

# Philippians 1:6, 21; 2:5, 9; 3:10; 4:7, 11, 13, 19

Sunday 6/26/2005

## I. Introduction to the Book of Philippians

We have been coming through the whole Bible. We started our church a little bit before July 10th, but we decided to put our anniversary back in July. Two years ago, we started our church, and we told you when we began that what we were looking to do was to really just take young men and young ladies, couples, young couples, moms and dads—it doesn't matter who—that wanted to learn God and learn about God and learn the Bible. That was our goal.

We started going through and talking about some of the basic aspects that everybody needs to know about God, your relationship with God, and how it all works. We spent an enormous amount of time laying all that out and putting all that together. Then, once we got to a certain point, we came back and we started going through every book of the Bible. You know that on our Bible study on Thursday night, we're kind of tying it all together, trying to put all the material in there to try to get it to work. What we're trying to accomplish in these early stages of our church is to get the people who really want to build a relationship with God through the Word of God where they need to be in the Bible. That is so vitally important.

So many of God's people today, and I see this all the time, and it really, really bothers me, think that they can have some kind of relationship with God without ever having a relationship with the Word of God, where they really find out about God and all that He has. So we're excited in our church. We just really love the Word of God. We love the book, and we try to live it as best we can, but we know that it's the absolute infallible Word of God for all things in our lives. So that's how we have been approaching it for those of you that are visiting today, and for those of you that have been around, to remind you again, that's what we're all about.

Today, we've come to the point where we're going to talk about the book of Philippians. The book of Philippians is about a great church. This church was founded in the city of Philippi. The name Philippi means "lover of horses." The city was named after the father of Alexander the Great, which is Philip of Macedonia. If you're going through your Bible, coming through the book of Acts, you find that this was one of the cities that Paul visited on his first missionary journey. This would put it around A.D. 52, somewhere right around Acts 14 or 15.

When Paul visits the city of Philippi, he has a lot to do, if not the central theme, in starting this church, which in our Bibles is called the book of Philippians. Paul first visited the church in A.D. 52. But when he writes this epistle, it's some 10 years later. In fact, this is one of the prison epistles that we talked about when we got into a book a couple of weeks ago, and we talked about how he writes some books from being in prison. This is one of those books. He writes this sometime around A.D. 62 from a Roman jail, which would put it around Acts 28, while he's awaiting his trial.

## II. Paul's Favorite Church: Philippi

I have to tell you that this church is, without a doubt, of all the churches that Paul writes to, this church is my favorite church. When you come through your Bible, you'll find that Paul addresses seven churches. He writes to seven churches. I've always thought it was a great study, and it's something that I've done many, many years ago, how I looked at each church and I watched what Paul wrote to them, what he addressed them on. I always watched how he had a stiffer relationship with different churches based on what he wrote them.

I also know, and most of you know this too, in Revelation 1, 2, and 3, you find where John writes to seven churches. Next week, when we get into the book of Colossians, I'm going to show you how the seven churches that John writes to match up to the seven churches that Paul writes to. We know from our past studies in the Word of God that the churches in the book of Revelation represent the seven periods of church history. We know that from a doctrinal standpoint, as you lay out the book of Revelation, you have these seven churches coming through, starting with the church at Ephesus, which would be the first church around the book of Acts, right up to the church of Laodicea, which is the church of the rights of the people instead of the rights of God. That's where you and I live today. We live in the Laodicean church period.

We know that as you come through that period of time and you look at those seven churches, those seven churches represent a time from the early church right up through the next 2,000 years that brings us up to 2005 with where the church is and the problems the church has. We know that. Let me tell you something else about it. I know that historically, those churches represent seven local churches that are in the area of Asia Minor when John is living in A.D. 90.

Let me tell you something else. I know that those churches also represent, in a spiritual way, as you look at it and make the spiritual application, that those seven churches have seven distinct characteristics about them. I personally believe that if you would travel through America, which I've done for the last 35, 40 years of my life, and you'd see churches, visit churches, get to know churches, you would find that churches have characteristics about them. In fact, I think that the seven churches in the book of Revelation, plus the seven churches that Paul writes to, they go hand in hand. I believe that if you would travel around, you would find churches that have the same characteristics as the churches that Paul has when he writes to his churches and also the churches that John writes to in the book of Revelation.

I'll go one step further. Churches are made up of people. You'll have people in churches. Obviously, if the churches have characteristics about themselves, those characteristics have to come from the people that are in those churches. I'm going to tell you that not only do these seven churches that Paul writes to and the seven churches that John writes to represent characteristics of churches, they represent characteristics of Christians in those churches. That's a true statement. You're going to find that Paul writes to seven churches, and to me, it's always been a great study to look, as I said, at each church and see how they have characteristics and how Paul relates to each of them.

You know what? You have some churches that start out good and they wind up bad. That would be the church at Ephesus, the church that was fully purposed. It started out good, and then it wound up losing its first love, the Bible says in Revelation 2. You have churches that never have

anything to do with God or the Word of God and never have. They would be like the church at Colossae. We're going to study that next. Then you have some churches and Christians that are all like this, that are so shallow when it comes to the Word of God, they really don't understand the Bible, that they get blown about by every wind of doctrine, every new thing that comes down the road. They fall into it, and they're the ones that don't know anything about their Bible. They don't teach anything. They're like the book of Galatians.

Then you have churches, and you also have Christians. You have churches that are full of spiritual babies. They never got past the baby stage. They stay that way. They never really grow into a real understanding of the Word of God, and therefore they have all kinds of problems, all kinds of problems. There's a little church, and I won't tell you where it's at. We drive by it on the way to our church. Years ago, I don't know if Jamie remembers this, but years ago I took Jamie, and we went to this church. This church is, it's got a neat little deal in it. It's just a neat little church. So I thought, "Well, you know, it was a Sunday night. I just want to go see what's going on there." I'll tell you what, once I got there, I understood, "Well, that church will never grow," and it hasn't grown. The same seven cars are in the parking lot today as I drove by that were there how many years ago that was when we drove by.

I'm telling you what, this church was, everybody wanted to run everything. It was one of those things that there were a whole lot of chiefs, but there weren't any Indians. I thought to myself, "You know what, there's a church that's filled with spiritual babies where everybody, the moment we walked in the door, it wasn't, 'Hi, how you doing? We're glad you're here.' It was more like, 'Where'd you come from? Why are you here? What are you doing?'" I mean, it was like we just walked into an FBI investigation. I thought to myself, "Wow, that church, everybody," and a lot of churches are that way.

I remember one time we went to a church teaching discipleship. We didn't even make it the whole week because the deacons threw us out. The deacons threw us out because they didn't like the fact that people were coming to their church and getting saved. You know what one deacon told me? He says, "You and your fandangled discipleship program coming in here and bringing all these new people in. Let me ask you a question: How are we going to control these people when they all come in here?" I knew where I was at that point, and I knew I didn't have to stay the last two days. So we packed up and came home, but that's the way churches are. When Paul writes to these churches and he lays it out just as John does, I love looking at how he addresses these churches. From that study, the church at Philippi, the Philippian church, is my favorite church.

### III. The Philippian Christian

In the course of ministry, and some of you young men and ladies, as you get into the ministry down the line and you really, really begin to understand how to deal and work with people, you're going to find that in the course of your life dealing with people, you find all kinds of Christians. You find weak Christians, you find baby Christians, you find worldly Christians, you find self-righteous Christians, you find dysfunctional Christians, you find undisciplined Christians. I know you're not going to believe this, but you even find Christians who hate God

and the Word of God. I know that sounds like an impossible thing. One of the greatest enemies of the Word of God I ever met in my life was a saved man. He was absolutely the worst enemy to the Word of God or anybody who believed the Word of God, if anybody I met in my life. Yet to this day, I believe he was saved, and I believe that he was born again. But you find all kinds of Christians, all kinds of Christians.

Then in the middle of that, you have what I call Philippian Christians. Philippian Christians are the best. That's why this church is not only my favorite, but this church was Paul's favorite. You're going to find, when you study the book of Philippians, that Paul spends more time with them laying out more intimate details with them than any other church that he writes to. This church was a joy in his life. This church was a bunch of people who just wanted, men and women who just wanted to know what God said. They wanted to be more like God. They wanted to know more about God. All they wanted to do was for Paul to tell them more about God and His Word. Every once in a while in your life, you find men and women just like that. They're not around very often today, but you find them just like that. That's why this church is such a scarce church in the world today. Here's a group of people who just want to learn about God, want to learn everything they can about God, and they just want to get God's Word in their hearts and in their lives, and they just want to spend all the time they can. That's why in this book Paul writes some of the most incredible doctrinal spiritual concepts for your life and my life to really help us build our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm telling you, as you go through life as a Christian, and some of you, most of you probably already got this figured out, you're going to find and understand that there are all kinds of people, all kinds of Christians. Just as different Christians have different characteristics and personalities—some good, some bad, some indifferent—you're going to find churches in the same way.

#### IV. The "Old Dogs" Sermon

The first message I ever heard as a young man that really impacted my life, I was 11 years old, maybe I was 10. I don't remember exactly how old I was, but I remember that my mom and dad took me to church that morning. That morning I got to hear, as far as I am concerned, one of the greatest preachers that ever existed in the 20th century. His name was Bob Jones Sr. Bob Jones Sr. was one of the old Philadelphia preachers. He was one of the greatest preachers I ever heard in my life. John's got a tape of him preaching in chapel, isn't that where he's preaching, John? This is back in what, 1920 or 1930? It's really early. He died in '78 or '76, someplace in there.

When he got old and senile in the last years of his life, they had him on campus down there at Bob Jones University, where he was the founder of Bob Jones University. They had him on campus down there, and in the last years of his life, they would find the old man wandering around the campus, and he would have a Bible in one hand and a suitcase and have his coat on and his hat on, and they'd say, "Daddy, where are you going? Daddy, what are you doing?" He couldn't preach anymore, and he was senile, and he was walking around that campus, and he would say, "I'm going to the train station. I got to preach. I got to preach. I got to find the train station. I got to go preach." I thought to myself, "Wow, here's a man that preached all of his life.

When he got old and senile, all he could get in his brain was going out to preach." He was a great soldier.

He preached one of the greatest messages I ever heard that talks about both the different characteristics of Christians in a different way. I was about 10 or 11 years old when I heard him preach, and I never forgot that message, and that message impacted me as a young boy. It's the one thing that I thought about. Here I am 55 years old, and I still remember it almost every day of my life in some way when I'm dealing with people. You know when he preached? He preached out of 2 Peter 2:22, and he preached the sermon, "Some Old Dogs I Have Known." You have to understand, you couldn't preach this sermon in most churches today, "Old Dogs I Have Known." You'd offend too many people, but that old boy, he didn't give a flip.

You know what he did? He took the concept in the Bible that people are different and people have different characteristics. How many of us have always heard that people buy dogs like who they are? Now I believe that's true, and I'm an expert on dogs. My family, if you want to know what's wrong with me, just look at my family. My family back in Ohio, I mean, I love dogs. I've had 15 dogs in my lifetime. I've had every kind of dog there is. I know dogs. My mother is worse than I am. Right now, as we speak, and she's what, 80 years old, 79, something like that, she's got, I just talked to her this week, she's got six dogs and 20 cats. Oh no, my sister gets better. My sister's got nine dogs and 52 cats. They just bought a house that's got 12 garages in it. Big mansion, and they don't have any kids. I went to her house one time. She had two rooms, bedrooms up there, two dogs per bedroom. That was their room. Had their names on the door. No, I'm not that bad, but I'm pretty bad.

People wear things with what they like. Don't laugh at me. I've seen you wear a fishing shirt, and you like to fish. I've seen you wear with Jimmy. Well, let's forget the shirt you got on this morning. Why didn't you wear that neat car shirt you got on this morning? I know why some of you like to play golf. You got little golf shirts. I like two things in life outside of the Bible. One, dogs. I just had to bring this because my wife won't let me. The other one's astronomy. Now she won't let me wear this. I think this is a cool tie. Honey, you like that? Don't lie to your preacher. Now I think that's a nice tie. See, I like astronomy. That's a good tie. You like that tie? You like that? It's all right. Take time to fix your hair this morning, and you just come on into church. I'll get back at you. All right, you like it better now? Does it look better? I like that tie. Now that's a tie. You're like, "Oh, Mindy, you like that, don't you, Mindy?" I do. You bet you do. We wear things like the way we are, and I'm telling you right now, we do things because of things we like, and I'm telling you, we buy our dogs the way we are.

Old Bob Jones Sr. knew a great truth because in the Bible, Gentiles are like the dogs. In 2 Peter 2:22, that's what it says. The Gentiles in the Bible, saved or unsaved, are likened to dogs. That's why in the Old Testament you find all those acronyms about Gentiles likened to dogs. I'll never forget, and this is a true fact, I'm telling you. People are like, churches have different characteristics, and it's based on people, and people are like dogs, Gentiles. When you go out there, you know what, Old Bob Jones, he said, "You know, you got some Christians out there that are like collies. They're slow, loyal, patient, trustworthy, kind, lovable, friendly, and all they want to do is please." Years later I thought, "I know Christians just like that."

Then he says you got some that are like Chihuahuas. Yappy, snappy, nervous, wild-eyed. I always looked at a Chihuahua and thought it was a little Barney Fife from Mayberry. We got a, you know, don't let me offend you if you love Chihuahuas because I love all dogs. We got a cross the street from my house, a little dog called Bandit. Bandit's not a real dog, it's a rat with a genetic defect. Somebody showed it to these poor people as a dog. They put him out at two o'clock in the morning, for what reason I don't know. They put him out at night all day long, and that dog barks every day. When the street lights come on at dusk, that dog barks. I like him. I'll take biscuits, I'll go over and I'll pet that dog, and I'll talk to Bandit. He's ugly, but he's cute. Not my kind of dog. I like all dogs. That's why I like you guys. See, I like all dogs, but let's face it, there are different dogs. There are different dogs.

Old Bob Jones Sr. said, "You got some like collies." He says, "You got some like Chihuahuas." He says, "You got some like bulldogs." Bulldogs are slow, they're tenacious, they're stubborn, they're good-natured, but they're ugly. I can't help it. They are. If you got a bulldog, and I love your bulldog, but it looked like he was chasing a truck, and it stopped, and he didn't. I don't know what to tell you. He says, "You got poodles." Dainty, high-strung, prissy, effeminate. I've had two poodles. We had one in our family, Fifi. I bought your mother one, Pierre. Heavy on the first part of the name, light on the second. Pierre was a big one. Fifi was a small one. Fifi didn't walk anywhere. My dad carried her around in his arm. We'd get her shaved, get her trimmed. She had a little bouffant on top of her head, tail out with a little ball on it, trimmed around the legs, and she'd push around in the house like she was the Queen of Sheba.

Then the old boy said, "Then you got German Shepherds." Now I've had German Shepherds. I've had two German Shepherds. I like German Shepherds. I got three labs right now. I only did that because I'm more biblical than I used to be. I got all three colors. I got black, I got white, and I got brown. Noah's three sons were Ham, Shem, and Japheth. One was black, one was white, and one was Shemite brown, and I got all of them. I'm biblical. Call me Bible Bob if you want, but that's where I come from. But German Shepherds are alert. They're strong. They're fearless. They're loyal. They protect their owner. Yet they're submissive.

I don't get to watch it much anymore, but I used to like to watch Cops. The only reason I like Cops is because I like to watch for the dogs. I love it. I always thought to myself, "Now why can't people figure this out?" If I'm building a church, I know, I know, I know, but if I want a church, I know you got all kinds of people. I know you do. But you know what? I want collies and German Shepherds. I do. I mean, that's what I want. You can be whatever, but that's what really gets things done. I mean, you watch Cops, and you got some, you know, they have police dogs, and police dogs are really highly trained dogs. Most of them are German Shepherds. I love it. I watched up there. One night they had this guy that was up in the attic. Now this, it was a net, no, it wasn't this high, but it was as high as the ceiling in your house. The police are down there with their guns, and there's one little hole to go up there. This guy's not coming down. No police officer is going to go up there and stick his head up there and say, "Hey, you're under arrest." You're not going to do that. What do you do? You get the dog. They told this guy, "Come on down. We're going to send the dog up." Now that's all the dog had to hear. This dog, German Shepherd, he's ready to go. He's got a little ladder in his back pocket. He's ready to roll. After this

guy won't come down, they take that dog. I've never seen this in my life. They grabbed the trainer, got that dog by the collar, got him by the scruff of her back there. That dog leaped, and he put that dog in. That dog caught that thing. That guy pushed him up. For the next 35 seconds, you heard the loveliest sound you ever heard in your life. That guy gave up faster than anything else. That dog, he comes, the guy comes head down out of that thing, fell on the floor. That dog is right on top of him. In the middle of it, that handler says, "Cut!" And that dog just stopped. He's barking. He wants more, but he is submissive. Now, I could just see that. "Come on down. We're going to send up the dog." "All right. Bring in, bring in Pierre." "Oh yeah. Would you shoot Pierre when we throw him up there?"

I'm telling you, you got different kinds of Christians, and they make up different kinds of churches. God's people, Bob Jones Sr. said that he knew some old dogs in his life. He did. I'm telling you, that's the way it is. I've got another thing I'll tell you. I read this stuff all the time. I hear all these guys know this stuff comes out. They talk about, "Well, the pastor, he's the shepherd. The pastor, he's the shepherd." I read the New Testament, but I don't find one place anywhere in the New Testament. I never find it in Paul's place where Paul makes any reference to me as a pastor being a shepherd. I just thought, "I know Christ is the chief shepherd." No question. But I never read anywhere in the Bible that I as a pastor am supposed to be a shepherd. He's the shepherd. You know what my job is? My job is one of a sheepdog. I'm not a shepherd. I'm a Gentile dog saved by the grace of God, whom God has put over the flock of sheep.

Did you ever been out, one time I was out in Montana, and I stayed on a ranch out there. Greatest experience of my life. I'll tell you what, I got to watch. They took me out early in the morning on horseback. Oh, it was great. This ranch was, we think of farms, you know, this ranch was like 200,000 acres. They had cattle here and sheep here, and it was just unbelievable, mountains all around you. You'd ride two days on horseback to the upper pastures, where they have the cattle and all that. They went out that morning to bring the sheep down or whatever they were doing. They put me on horseback, and man, I'll tell you what, I wish I looked like a cowboy. There's a lot of things I don't. I looked like a cowboy, but I had chaps on. I had one of them crinkled up hats. They put spurs on me. I had spurs that jingle, jangle, jingle. I mean, I was walking around there. You couldn't tell me from the real cowboys. End of the day, you could. I was riding high on a saddle, and my blisters broke. I mean, it was a rough day on a horse. You ride all day on a horse sitting down. You ain't used to it. I don't know where they ever got the idea it was called "tenderfoot," but anyway, we're riding those horses down up there, and I'm up there, and all of a sudden up there, there's this old sheepdog. This sheepdog's running along. He gets up there. The other one comes up with him, and those dogs, those sheep are spread out everywhere. Those dogs circle those sheep. They bring those things in closer and closer. When they got a sheep that strayed out there, they go nipping at them. They're barking at them. They're chasing them, and the sheep are running in there. Before you know it, we're just sitting on the horses, and those dogs had those things all in the right place. There was one sheep way out there, way out there. The old boy said, "Get him!" Boy, that old dog goes, gathered both dogs out there. They, and I said, "Man, I mean, are they going to?" He said, "Oh, he won't hurt them. They won't, they'll never bite the sheep. They never hurt the sheep. They just get the sheep back in the fold with the

other sheep." I thought, "Amen." I'm telling you what, I'm not a shepherd. I'm a sheepdog. When you become a pastor, you become a sheepdog that watches out.

You know what happened when he got all those sheep down? The guy says, "Come on, we're going to go down." I says, "Where's the dog?" He said, "Didn't you see one sitting up there? Seems sitting up on the side of a hill. The other one's sitting over here on the side of the hill." I thought, "What are they doing up there?" He said, "Once they get them all down, they just stand up there and make sure while the sheep are eating and feeding, no wild animals come in to get the sheep." I thought, "That's a pretty good dog." Old Bob Jones Sr. knew what he was talking about. So you have different personalities of Christians, different characteristics of churches. I want to tell you something. Every once in a while in the Christian world, you find some German Shepherds, and you find some collies. Every once in a while in the Christian world, you find some Philippian Christians who just really want to learn all that they can about God. Paul has a more intimate relationship with this church than he does the rest. You know why? I'll tell you one of the reasons why, we're going to get to all of them today. He doesn't have to wade through a lot of baggage to begin to work with them and to help them.

Let me just say this. I know that when people come into church, people have problems. That's what it's all about. I never, I want when people come into a church, I know that most of them are dealing with some issue in their life. You know what? I think that's the greatest thing in the world because that's the first step for us to build a relationship in the Word of God. I never, never expect people coming into the church. Sometimes they don't, but most of the time, I never, I never, I never care about people coming into the church that have problems in the church. What gets problematic is when people who are in the church cause problems. That's the problem. Having problems is no problem. Causing problems becomes a problem.

This church at Philippi stands alone in one respect. It loved Paul and understood Paul's mission, and it was Paul's favorite. You see, this church had seen him suffer for Christ, and they knew and understood that he paid the price for them to be there as a church. He was evidently involved some way very intimately in winning many of them to the Lord and starting that church. They never forgot what he had done for them. They never got sidetracked from the great principles that he gave them. This church never took for granted. They never took for granted the Apostle Paul in their life. I'm telling you, because of that relationship, they had a special relationship with him, and he had a special relationship with them. Every once in a while in the ministry, every once in a while in the ministry, you'll find men or women who all they want to do is learn about God. They want to just get their marriages right. They want to get their families right. They want to get their own selves right. They just want to find a place that will quit taking advantage of them where they can just have all of the Bible they want, all of the Bible they want.

## V. The Mission of the Church

The theme of the book of Philippians is the mission of the church. No question about that. That's another great reason why this church and Paul get along, because Paul's heart was the mission that God called him to do. Each of us, and we're going to talk about this in a little bit, each of us have a mission. God saved you and I for a purpose, for a reason. This church understood that.

My philosophy of ministry is very simple. I've always tried to keep it simple. I know that going through life, you find all kinds of Christians, but every once in a while, you find Christians that just want to learn God. They want to learn all they can about the Bible. They're tired of the formalized religion. They're tired of playing the games. They're tired of putting the emphasis on money and everything else instead of the Word of God. They just want to go someplace where they can just learn the Bible to help raise their kids, to help to have a better marriage, to help them have a better relationship with God, and just to learn where they want to go. I'm telling you, and sometimes, not very often, but sometimes you find people just like that. To that kind of person, my response is this: You can have as much of me as you can stomach.

My philosophy of ministry is very simple. I've told you this from day one. My main job here, my mission in life as a child of God, my mission in life is to take young men and young ladies, young couples, moms and dads, anybody at any age, my mission in life and my job in life is to take you and help you be the best you can be, not only to your husband and to your wife and to your kids, but to the Lord Jesus Christ as you build that relationship that someday you will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ at the judgment seat of Christ, and you'll get everything coming to you because of the fact that you put your emphasis in the right place. You found out the mission that God has saved you for, and then you invested the rest of your life in that. We're going to talk about that as we go on here a little bit.

I love people that just love the Bible. I love people that just want to learn the Bible. I love people that just want to live what the Word of God says, and I know none of us are perfect. I said it before, all of us have problems. I don't care what problems you have today. Whatever problems you have in your marriage, in your personal life, with your children, at work, whatever problems you have can be solved when we get to the book that solves them. There's a big difference, as I said, and I'll say it again, between having problems and causing problems, and I thank God that we've got a church here that does not cause problems. It helps solve the problems, and I'll tell you, it's a great thing. These people had come to the place that they understood the great Proverbs 27:7, which says:

*Proverbs 27:7*

*The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.*

They had come to the place where even the tough things in the Bible were sweet to them. There was nothing you could say to this church that they wouldn't look and take it internally and digest it internally first. They didn't get offended by what Paul told them. They're not like the church at Corinth that was asking for proof of who he was in the midst of the greatest Christian that ever lived's ministry. They weren't arguing with him over other things and disputing with him. This church simply put said, "Paul, we know who you are. We know God put you in my life, and you can tell me to stand on my head for 20 minutes a day, and I'll do it." They simply wanted to build a relationship with God. That is the church at Philippi. They have the same mission as Paul, the same mission as Paul, the same mission as Paul.

Of course, sometimes when you come through the ministry and you deal with people, and like I said earlier, you find people who come in from all walks of life, but you're going to find a brand

of Christian, and they're still out here today. Our church is living proof of it, and I know there's more out there. If somebody wants to learn the Bible, build a relationship with God, as I told you when we started this church, I will spend an hour a week with anybody who wants to learn the Bible. You can sit out in my home, and you can ask me questions about the Bible. You can bring your list. I'll teach you something. I'll answer any questions that you have. There's nothing that you can't ask me. You can have whatever time you want to do whatever you want to help you build your relationship with God because we will take that and we will build into your life those things that we need to have. I've told you from day one, I am not interested in building the biggest church in the world, just the best, and the best has to come down to your relationship with the Word of God.

You know how it is? You love that book. I love that book. There ain't nothing we can't work through in life because the common bond is the mission, and because of this Bible-based love for God and the Word of God and their relationship, this church was Paul's favorite. Paul is more intimate. He is more personal with them. He shares with them great principles of biblical doctrine that are practical for their everyday life more than any other church. Not until you get to First and Second Timothy, where Paul now switches gears and he deals with a young man preparing him in the intimate fashion for the ministry, do you get this kind of material. This book is built around nine of the greatest New Testament spiritual concepts of which every Christian's life is built on. If I would take the Christian life and solidify it down to nine things, they'd be found in this book, and most of them you already know, I'm sure. I'm going to go through them, and I'm going to show you why this church had the relationship that it had with Paul and how Paul dealt with them on these nine intimate relationships, giving it to them.

## VI. Nine Great Principles for the Christian Life

Now we're going to come through chapter by chapter, and you'll see what I mean. Chapter one teaches and is built around two of the great mission verses for your life and my life, and it says in chapter one, verse six:

*Philippians 1:6*

*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*

Let me just say this to you. God has a mission for you. There's a reason God saved you. There's a reason why God saved you when He did. If you read Jeremiah 1, then you know that God is in charge and knows through foreknowledge everything that is going to happen, even though God keeps the hand of free will in it and lets man choose it. God knows exactly what is going to happen, and of course, God's whole plan around this universe and this world is built around that Bible that lays it all out. There's a reason why God allowed you to go through the events in your life. There's a reason why you've got the problems you're struggling with right now, maybe in your marriage, maybe in your personal life. It doesn't matter to me. I never care what problems a person has because I've learned over the years that if you do what's right with the Bible and you focus the problems you have to solve them, down the line you'll be more value to me because I

can put you in a situation that you can deal with somebody else with the same problem because you have learned through those problems. That's why I want to be intimately involved in helping you learn that Bible one on one every way we can. Besides that, isn't it fun? You bet it is. One of the greatest times I have in a week is the times I spend with you guys just going through the Bible. Sometimes I go home, I feel like somebody put a vacuum cleaner on both my ears and sucked everything out backwards. I mean it, but what a great feeling.

God has a mission for you. Let me ask you a question, and I'm talking to Christians now that maybe you've only been saved a short time, or maybe you never really got into a church or never really got into the Bible, and you've kind of just been finding your way along, and now you're looking for something. I'm not talking to you about this. Let me ask you a question: Have you been saved, duly saved, and really supposedly into this thing for five, ten, fifteen years? Do you know what your mission is? Don't tell me it's winning people to Christ. That's not your mission. That's just a byproduct of your intimate relationship with Christ. There's another reason why God has saved you.

I talked last week when we talked about the church at Ephesus, and I told you that the church at Ephesus had a mission. That mission was for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ. It was for the work in the ministry. That is my mission. My mission is clearly defined in my life. There's one thing I do better than anything else in my life, and I'm not bragging to tell you about it. I'm just telling you this is what God has called me to do. This is my mission in life, and that is taking men and women wherever they're at in life and getting them from this point to this point in this book. I do that better than anything else I do in life. You know why? That's what God's called me to do. God's called me to take men and women, young couples, and take them from a hopeless world where they're struggling with problems in life and put their feet solidly in the Word of God where they can use biblical principles to make every decision in life.

We live in a bad world out there today. We live in a world that wants to damn your kids' souls to hell. We live in a world that wants to destroy your marriage. We live in a world that wants to tear apart everything that you hold holy. Let me tell you something, and you won't get it by just going to church and sitting down. You won't get it by giving all your tithe and giving it. You get it. Forget that stuff. You get it by getting in a book that God gave you and taking the time to learn the principles to solve where you're at and then go where God wants you to go and fulfill your mission. He says:

*Philippians 1:6*

*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*

Let me just say this in addition to that, this is where the first attack of the devil is going to be. The devil wants to keep you from fulfilling that mission. He's been very successful in most of God's people's lives. He wants to get them focused on all the wrong things. He wants to get them involved in all the wrong things. Life is very simple. At the end of your Christian life, you're going to look back, and your epitaph is going to be simply this: "Here's a man or a woman that

found out what God wanted to do with them in their life and did it," or "Here's somebody that didn't."

You see that verse says that God is going to, that God is going to, He began a good work in you, and He's going to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. That's the rapture of the church, the day of Jesus Christ. The truth of that verse is God is going to perform it in your life, whether you're willing or whether you're not. You know why? Because at the end of your life, God's going to hold you up as an example to everybody else of how to do it, or God's going to hold you up as an example of how not to do it. You'll either train, you'll either make your marriage work and raise your kids right, and you'll be held up by other believers to look around and want to find it for young couples struggling. They'll say, "I can go here because there's a man and a woman that had it together," or you're going to go this way wherever you go. At the end of your life, it will simply be this: "Here is somebody that figured it out and went along with the program," and "Here's somebody that did their own thing." Life is simple. I'm going to tell you, that is one of the greatest verses, greatest principles for you and for I, understanding that God saved you and I for a reason. He began a good work in you, and He wants to perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

But the second great principle goes along with the first one that's found in chapter 1, verse 21. It says:

*Philippians 1:21*

*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

You know what? If I'm honest with you this morning, I'm almost embarrassed to quote that verse today to God's people. I'm almost embarrassed to quote that verse to a child of God today in the situation that we live our lives in. If there's any banner for Christianity, it is the banner, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

You know, when I was studying church history to find out my roots, because I knew that I could never understand what I have to believe now if I didn't understand where that line came from, and I could never make my stand or in the future if I didn't know where I was at now and where I had come from. I had to understand in my life why I believe the things that I believe, why I preach the things that I believe. Very honestly, I find most of God's people today carrying Bibles around and going to churches, they don't have a clue of why they believe what they believe. But that's okay. My job is to help you get there. I'm always looking for new Philippian Christians. I'm always looking for Philippian Christians that want to just say, "Hey, Bob, you know what? I'll take the time. I'll give you the time. You give me what I need and help me get this thing together." Brother, you and I are on the way, and we'll have a good time because just as that church was Paul's favorite church, those kinds of Christians are my favorite Christians. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

I was coming back there, and I read back in the beginning of the 1700s, a man by the name of Count Zinzendorf. Count Zinzendorf was one of the old-time missionary founders long before the great missionary movements of the world were ever written about. There's not much about

Count Zinzendorf today. You won't find him held up in the great annals of Bible colleges when they talk about their missions program. Or they'll talk about Livingston. They'll talk about Adoniram Judson. They were all great men. But let me tell you something. Count Zinzendorf paved the ground. Count Zinzendorf laid the foundation for modern-day missions. I know we call William Carey the father of modern missions, and he was a tremendous impact. But anything that he learned about missions, he learned from Count Zinzendorf.

All the way back in 1727, the saved, born-again man, when the Moravians were being persecuted by the church state who owned great vassal land, Count Zinzendorf allowed them to build a little mission church on his property. A little bit later on, he took those men and women, and he began to train them in the Word of God because he had a mission. He knew that he had a mission. His theme was, "I have but one mission, He and He only." Wow, "I have but one mission," he used to say, "He and He only." Today we say, "I only have one mission, me and me only." That's where we're at today.

Count Zinzendorf trained the greatest missionaries that you ever saw in this world. They went everywhere. They understood what it meant to live, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." They understood that their life counted nothing down here, that they had one goal, and that was the mission, the mission, the mission. They understood that one came to this earth with one mission: to die on the cross and save them, that they might fulfill that mission. They built a college or a school where they trained missionaries. When they graduated, they gave them a one-way ticket to wherever God called them in their heart to go. Listen, there were Moravian missionaries who came to the United States in the 1700s and in the 1800s who sold themselves into Southern slavery, never to be free again, that they might be able to reach the black man for Christ. That is a mission movement, and yet today we can't even get to that point. When you speak like this to the average 20th-century American Christian crowd, they look at you like you're a frog in a hailstorm. We're so desensitized.

I was actually out at Worlds of Fun yesterday. At the end of the day, we stopped, and as we were coming out, they had this dog show. I thought it was a great dog show. I thought the dog, of course, why wouldn't I? I thought it was a great show. These dogs were jumping up, doing all kinds of tricks. They had a contest, and the dogs who could jump the highest, and then what dog was just leaping over that thing there? I got so fired up, I went home trying to get my dog to do it. The big old brown one, when he comes, he did the best shot, but he didn't make it. He plowed right through the whole fence and busted the thing to pieces, but they tried. I sat down there at the end of the thing, and you know what, this lady came out, and I had enjoyed the show, but it grieved me at this point because it brought me, you know, it's nice to go to Worlds of Fun, kind of check out from reality with all the problems of the world and situation, just go someplace, throw up on people as you go down to the Zambezi Zinger, whatever. It's nice, and I was just enjoying the day. I was just having a nice time from all, had checked out from every day, and then this dear sweet lady came out. The place was packed with people, and she got up there, and she gave the plea how that they had rescued these dogs from the city pound, and that in America, last year, there were 12 million dogs that had died in pounds without good homes. I actually saw a woman over here and a man over here, tears running down their face, and I sat there for that

time. It was over for me. I was ready to leave because I thought to myself, "My, what a place we've come to." We'll sit around and weep because 12 million dogs went to the pound and got euthanasia or killed last year, and yet around us, our people are dying and going to hell 90 a second, and we don't do a thing about it. You know why? We've lost our mission. We've lost our, maybe you never had the mission.

Their coat of arms was an alder. One side there was a plow laying up against the alder. The other side there was an ox, and underneath there was a motto on that coat of arms that said, "Ready for either." They were ready to be hitched to the plow of God and plow the furrowed fields of this planet till Jesus came back, or they were willing to lay their life down on the altar of God for the souls of men. You know what the tragedy is? I tell you that story today. I listen to that story today. Doesn't even move us. Doesn't even move us. You know why? We don't know what the mission is. That's why I'm saying I'm embarrassed. I'm embarrassed for me to read it. You think I can take this verse, and I even have a tough time preaching, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." I'm telling you, don't you know the mission, the mission? Israel had a mission. She failed. America had a mission. She failed. The church had a mission. We failed. We don't even know what our mission is today. That's why God gave you as a Christian, a husband, and a wife. That's why when you go back to the book of Genesis, they're not helpmates. They're help meets. He made Adam, and He gave him a help meet. That help meet was given to him to help him fulfill the mission. When a husband and wife learns that concept, builds that concept in their life, they have kids, they build the kid concept into their life for ministry, and they teach it down the line. It just goes right down the line, and the mission gets fulfilled. Live for Christ, forget the rest. The mission. I'm seeing America. It's tough to do that. We're going to see why here a little bit later on.

Chapter two, two more great mission concepts of the church and Christian. The first one's in chapter two, verse five, where he says:

*Philippians 2:5*

*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

Now we always use this verse along with 1 Corinthians 2:16, talking about how that we have the absolute infallible Word of God, that we have the mind of Christ, that God gave us as His children, a book that is a recording of His mind, His thoughts, that we know exactly what God wants us to do or how to respond in any given situation because of the way that Christ has written it down in the Word of God. That's true. Nothing wrong with that. But I want you to look at the context of chapter two, verse five, and then six, and then seven. He says:

*Philippians 2:5-8*

*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

*But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

*And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

You see that verse has more to do with just knowing the Bible is the mind of Christ. The end result of you taking the Bible and becoming more like Christ makes you, should make you more being a servant. That's what he's talking about. Being a servant who took upon himself the form of a servant, the form of a servant, we're to be servants.

The second great concept is found in the next verses, nine, ten, eleven:

*Philippians 2:9-11*

*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:*

*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

*And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

There it is. You know what you got in these great verses from the first one to the second one? I don't know if you found it or not, but you got seven steps down to being a servant, and then you got seven steps that Christ took up, exaltation. That's how it works. You see, the way down with God is the way up. A good leader always has to be a good follower. A good leader in charge always has to be a good servant first. It's hard to believe that at the judgment seat of Christ, there will be people, there will be people who are saved people who have to bow their knee to Christ as Lord. I know we use this verse as for unsaved people, but you better read it again. It says, "every knee and every tongue." The context of verse 12 is the judgment seat of Christ. These are great concepts. Why? Because of the mission. If you don't get the attitude of a servant, as in the mission, you're just wasting your time. The mission, the mission, the mission.

Then chapter three, two more great principles that help define the mission we have. Chapter three, verses one through nine, you come down through here, and Paul talks about his personal statement. We're not going to read it, just read it on your own. His personal statement based on the fact that all the formal education that he had, all the greater learning and the great degrees that he had, all the time that he spent becoming a Pharisee, a Sadducee, all the meticulous study of the law, all the stuff that he brought couldn't compare to his walk with God and the relationship that he had when he got a personal one-on-one relationship with God. Let me tell you something. In most churches today, when they look for a pastor, they're more interested in where he's been to school, how much education he's got, what degrees he's got behind his name than they are how he walks with God or what he knows about the Word of God. The tragedy, but that's where we're at today.

Then to the second thing in verse 10. Oh, what a great one this is. One of the greatest verses in all the Bible, when there's four parts to it, he says this in verse 10:

*Philippians 3:10*

*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*

Oh wow, "that I may know him." You see, that's salvation in the character of God. Once you get saved, then you learn to know who God is. That's my job. That's what I help you do. That's what we do when we break into that Bible in a very basic way. That's what we do when we sit down together and I help you put the Bible together. You ask me your questions. We work through it. We help you begin to formulate and understand how the Bible works. That's my job is to sit down with you and to give you, answer every question you have. You have to be the most important thing in this church. If you're not, then there's some priority out of whack because it is you who are to be edified, to be strengthened, and to be perfected for the work of the ministry. The only way I know how to do that is to help you understand how to know Him. Show you what He did for you when He died for you on the cross. Show you those everyday characteristics that will make you love Him more than anything else in time. That will heal any marriage. That will heal any family situation. That will bring anything to the right perspective that it needs to be.

Of course, he says the character of God. It's like I taught you when we went through the book of Galatians. You have to have the character of God first. "That I may know him." Character qualities of God.

1. Power of His resurrection. There are the spiritual gifts God has for your life. 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14. But you see, you've got to have the character qualities of God before you can have the power of God. You have to know His character qualities first before He'll give you the power of God to do something.
2. Then he says the fellowship of His suffering. We study that in 2 Corinthians 1 and 2. The fellowship of His sufferings is simply getting on the same page, understanding that you and I as God's people should be in fellowship with Christ's suffering every day.
3. Then the last thing, being made conformable unto His death. You see, as a child of God, this is one of these great concepts in the Bible. That's the opposites of life. You see, the world thinks that if you want to be successful, you've got to go up. God says, if you're going to be successful, you've got to go down. The world thinks that if you want to have everything you have, you've got to get all you can get. The Bible says, if you want to keep it, you've got to give it away. The world thinks that you've got to be first in everything. The Bible says, the last shall be first and the first shall be last. See how it always works around the opposite? It always does. It always does.

For a child of God, you can't really be alive until you first recognize you're dead. Dead to this world. You know what's going to stop most of you? Besides yourself, it's the people that the devil is going to put around you. Once you start to take a stand for the book, you're going to see it unleashed on you unbelievably. They're going to call you a cult. They're going to make fun of you because you believe the Bible is the Word of God. You know, 150 years ago, anybody who didn't believe the Word of God was a cult. Now, today in 2005, anybody that believes it's a cult, everybody that doesn't believe it's the norm. I don't think so. But you know what? That's going to put pressure on you. Now, how you deal with that?

Not this week, but next Sunday, we're going to rent an air-conditioned bus. Instead of having church, I'm going to give you one of the greatest object lessons. I've already got it worked out with Newcomers Funeral Home. There's a man over there that they're going to bury Sunday afternoon who they said that if we come over there at 11 o'clock, so you need to be on time. By the way, you all were on time this morning. Some of you were even early. They said if we got there by 11 o'clock, we could view the body as a church. I'm going to put you all in seats like this. I'm going to give you the greatest example of your life. The body is going to be laying up here in a casket. I'm not going to give you his name because I don't want you reading the obituaries all week trying to find this guy out. I'm going to walk up here, and he's going to be laying in this casket, and you're all going to be sitting right there, and I'm going to say, "If I had that nose full of nickels, I wouldn't have to work all week. Look how big. Look, when you get down there and think at the edge of that casket, only you can see sticking up to his nose. That guy's got a snarls on him, doesn't he, Kelly?" You ever notice how people walk by and they say, "You look good. You looked himself." You ever been at a funeral? "How do you think he looked?" "I think he looked good." I've seen old ladies come up to the whoever, and they'd say, "Honey, your daddy looked really good." Somebody says, "How do you think you look?" "I think you look dead." His ears are way out. If he was that ugly in life, it was hard for him to ever swim because the whales kept pushing him back out on the shore. This guy is ugly. His hands are all gnarled and curled up. He looks like he should have died 10, 15 years ago. I'll tell you what, he looked dead. He got big ears. He got a nose that's as big as Jimmy Durante, and he's just dead.

Now you guys are upset about that. Some of you are already, I can see it. You see it. My point is this, the guy in the casket, he didn't care one way or the other what I said. You know why? He's dead. That's the way you ought to be to this world. Just like that man in the casket. Now we are not going next week, but that's the way we ought to be. Let them say what you want to say about you. You're dead. Let them make fun of you. You're dead. It doesn't bother what you say about that guy. He's dead. When you're dead to Christ, you're alive in Christ, that book. You got the promises, the greatest book in the mission of God. What does it bother you what somebody says about because you got what you got from God? We need to be dead before we can be alive. Being made conformable unto His death. You know why? Because more missions get canceled because some of you are afraid of what somebody is going to say about what you believe. Because you're so timid about, "Oh, the church that I go to and what they believe, oh, and they call me a cult, and I just don't know. I just don't know." My friend, you need to die and just not care what people say. If you know that book's the truth. Simple as that.

Then we come to chapter four. I call chapter four my Fourth of July chapter. We've all been to fireworks. I love fireworks. You know how fireworks go? You got some guy out there that works for the volunteer fire department. They've got his psych degree off the internet in fireworks explosion. So he sets all these mortar tubes up, and he's down there, and all of a sudden you're sitting down there along the lake, and you're going, everybody goes, all across the lake. Then you get a couple of bangers. I like that. They could really shake the whole thing, and you get this or that. Then at the, you know, it's at the end because at the end everything lets loose at once. You know, it's like at the end of the thing, every tube is popping fireworks. I mean, they got it beautiful. I mean, a big flag falls down with the sparklings, and the thing going up, and you can

hear some drunk lady across the lake in the rock, "It's red glare." She's into the thing, and it's bang. You sang it much better than that. The last time we were out at the lake, I want you to know that.

This is my fireworks chapter. You know why? All through here, chapter one, it was two great concepts. Chapter two, two great principles. Chapter three, two great principles. Chapter four, what a way to end the book. Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. There's four in this one. Chapter four holds four more of the greatest verses that are absolute to us for our mission. But I must confess for most of God's people, literally unknown.

Boy, chapter four, verse seven, let's get right into it. Here's what it says:

*Philippians 4:7*

*And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

Wow. What a great verse. What a great verse. You know what? If I could package peace of mind, peace of heart, that is the rarest commodity on the face of planet Earth today. I have never met anybody in my life that didn't want peace in their heart, peace in their life, peace in their family. That is the number one goal of the world. That is the number one goal of couples and marital problems. That's the number one struggle with parents. That's the number one problem with people. Everywhere you go, you find people across this world, across this country, that just want some kind of peace in a world where there just seemingly is no peace. Well, I'm going to tell you something. There is peace, but that peace only comes from the Word of God.

You see, we live in a very screwed up society today. We really do. I'm going to give you some, a couple of little concepts here that I have lived my life by all down through my life. One of them is real simple as simply this: You learn to let God take care of the problems in your life. I'm going to say it again. You learn to let God take care of the problems in your life. You know why? That's His job. So you and I, through the process of building a relationship with God, one of the things that we do is we learn to let God take care of the problems in our lives. That is the first step to having peace. The second step is your job, my job. God's job is to take care of the problems in my life. My job is to learn to take care of the God in my life. That's my job. His job is to take care of me. My job is to take care of Him. Give God what is His. Recognize what God wants and then give it to Him. You want peace? Peace starts with learning that God takes everything in your life and He solves your problem. That's His job. My job is to take care of the God of my life in everything that I do.

Did you ever wonder this? Did you ever wonder why in the 1800s and even in the early part of the 1900s in our medical vocabulary there was no word called stress? You realize in the 1800s there was no problem with midlife crisis? You realize in the 1800s and even the early 1900s there was no such thing as a nervous breakdown? Hypertension was unheard of? Oncology of this whole concept, this whole concept of what we've got in our world today of stress, nervous breakdowns, midlife crisis, all of the things. They become phrases of convenience that have no

real significance because it all goes back to we are a country and as Christians we are Christians without the real peace of God in our lives.

I remember a number of years ago, I still laugh about this, I remember a number of years ago I had a couple come into me for counseling, and they were prominent members in a church, and they had a boy that they just could not control. This couple, honest to goodness, they had taken this kid to everybody that was anybody. She told me they spent ten thousand dollars testing this kid, and at the end of the test of this kid, they came up with the fact that this kid had what they commonly call today ADD. I said, and she said, "Well, we can finally, as a last resort, are going to come in and talk to you." Oh, that's great, you're Christians, and as a last resort, we're going to come to the Bible. I know where I'm going with this already, or I know where they're going with it already. Now they said, "Would you talk to our son?" And I said, "I'd be glad to talk to your son, where's he at?" He said, "He's out in the waiting room." I said, "Fine, you guys go in this conference room, let me go out and bring him in."

The kid didn't know who I was. I walked out there, the kid's playing. I don't even know what they're called, but it was back when Pac-Man was a big deal. He had one of these Pac-Man things that his mom and dad had bought him, and I sat down next to him there, and the thing in there like I was waiting, he didn't know where I was, and I said, "That's really neat, what do you got there?" And he said, "Oh, this is my place," whatever it was, Pac-Man on it, and I'll tell you what, that little, you know, with it going around gobbling everything up coming down through there, and just getting up there, and I'm watching this guy, and I'm watching this guy, and I said, "You're pretty good at that." And he says, "Yeah," he says, "I," he says, "by the truth," he says, "I'm the champion in my school." He said, "Let me show you my score." He called up something on his little thing there, and he had won, he had won out of 5,000 games, he had won 4,200 and some games. He was the highest thing in the world, and I immediately when I walked back in the office, I thought to myself, "That kid doesn't have ADD, he has selective ADD." Please don't tell me that your kid can't sit in school and focus when he can get a Pac-Man game and beat everybody in the world.

Now you know what the doctor's solution was? "Let's put him on drugs." Well, that'll always help. How come there was none of that in the 1800s? I'll tell you why, because kids went to work when they were 12 years old, and they earned a living because they didn't get off the farm till night. They didn't have any TV, didn't have any Pac-Man. They worked for a living. They lived a value system, and they had moms and dads, saved or lost, that believed there was an eternal judgment someday that understood the concept of God. That's why, and it wasn't run to the world first to solve it when they had a problem, it was go to God first. You know what this world will do? This world will say, "I'll pay, you know what that family was telling me? They were telling me that I told, I'll pay ten thousand dollars. I will pay you ten thousand dollars if you just will tell me that this problem is not my fault. I'll pay you any amount of money in the world if you'll just confirm for me that my lack of days ago, godless lifestyle without any discipline in it caused this problem. Tell me it's a sickness. Tell me it's a society problem. Tell me that it's a real thing that my kid can win Pac-Man game after Pac-Man, but he can't sit still in school for five minutes without having problems. Tell me that that's a genetic defect like the dog across the street."

No, my friend, when I got into the details, I saw the problem. Mom and dad divorced. Kid was the last thought. Mom and dad didn't want anything to do with him. Gave him everything he wanted. You know what the kid did? He selected what he wanted to focus on and what he didn't want to focus on, and he comes up every taste of it. If you can win Pac-Man that many times, you can be valedictorian of your class when you graduate. You go to Harvard, they play Pac-Man there all the time. You'd fit right in, man. You want peace? Peace is the greatest commodity that people will pay for today because it's lacking in this world. You know where it comes from? It comes from the Word of God, your own personal relationship with God. It starts with you learning to take care of Him. He'll take care of you. You give Him what's His, He'll give you what's yours. But I'm telling you right now, my friend, there's no peace, no peace, no mission.

Then he says in chapter four, verse 11:

*Philippians 4:11*

*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

Oh boy, what a great one. Wants versus needs. "Oh, the grass is greener on the other side, Bob." You have a way to see the water bill. 1 Timothy 6:6 says:

*1 Timothy 6:6*

*But godliness with contentment is great gain.*

These are impossible verses for most of God's people today. I see it driving around on big trucks, redneck trucks, big trucks driving around on a bumper. It says, "The difference between men and boys is only the size of their toys. He who dies with the most wins." I was at Worlds of Fun yesterday walking around. I saw three girls wearing a T-shirt. You know what it said? "I saw it. I wanted it. I threw a fit, and I got it." That's where we're at today. Only the girls wearing it were 12, 13, and 14. The ones I'm thinking about are probably in their 40s and their 50s. The rationalization process for an undisciplined lifestyle. Hey, you know what? You can't afford it. Save for it. It builds character. It builds patience. You'll probably find out halfway through you really didn't want it anyhow. If you can't get what you finally want, and then if you finally get what you think you want, and you have to work two jobs and strap yourself, that God comes out last all the time, and kill yourself to pay for it, you know what? God was probably not in it. You see, success in your mind may be getting what you want, but contentment is being successful with what you already have, and that's the key. That's the key.

Another great one is in chapter four, verse 13, where he says:

*Philippians 4:13*

*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Every time I hear that quoted today, I always hear, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," and that destroys the whole doctrine of the whole Bible of how Christ does things in your life. It isn't God that comes down

and strengthens you. It's the things that you begin to do for Him, the which that God takes in your life. That's what this church is all about. You see, I'll start with you in the Bible. I'll start you, lay out the Word of God. I'll start to give you the concept, the principles. You start to put it all together, and then somewhere in the process, you'll step out by faith, and you do something for God. When you step out by faith and you do something for God, then you come to the point where God takes that, and He strengthens you by it, and then you do something else, and it's like stair steps going up. Every time you do something else, God strengthens you more, and pretty soon you get to the point where you can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. It's the things that you do that strengthens you. It isn't, but see, we live in a generation that doesn't want to do anything for God. We just want God to come down and dump it on us. That's not the way it works in the Bible.

Then lastly, chapter four, verse 19. What a way to end the book:

*Philippians 4:19*

*But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Again, every time I hear somebody quote it, they always say, "My God shall supply all your needs," plural. It isn't "needs" plural, it's "need" singular. You know why? Just like we studied in the book of Galatians, when it was nine fruit of the Spirit, it was singular. It wasn't plural. You know why? Because God deals with your problems one at a time, individually. He never puts it in a plural phase because God knows the great principle of the book of Proverbs that you're not to boast yourself of tomorrow. You're not to, you're to just look for today, and Proverbs 27:1 says that that's the way it's supposed to be. So God supplies all your need. He takes care of what you need today. You don't have to worry about tomorrow. You know why? Tomorrow may never come if Jesus Christ comes today. If it does, then the next day may not, and if that day does, it may not come the next day. But the bottom line is God looks at it as one need at a time.

See, we got all kinds of people out there talked about this, "claim it, name it" deal, how you're supposed to have everything. You got to have everything you want. The worst thing you could ever do to yourself is to give you everything you want. Somebody says, "Well, my father owns the cattle on a thousand hills." I believe that, but you know what? Sometimes He only gives it to you one hamburger at a time because He knows what we'll do with it. Our life simply comes down to one great concept, and I close with this, and it is: What can God trust you with today? What can God trust you for in your life today? God has a mission for you. He's got one for me. What can God trust me with?

Now you've heard me speak for the last hour and 10 minutes about nine great concepts that were most given to the most favorite church that Paul wrote to. Nine of them because nine in your Bible is fruit bearing. You want to be a fruitful Christian? Let me help you put these nine things in your life. I'm going to say it again, I don't care what problems you have. I don't care what marital problems you have. I don't care what personal problems you have. I don't care what you're struggling with. There's always something to do if you're willing to do it. At some point in your life, ladies and gentlemen, at some point in your life, moms and dads, at some point in your life as a child of God, you have to clear up a spot and say, "I'm going to build my relationship

with God right from here." When you get to that point, I want to be there to help you. We'll do it however you want to do it. I'll take whatever you want to take. The bottom line is, when you were a young person growing up, you didn't just start running. Somebody helped you walk. That's all I want to do. I want to help you walk. I want to help you get to the place where you stand on your own two feet, that these nine great biblical concepts will fit into your life, that you can stand on these because, my friend, this is what builds the mission. This is what you have to have to understand the key in your life is your relationship with Jesus Christ, letting God supply all of your needs, building that relationship with Him in every aspect, being content with where you're at, with what you have, being successful with what God has given you, not looking way outside at all the things that you don't have, but being content with where God wants you to be. It goes back to the mission, He and He alone. It goes back to understanding that the day you got saved, God began a good work in you, and the only question you've got to ask yourself today, "How's that work going? Where are you at in your relationship with God and the Word of God from that point to this point?" Philippian Christians, I'll take them all the time. I'll say it again, you can have as much of me and that book as you can stand because that is the most fun thing in this world is spending time with God's people around the book that God gave us.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You and praise You.