

STAND FIRM IN THE LORD (Philippians 4)

REVIEW: As we enter the last chapter of Philippians it is important to never lose sight of the book's beautiful presentation of the fourfold Christ in relation to the experience of the believer:

Chapter 1: Christ our LIFE

Key verse: *For to me to live is Christ and to die gain (v. 21).*

Application: LIVE for Christ in all circumstances.

Chapter 2: Christ our MIND

Key verse: *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus (v. 5).*

Application: LOVE like Christ in all relationships.

Chapter 3: Christ our GOAL

Key verse: *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (v. 14).*

Application: LOOK to Christ in all decisions.

Chapter 4: Christ our STRENGTH

Key verse: *I can do all things through Him who strengthens me (v. 13).*

Applications: LEAN on Christ in all challenges.

OVERVIEW OF PHILIPPIANS 4: The command in verse one “to stand firm in the Lord” is the leading thought in chapter 4. Like soldiers on the front lines of battle, believers are admonished never to give up or retreat in the face of persecution, temptation, or adversity, but to remain faithful to Christ and advance the gospel. In chapter 4 Paul shares seven ways “to stand firm in the Lord.”

1. Stand firm through harmony in the church (vs. 1-3)
2. Stand firm through joy in the Lord (v. 4)
3. Stand firm through graciousness toward others (v. 5)
4. Stand firm through God's peace in prayer (vs. 6-7)
5. Stand firm through right thinking (vs. 8-9)
6. Stand firm through contentment with Christ (vs. 10-13)
7. Stand firm through sacrificial giving to the cause of Christ (vs. 14-23)

STAND FIRM THROUGH HARMONY IN THE CHURCH (Philippians 4: 1-3)

Two Important Points:

1. The appeal “to live in harmony in the Lord” in Philippians 4: 3 is not an appeal for unity at the expense of the foundational truths of Christianity. When fundamental gospel truths are at stake it is necessary to divide (Galatians 1: 6-9). But this was not the issue in Philippi.

2. Philippians 4: 1-3 is also not a hopeless appeal for perfect agreement on every issue. Paul is appealing for a mental attitude in which believers find harmony in being committed to the same priority of exalting Christ and advancing the gospel (Philippians 1: 27; 2: 1-8).

Therefore my beloved brethren... Harmony is rooted in the fact that believers are one FAMILY sharing a common Father and Lord. Therefore, I am obligated to receive as my brother or sister the one God has already received as His son or daughter (Romans 12: 10).

...whom I long to see, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved... When a believer refuses to heal a breach between another believer, the error of the division is greater than the issue that caused the breach because the division is an ASSAULT on the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 1: 10-13).

I urge Euodia and Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord.

More important than winning the argument or holding onto a grudge is maintaining a CHRISTLIKE spirit toward one another (Ephesians 4: 1-3).

Indeed, true comrade, I ask you to help these women who have struggled in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. Harmony is found in:

- 1. Our common bond in the LOVE of Christ which motivates us to help one another (*I ask you to help these women*).**
- 2. Our common task to advance the GOSPEL of Christ which is greater than all other issues (*these women who have struggled in the cause of the gospel*).**
- 3. Our common destiny to live in HEAVEN with Christ. It is totally inconsistent in light of the unity we will experience in heaven to live in disunity on earth (*whose names are in the book of life*).**