



## **"Stand Firm in the Lord"**

Paul's letter to the Philippians offers some key elements to "Maintaining the Joy of the Lord No Matter What".

The true secret is Deeping relationship with and commitment to Jesus Christ.

Truly knowing Jesus bring true joy and enables us to experience inner joy even when our outer world seems in chaos.

The first ingredient is found in the first chapter where Paul calls us to adopt the

### **I. ADOPT THE RIGHT AXIS -- SUPERIOR PERSPECTIVE**

*The Exaltation of Christ in Everything  
Passion to Praise Jesus*

### **II. MAINTAIN THE RIGHT ATTITUDE -- SUPERIOR PATTERN OF LIVING**

*Humble Obedience modeled by Jesus  
Passion to Please Jesus*

### **III. PURSUE THE RIGHT AIM – SUPERIOR PURSUIT 3:1-21**

*Knowing and Living Christ  
Passion to Pursue Christ above all else*

- A. Paul warned against false Christianity 3:1-2**
- B. Paul affirmed genuine Christianity 3:3**
- C. Paul shared his own passionate pursuit of Jesus 3:7-14**
- D. Paul invited the Philippians to join his pursuit of Christ 15-17,20**
  - 1. The invitation to imitate Paul 3:15-17**
    - a) Think right 3:15*
    - b) Live Right 3:16-17*
  - 2. The Incentive to imitate Paul 3:20-21**
    - a) We are Citizens of heaven 3:20a*
    - b) We are eagerly awaiting Jesus' return 3:20b*
    - c) We are eagerly awaiting final transformation 3:21*
- E. Paul lamented those not pursuing Christ 3:18-19**

## IV. Practice the right actions – Superior Practice 4:1-8

*Passion to live well*

To adopt the right axis, maintain the right attitude, pursue the right aim brings a level of joy no matter what.

It is another thing to practice the right actions.

Joy comes from practicing the right behavior.

There is joy in living well before God.

Pleasing God brings joy.

Of course there are numerous joy producing behaviors but Paul identifies six followed by a summary exhortation to practice what he taught and lived.

- Stand Firm in the Lord 4:1
- Live in Harmony in the Lord 4:2-3
- Rejoice in the Lord 4:4
- Radiate Gentleness 4:5
- Pray about everything 4:6-7
- Meditate on good things 4:8

*What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:9*

Today I want to explore Paul’s first behavioral exhortation.

### EXPOSITION

#### A. Stand firm in the Lord 4:1

*Therefore, my brothers, dearly loved and longed for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, dearly loved.*

##### 1. Paul’s passionate connection

Notice the multiplication of relational references.

My brothers – Not servants but brothers, equals under Christ.

Dearly loved (beloved) Plural. I love you all.

Longed for – Passion to reunite

My joy and crown victory wreath

“crown”

*The particular Greek word for “crown” here refers to the victor’s garland or wreath placed upon the head of the victor in the athletic games. It was given for*

*military valor. It was used at festal occasions as an expression of gladness. This garland was woven of oak leaves, ivy, myrtle, olive, or of flowers, violets or roses. Paul's garland of victory in his Christian service was composed of the Philippian saints whom he had won to the Lord Jesus. Wuest, K.S., 1997.*

He finishes again with “Dearly loved” (beloved)

There seemed to be an emotional connection with this congregation more than any other.

Paul's tone even amidst solemn instruction was deeply relational and family.

## **2. Paul's solemn instruction**

### **a) *The logical connection “therefore”***

Not too many pay attention to the little things in Scripture.

These letters were written through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

We should then exercise diligence to discover what it actually says not what we think it says without due diligence to the text.

Only after careful exploration of the text can we attempt any application to our life.

Paul told Timothy to demonstrate himself as a servant without shame.

We demonstrate that by accurately handling the word of truth.

It has been my lifelong ambition to work hard to discover what God said through the Holy Spirit to the original readers and by extension to today's church family.

I may not be flamboyant or entertaining but I work hard at being faithful to the word of God.

One helpful tool has to do with discovering the logical flow of any given passage. Much of that logic is triggered by what could be called “connectors”.

They are those little words that connect phrases.

Words like because, therefore, for, that, so that, wherefore etc.

Paul's solemn instruction begins with a “therefore”.

This connector signals some sort of logical connection to a previous discussion.

John MacArthur links the context the whole context of chapter 3.

*The passage opens with the transitional word therefore, which indicates that what Paul is about to write builds on what he has just written. The preceding passage (3:12-21) described the believer's pursuit of Christlikeness, which is both the **goal** in this life and the **prize** in the next life. MacArthur New Testament Commentary*

The immediate context had to do with the call to follow Paul's life example, awareness of those living as enemies of the cross, the anticipation of Christ's return and our ultimate transformation at that return.

In light of those things, Paul called for the church family to STAND FIRM. They were to stand firm as a Christian outpost in a dark world.

Interestingly, Paul uses another connector "thus" or "in this way" This connector word is used to point to whatever precedes OR follows.

In this case, I think Paul intends to connect the concept of "standing firm" with the specific behaviors detailed in what follows i.e. harmony, gentleness, rejoicing, prayer, good meditation, consistent practice of godly behavior.

We have both the reason why "therefore" and the means "in this way" for standing firm.

### ***b) The solemn instruction to "stand firm"***

Paul used a military term meaning to hold your ground.

The Romans were known for never backing down and holding their ground.

They conquered territory and kept it.

This is similar to Paul's earlier instruction.

*Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; Philippians 1:27*

*So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; Philippians 2:12*

*Only let us hold true to what we have attained. Philippians 3:16*

He was confident that such perseverance was God's will.

*for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Philippians 2:13*

*For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:6*

Paul instructed this church to stand firm in the face of difficulty, opposition and persecution.

He referenced his own struggle in chapter one.

He referenced the Judaizers who were attempting to add requirements to salvation.

He referenced the enemies of the cross who had a complete different focus.

He referenced partnership in Christ's suffering.

He referenced sorrow, sickness, concern.

There were subtle references that all was not well between members of the church.

All of these things individually and combined could cause anyone to crumble.

He used a habitual action plural command.

He admonished the WHOLE church to keep on standing firm together.

The following few verses serve as the specific elements involved in standing together including, getting along, rejoicing, prayer, gentleness, pure thinking.

The opposite of standing firm could be to fall, stumble, defect, give up, lose heart, grow weary, doubt, run away, lose focus on knowing Christ, get distracted, tossed to and fro.

Scripture often addresses these tendencies under persecution.

A good soldier of Jesus Christ employs every resource to stand firm in the fight.

In light of the Lord's imminent return keep standing in the face of difficulty.

When Paul came to the end of his life and ministry, he claimed to have stood firm.

*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I*

*have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. 2 Timothy 4:6-8*

John expressed joy over those disciples who stood firm.

*For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth. 3 John 1:3-4*

### **c) The divine connection “in the Lord”**

To be in the Lord has reference to our identity with Him; our connection to Him.

It recognizes that connection of us with Him and He with us.

It is the basis for faithfulness, warfare, perseverance.

It is like standing firm through His empowering grace.

Not only is it His power that will eventually conform us to His physical image but also a daily steadfast growth in His moral image.

*To stand firm in the Lord means that we remain strong and resolute in union with our Lord by exhibiting his Lordship over our lives, by following our Lord’s way to the cross, and by walking in unity with each other in our corporate union with our Lord. Hansen, G.W., 2009.*

Jesus clearly communicate the necessity of connection with Him to His disciples.

*“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. John 15:4-5*

## **APPLICATION**

Some of the specifics of standing firm in the Lord will be discussed as we address the rest of this passage.

I finish today by sharing some of the insights I gleaned from the multitude of passages related to this vital admonition so relevant to the times in which we live.

Because there are so many, I will categorize them and summarize the central ideas from the passages.

## **Stand firm against persecution and false teaching**

This is the context of our present passage.

We are to stand firm against those who would pervert the gospel.

Peter wrote not to be carried away with the air of lawless people and lose our stability. His solution was to continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:17-18

Jesus warned that they would be persecuted, put in prison and even killed. Jesus told them to endure and promised a special work of the Holy Spirit. Luke 21:12  
Jesus praised one of the churches in Revelation because of their intolerance false teaching, perseverance and endurance against the opposition. Revelation 2:2

Paul told Philippians that God gives the church with pastors so they would come to the unity of the faith and not be tossed to and fro every strange teaching. Eph 4

## **Stand firm in the truth**

there are many passages that reference the need to hold onto what we believe in our trust in God.

Paul told the Thessalonians to stand firm and hold to the traditions which he had taught them. 1 Thess 2:13-17

Paul told the Romans that it was through Jesus Christ that we have obtained our introduction by faith into grace in which we stand firm. Romans 5:1

Paul told the Corinthians that he had made known to them the gospel in which they stood and were to continue to hold fast the word that was preached to them. 1 Cor 15:1-2

Jesus told the church of Sardis to wake up and strengthen their faith. They were to remember what they had received and to keep it and repent. Revelation 3:1-3

Peter wrote and exhorted them to stand firm in the truth that he taught. 1Pet 5:12-14

Paul told the Romans and it was the preaching of the gospel that establish them. Rom 16

Paul told Timothy pay close attention to his teaching and to persevere. 1 Tim 4:16

Paul told the Corinthians to be on the alert and stand firm in the faith be strong. 16

He told the Galatians to keep standing firm in their freedom. Gal 5:1

Paul told Timothy to fight the good fight to pursue perseverance and take hold of the eternal life to which he had been called. 1 Tim 6:11-12

### **Stand firm against temptation and Trials**

Paul told the Corinthians that God doesn't allow temptation above what they were able but when temptation comes he would provide a way of escape so that they could endure whatever they were facing. 1 Corinthians 10:11-13

Paul told the Thessalonians that he was concerned that the tempter might tempt them was confident that God would cause them to be established. 1 Thes 3:1-13

Both Paul and James wrote that we were to consider it all joy when we encounter various trials because trials produce endurance and endurance brings about maturity. James 1:2-4; Rom 5:1-5

### **Stand firm against the devil**

Paul, James and Peter all exhort us to resist the devil, which means to stand firm against whatever he tries to do. We are to submit to God and humbly stand in the strength of the Lord and stand with the armor of truth regarding Christ.

Eph 6:10-17; James 4:6-10; 1 Pet 6:6-10

### **We are to stand firm against the world system**

Don't become friends with the world. James  
Love not the world 1 John

### **We are to stand firm against the pull of the flesh**

We are to abstain from every form of evil. 1 Thes 5:22

We are to obtain sexual immorality. 1 Thes 4:3

We are to abstain from wickedness. 2 Tim 2:19

We are to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. 1 Pet 2:11

### **We are to stand firm in the weariness of life and ministry**

Paul told the Romans that through perseverance and encourage them of the Scriptures we have hope. Rom 16:1-6

Paul prayed that the Colossians would find strength and power from the Lord for the attaining of all steadfastness and long-suffering in our attempt to walk worthy of the Lord. Col 1:9-12

Paul encouraged the Corinthians to be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. 1 Cor 15:58

Paul encouraged the Corinthians, Thessalonians and the Galatians not to lose heart or grow weary in well doing. 2 Cor 4:16-18; Gal 6:9-10; 2 Thess 3:13.

The writer of Hebrews encourages us to run this race with endurance by looking to Jesus and to consider his steadfastness along with others who have faithfully run the race. Heb 12:1-8 also James 5:5-11

### **Stand firm in unity.**

We will address this in two weeks as we look to the rest of this passage in Philippians. One of the keys to standing firm is doing it together.

### **Stand firm in the Lord.**

Many passages deal with the fact that we are not on our own. We have God's continued work in our life. Paul told that baloney and the Lord is faithful and he will strengthen and protect us from the evil one he will direct our hearts into the love of God and the steadfastness of Christ. 2 Thess 3:1-5

Peter said the God of all grace will himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. 1 Pet 5:9-12

June said that it is God who is able to keep you from stumbling and make you stand in the presence of his glory blameless with great joy. Jude 1:24-25

Paul will specify some of the elements involved in standing firm. After the command to stand firm he talks about unity, rejoicing, gentleness, grateful prayer in place of worry, thinking right things.

These are the elements that enable us to stand firm in the Lord.

*What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:9*

We can't do it without God.

We can't do it alone.

### **I AM A SOLDIER IN GOD'S ARMY**

I am a soldier in the Army of my God.

The Lord Jesus Christ is my Commanding Officer. The Holy Bible is my Code of Conduct.

Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, prayer, and the Word are my weapons of warfare.

I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, Trained by experience, and Tried by adversity and tested by fire.

I am a volunteer in this Army, and I am enlisted for Eternity. I will either retire in this Army at the Rapture or die in this Army; but I will not get out, sell out, be talked out, or pushed out.

I am faithful, Reliable, Capable, and dependable.

If my God needs me, I am there.

If He needs me in the Sunday school, To teach the children, Work with the youth, Help adults, Or just sit and learn, He can use me because I am there! I am a soldier.

I am not a baby. I do not need to be pampered, Petted, Primed up, Pumped up, Picked up Or pepped up. I am a soldier. No one has to call me, Remind me, Write me, Visit me, Entice me, Or lure me. I am a soldier.

I am not a wimp. I am in place, saluting my King, Obeying His orders, praising His name, and building His kingdom! No one has to send me flowers, Gifts, food, cards, candy or give me handouts.

I do not need to be cuddled, coddled, Cradled, Cared for, or catered to. I am committed.

I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around.

I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside.

I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit.

When Jesus called me into His Army, I had nothing. If I end up with nothing, I will still come out ahead. I will win.

My God has and will continue to supply all of my needs. I am more than a conqueror.

I will always triumph. I can do all things through Christ.

Devils cannot defeat me. People cannot disillusion me. Weather cannot weary me. Sickness cannot stop me.

Battles cannot beat me. Money cannot buy me. Governments cannot silence me And Hell cannot handle me.

I am a soldier.

Even death cannot destroy me. For when my Commander Calls me from this battlefield, He will promote me to Captain and then allow me to rule with Him.

I am a soldier in the Army, and I'm marching claiming victory.

I am following my commander who always leads us in triumph.

I will not give up. I will not turn around.

I am a soldier, armed with His armor, I will take my stand and engage the enemy.

Here I stand! Will you stand with me?