial needs of other believers.* (3) *Believers who give to missionaries will see God meet their own material needs.*

Application: *May we apply Paul’s words on relating well to finances and material possessions for God’s blessing.*