

## Chapter 10: Generosity

*Philippians 4:10–23*

At the very end of Paul's letter to the Philippians, the apostle finally thanks the Philippians for their financial gift to him. Although thanking the Philippians for their monetary partnership with him is one of the chief reasons prompting him to write this letter in the first place, he waits until the very end of this letter to do it. Paul has needed to address many things in this letter to the Philippians, but he has not forgotten to express his gratitude for their generosity.

Of course, Paul would never address themes as significant as worldly possessions, financial stewardship, and generosity with a perfunctory thank you note. Instead, he takes this opportunity to expand the Philippians' vision for generosity beyond what they already have. Paul is not trying to squeeze more money out of the Philippians, and he goes to great lengths (as we will see) to avoid suggesting that he was at all desperate for what they sent to him. Rather, he treats their giving along the same lines that he has addressed their wider spiritual growth in the gospel: as the work of God in them, both to will and to work.

In this closing section of the letter to the Philippians, Paul touches on several themes from this letter to place Christian generosity squarely within the context of the cruciform life—as a part of their sanctification, and also squarely under the gracious provision of God.

### **Gaining: Receiving in Joyful Contentedness (Phil. 4:10–13)**

In this first section (Phil. 4:10–13), Paul weighs every word carefully to avoid being misunderstood or causing offense. Paul rejoices with thankfulness for the gifts that the Philippians have sent, but, importantly, he does not rejoice for the reasons that they might guess. This section offers key insights into how the apostle addresses issues of money, clarifying how we ought to think about both our own needs, as well as our own giving.

#### The Spring of Generosity

Paul begins by describing his own perspective when he received their gift, writing, “I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity” (Phil. 4:10). As he has done at many points in this letter, Paul again writes about his joy and his rejoicing. But whereas Paul has spoken primarily in this letter about rejoicing in the face of suffering, he now writes about rejoicing at the Philippians' gift, by which they attempted to *relieve* his suffering. Nevertheless, we should not too quickly assume that we understand the reasons why Paul rejoices over this gift. As he will quickly make clear, he does not rejoice because the Philippians met his needs, but for a different reason altogether.

Still, what Paul says in this verse sets up the rest of what he will write through this section to close out his letter. First, Paul tells the Philippians that he rejoiced greatly in the Lord because “now

at length you have revived your concern for me.” The word for “revived” is a botanical word, meaning “to cause to grow/bloom again.” John Calvin observes the way this word invokes the idea of a seasonality to the giving of the Philippians: “The metaphor is borrowed from trees, the strength of which is drawn inward, and lies concealed during winter, and begins to flourish in spring.”<sup>2</sup>

But what specifically has begun to bloom again? Paul tells us that it is their “concern” or, literally, their “minding” of him—the same word for “mind” or “think” or “have this mind” that Paul has used so often in this letter (Phil. 1:7; 2:2, 5; 3:15, 16, 19; 4:2, 10). It is a word that captures at once the idea of a moving concern that “takes interest, makes plans, and then proceeds to act.”<sup>3</sup> Paul rejoiced when he saw the way that the Philippians minded him to such a degree as to send him a financial gift in his need.

Paul does not, however, wish to accuse them of a lack of desire to “mind” him on their part. Instead, he quickly acknowledges that “You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.” Paul does not tell us here why exactly the Philippians “had no opportunity” to help him, and interpreters have offered many plausible suggestions to explain what Paul might be referring to here. Perhaps no messenger could take the gift immediately, or maybe it was impossible even to collect a gift for some reason.<sup>4</sup>

Most plausibly, Paul writes elsewhere in 2 Corinthians 8:1–3 about an extreme trial of poverty that at some point struck the churches of Macedonia, which would include the church at Philippi.<sup>5</sup> While these churches gave despite their poverty out of the spirit of the widow whom Jesus praised for giving all she had to live on (Mark 12:41–44), their meager income only permitted them to give the equivalent of two small copper coins. Paul insists in his letter to the Corinthian church that the Macedonians were exceedingly generous *proportionately*, but, from what Paul writes here in Philippians 4, it is clear that their generosity of proportionality did not amount to much *numerically*.

### Receiving with Contentedness

Additionally, Paul makes it clear that he had not suffered because of their inability to give during the time when they “had no opportunity” by writing a second qualification: “Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need” (Phil. 4:11–12). Here, Paul turns from addressing the renewed generosity of the Philippians to speak of his own contentment in all circumstances.

Now, when Paul says that he has learned “to be content” in any situation, we should recognize that he is choosing a significant word. In today’s world, “contentedness” is a fairly standard virtue for Christians to seek, but in Paul’s day, the idea of being “content” had pagan overtones to it. The specific word Paul uses here (*autarkēs*) is not a word that Christians coined, but rather a word that the pagan philosophers of Stoicism used to describe their self-satisfaction (*auto* = self; *arkēs* = sufficient).<sup>6</sup> Gordon Fee summarizes the Stoic philosophy this way:

The word translated “content” expresses the ultimate goal of Stoicism: to live above need and abundance in such a way as to be “self-sufficient,” not meaning that one is oblivious to circumstances, but that the truly *autarkēs* person is not determined by such. One is “independent” of others and of circumstances in the sense of being free from their either causing distress or effecting serenity. Serenity comes from being sufficient unto oneself.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, Paul goes on from this point to describe something very similar to the philosophy of the Stoics, arguing that, whether he is brought low or he abounds, whether he faces plenty or hunger, abundance or need, he has learned the “secret” of how to be *autarkēs*.

But, lest we think that Paul has converted to Stoicism, he clarifies his meaning by writing, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). The difference between contentment in Christianity and contentment in Stoicism is in the source of our sufficiency. While the Stoics tried to be utterly *self*-sufficient, Paul’s entire worldview revolves around his recognition of his absolute inability to be sufficient in himself (cf. Phil. 3:1–11). Instead, Paul’s sufficiency is *outside* of himself, so that he can certainly do “all things,” but only “through him who strengthens me.”

Philippians 4:13 is a famous verse, but when we read it in context, we quickly see that most of the interpretations and applications of this verse miss Paul’s point entirely. This verse is not about achieving absurd career ambitions or checking off every item on our life’s bucket list. Instead, Paul writes here about our ability through Christ to endure whatever hardships, sufferings, or persecutions God may lead us into in our service to him. As John Calvin explains, “When he says all things, he means merely those things which belong to his calling.”<sup>8</sup> We see in this verse, then, a very similar idea to what we found in Philippians 2:12–13, that we should work out our salvation with fear and trembling, since it is God himself who works in us, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. No matter what God may call us to, we can endure any suffering because God himself will strengthen us for the task.

### Christian Contentedness

As through the rest of this letter, Paul reveals a thoroughly unnatural attitude. Just when we think that his values might be aligned with ours as he rejoices for receiving a gift, Paul quickly rejects such a simplistic idea. Paul did not become an apostle to live a comfortable life or to get rich. His motivations for serving Christ run deeper than what he gets out of the deal, so even when his benefactors can no longer donate to the cause, Paul is able to rejoice (Phil. 4:10) anyway.

While we ought to have the same mindset, we once again read about Paul’s attitude with curiosity and wonder. How could anyone live this way? Why do financial concerns not seem to bother Paul at all? If his joy arose not from seeing God provide for his needs, then what is it that causes his joy? And, more importantly, how do we gain that mindset for ourselves?

### **Giving: Bearing Fruit in Generosity (Phil. 4:14–18)**

After Paul describes his contented, joyful spirit in which he was able to receive the gift of the Philippians, he clarifies the *reason* he was so encouraged by their gift. He writes, “Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again” (Phil. 4:14–16). While we should acknowledge that Paul does not use the phrase “I thank you!” in this paragraph,<sup>9</sup> we find something far better. Paul goes beyond a simple thank you note by engaging with, praising, and encouraging the spirit of generosity in the Philippians and their partnership with him in the gospel.<sup>10</sup>

## Fellowship in the Gospel

Importantly, the word “share” here in Philippians 4:14, and the word “partnership” in Phil. 4:15, both come from the word for fellowship (*koinōnia*) that has been featured so prominently in this letter. Here, the Philippians fellowshiped with Paul in his suffering (ESV: “trouble”) by entering into a gospel fellowship–partnership with him “of giving and receiving.” This partnership between Paul and the Philippians has taken many forms, including shared prayer (Phil. 1:4–5, 19), shared sufferings (Phil. 1:29–30, 3:10, 4:14), shared imitation of Christ (Phil. 2:2–5, 3:14–17), shared ministry (Phil. 2:17–18), shared relationships (Phil. 2:19–30), shared hope (Phil. 3:11, 20–21), shared peace (Phil. 4:2–9), and, finally, shared finances (Phil. 4:10, 14–18).

The Philippians, then, are not Paul’s donors, and they are certainly not his employers. Rather, the Philippians are fellowship–partners with Paul in his ministry. Just as if they had been there the whole time with Paul on the front lines of ministry (and now, in prison), the Philippians have joined with Paul in his sufferings (Phil. 4:14) and by giving and receiving of financial gifts (Phil. 4:15). It is not that Paul is in the trenches, while the Philippians are in the bleachers; rather, they are engaged through their fellowship together in the same conflict *together* (Phil. 1:30). Furthermore, their status as fellowship–partners is unique among all the other churches with whom Paul has a relationship, since, when he left Macedonia, no other church entered into this kind of shared ministry with him. They took upon themselves the burden of supporting Paul in his ministry with the same dedication as if they were providing for their own families.

## Gospel Fruit and Gospel Sacrifices

This is where Paul begins to explain the reason for his joy at seeing their gift. Not only is their gift an ongoing part of their fellowship–partnership with him, but the gift reveals something deeper about the work that God has been doing in their lives. Remember, Paul has hinted no less than three times that his absence from the Philippians has left him anxious for news of their spiritual growth (Phil. 1:27; 2:12, 24; cf. Phil. 2:28). Their gift, then, provides the evidence he is looking for that God has continued his glorious work in the Philippians, even in Paul’s absence. So, for a third time, Paul again qualifies his message, saying, “Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God” (Phil. 4:17–18). In this explanation, Paul uses two metaphors to describe their giving: fruit and sacrifice.

As fruit, Paul picks up the botanical metaphor he began in Philippians 4:10, where he described their financial contributions as having “bloomed again” (ESV: “revived”).<sup>11</sup> By describing this donation as “fruit,” Paul also hints at his larger theology of spiritual fruit that he writes about in his letter to the Galatians, where he speaks of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), and in his first letter to the Corinthians, where he speaks of ministry as a work of agriculture (1 Cor. 3:5–9). There, he explains that gospel ministers can only plant and water, but that God gives the growth—that is, the fruit. On this point, Paul picks up and applies the preaching of Jesus, who explained that we could recognize whether someone is a false teacher based on the “fruit” that they produce (Matt. 7:15–20). Then, in Mark 4:26–29, Jesus taught a parable to describe that the gospel minister, after planting the seed of the gospel, can only wait and sleep until he sees the seed sprouting and growing, “he knows not how” (Mark 4:27).

Wherever we see “fruit,” both Jesus and Paul teach us that we are not seeing a product that the tree has worked hard to manufacture on its own—or, we are not seeing something that the farmer creates purely through his agricultural technology and skill. Instead, when we see fruit, we see evidence of the miraculous, life-giving work of God’s Holy Spirit to bring life out of dead, charred stumps (cf. Isa. 6:13). As Frank Thielman writes, “Their aid to Paul demonstrates their partnership with him in the work of the gospel and shows that they are progressing in sanctification as they move toward the day of Christ.”<sup>12</sup> Paul rejoices because he recognizes that the gift is an evidence that the Philippians are working out their own salvation—and if so, then they are only doing so because God is at work in them (Phil. 2:12–13).

But in this context, Paul also uses the imagery of “fruit” as a part of an extended metaphor that borrows ideas from the world of business and commerce. When Paul says that he does not so much seek the fruit itself, but that he seeks “the fruit that increases to your credit” (Phil. 4:17), he is saying that he does not seek his own gain, but the gain of the Philippians. In an agricultural society, wealth did not look like dollars in a bank account, but like the accumulation of commodities such as grain or livestock. To understand what Paul is saying, we can contrast the attitudes of the Philippians with that of the rich fool in Jesus’ parable in Luke 12:13–21. Rather than hoarding their “fruit” by building bigger barns to store as much wealth as they could, the Philippians have given away their wealth because of their partnership with Paul. In doing this, they reflect the condition of their hearts by demonstrating that their treasure is in heaven, not on earth. The Philippians are rich toward God, even if they have not accumulated much treasure for themselves in this life (Luke 12:21).

Next, Paul continues his extended commercial metaphor to write, “I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.” Now, the phrase “I have received full payment”<sup>13</sup> sounds like a cold, aloof business transaction, and in fact, merchants wrote this phrase at the bottom of receipts when they received payments.<sup>14</sup> But, given the context, Moisés Silva is almost certainly correct to write, “On the contrary, we may well imagine a warm Pauline smile as he dictated these words; Paul’s playfulness here is one more evidence of the closeness existing between him and the Philippians.”<sup>15</sup>

Additionally, Paul does not speak any further in the language of a business transaction. At this point he shifts his language to speak of a sacrificial metaphor, describing their gift as a “fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.” This abrupt change in metaphors does more than to say the same thing in different words. More than that, Paul’s use of sacrificial language clarifies that *he* is not the true recipient of this gift, but God. In the Old Testament priests benefited from the sacrifices that worshipers brought to the temple, since God had commanded that the priests and Levites should eat designated portions of those sacrifices.<sup>16</sup> While these sacrifices played an important role in providing for the physical needs of the priests, there was no question that worshipers were bringing their sacrifices to *God*, and not to the priests.

Just as we must recognize that the gift the Philippians have given is the “fruit” of the work of God in their lives, so also we should acknowledge that God, not Paul, is the one who ultimately receives this gift. Here is where both sides of Paul’s overall message about stewardship thus far in the passage come together, since we see that Paul is identifying God (not the Philippians) as the *source* of this gift, and also identifying God (not Paul) as the *recipient* of this gift. God is the one from whom all blessings flow, so we give to God *by supporting God’s ministries and ministers* as a part of our worship

to him.

### Generosity and Sanctification

Through this, Paul carefully distinguishes his own joy in seeing their financial contribution to him from the joy of the greedy itinerant preachers who moved from town to town in those days, seeking to make themselves rich by manipulating those who came to listen to them.<sup>17</sup> Paul has discovered how to be content, regardless of whether or not he received material gifts from those around him. His full joy at receiving their contribution is not the limited happiness of a man cashing a paycheck.

Instead, Paul's rejoicing over the giving of the Philippians is pastoral in nature. The money is important not to meet Paul's own desires, but as a tangible expression of the Philippians' growth in grace. When he saw their gift, Paul saw evidence that God was continuing his work in them, even after their hardship was over. Now that they had "opportunity" (Phil. 4:10) to give again, their hearts had not been hardened to hoard their possessions. Instead, their hearts were soft so that they gave as soon as they were able. Money did not enslave them, so that they gave as much as they could during their poverty (2 Cor. 8:1–3). Now that they again have "opportunity," they still give generously.

There are three major lessons we should glean from the example of the Philippians and Paul's interpretation of their actions. First, we must never forget that God is the one who provides for our needs. No matter whether our company's sales or our organization's donations are large enough to continue supporting our salary, we can be content in any situation in the confidence that God himself will provide for our needs.

Second, after we acknowledge that we are not saved by our giving, we should then turn around to acknowledge that our giving reflects the genuineness of our salvation. Christ not only humbled himself at his death,<sup>18</sup> but also by making himself poor for our sakes, so that through him, we might become rich (2 Cor. 8:9). When we give, our giving is evidence that God is at work in us, giving growth that causes fruit to bloom in our hearts by conforming us to the image of Christ in generosity.<sup>19</sup>

But third, in the wider context of this letter, we must always keep in mind that our righteousness is not based on our end-of-year giving reports. Rather, we are righteous because Christ makes us righteous (Phil. 3:9). Generosity is the *fruit* and *result* of Christ's righteousness given to us; it is not the *cause* of our being counted righteous before God. God owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Ps. 50:10), so that he needs nothing from us, and we cannot purchase righteousness from him with our giving. To paraphrase 1 John 4:19, we give *only* because God first gave to us.

### **Glory: Supplying our Needs According to the Riches of Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19–23)**

Because Paul's chief concern is for the sanctification of the Philippians, and not with his own personal enrichment, Paul closes his letter with two promises of encouragement to assure them that God will continue to supply all of their needs. Paul is not angling for more money; instead, he is cheering on their growth and confidence in the gospel all the way through this letter's closing benediction.

## God's Glorious Riches

First, Paul writes, “And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Phil. 4:19–20). The Philippians can give generously not only because they *should*, but because they *can*—that is, they can give with the confidence that God will supply all of their needs according to his great riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Even safer than deposits you make in a bank backed by the FDIC that are insured with the “full faith and credit of the United States Government,”<sup>20</sup> your investments into the gospel are backed by the full faith and credit of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Building on this idea, William Hendriksen points out an important nuance of the grammar Paul uses, which is that God will fulfill his promises “not merely *out of* his riches (as a millionaire might do when he donates a trifling sum to a good cause, subtracting the amount from his vast possessions) but *according to* his riches, so that the gift is actually *in proportion to* God’s infinite resources!”<sup>21</sup>

Now, we need to place this statement in the context of the wider teachings of Scripture. To begin, Paul isn’t burdening us with a mandate to live unwisely by giving away absolutely anything we ever gain. Even so, Paul is certainly instructing us to live sacrificially. Sometimes, living sacrificially means that we should *not* give, but that we should instead save or spend—especially when we spend toward the needs of those for whom we have special responsibility (e.g., our families). Remember, Paul also warns us that if we do not provide for our own relatives, and especially for members of our own households, then we have committed a serious crime: “he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8). Paul refuses to provide any kind of exception to this statement to suggest that you will be exempt from this warning if you instead give your money to a church. In fact, Jesus himself called the Pharisees hypocrites for “giving to God” what they should have given to their parents, and for teaching others to do the same (Matt. 15:1–9). Therefore, while we should give sacrificially, we should do so wisely, with the entirety of God’s word guiding our decisions.

Additionally, we also cannot interpret Paul’s words here to suggest something along the lines of what so-called prosperity gospel preachers suggest, which is that if we give to the “ministries” of these false teachers, then we will become rich as a result of that giving. Frank Thielman wisely writes, “If we take Jesus and Paul as examples, it becomes apparent that sometimes obedience to the will of God requires physical deprivation to the point of death....God supplies the needs of his people by giving them the resources to cope with hardship.”<sup>22</sup>

Generosity isn’t a magical formula where we can manipulate God, for our giving does *not* force God in any way to bless us. In other words, God is *not* a vending machine where we can insert a quarter and expect to receive back a dollar. Rather, Paul is teaching us here to live generously by trusting God to provide for us what we need, when we need it—especially when our generosity leads us into sacrificial suffering. It is these places of hardship and suffering that come as a result of our generosity where we can have confidence that God will surely meet our needs.

Finally, note that Paul states clearly that God provides our every need according to his riches in glory “in Christ Jesus.” As Hendriksen writes, “It is only because believers are in vital union with him that they receive all these bounties.”<sup>23</sup> That is, our riches are chiefly composed by the righteousness of Christ that God has imputed to us through faith (Phil. 3:9), and then later on by what we will receive in the life to come, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to “transform our lowly body to be like his

glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself” (Phil. 3:20–21). We will inherit God’s kingdom as we reign and rule with Christ throughout eternity, even if we must endure lowliness, suffering, and hardship—just as Christ did—during this life. Once again, Paul urges us to have the mind of Christ in us by directing our attention forward to the grace of God.

### The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

The second promise of encouragement comes in the final greetings that Paul writes: “Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar’s household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit” (Phil. 4:21–23). Paul phrases the very last verse as a benediction, but the Greek does not actually include a verb: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ [*be*] with your spirit.” Once again in this passage, Paul echoes the clear teaching of Jesus Christ himself, who promised: “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20).

In support of the trustworthiness of this promise, Paul also includes evidence: the advancement of the gospel, even into the household of Caesar himself. Think about the significance of Paul’s casual reference to the fact that “saints” from “Caesar’s household” send greetings to the Philippians. The gospel of Jesus Christ has invaded the most powerful—and most corrupt—place on earth, among those who live in the service of an earthly ruler who blasphemes by claiming to be “lord.” Even in Caesar’s household, people are coming to recognize the true Lordship of Jesus Christ!<sup>24</sup>

And it is on this note of triumph and confidence—written from a jail cell awaiting a verdict that might possibly sentence him to death—that Paul closes his letter after sending a few simple greetings and a benediction from the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ promises to provide his grace to his people to enable them to endure any suffering they might face. It was with the grace and peace of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ that Paul opened his letter (Phil. 1:2), and now on the same note—the grace of Christ—that he closes it.<sup>25</sup> Until the day that Christ himself returns to bring his good work in his people to completion (Phil. 1:6), we must live every day according to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that is our spirit (Phil. 4:23).

### Discussion Questions

1. Why does Paul rejoice in the Lord when he receives the gift of the Philippians? Why do we typically rejoice when we receive a gift? What drives Paul to be so concerned for the spiritual growth of the Philippians? How might we pursue that kind of spiritual concern for others?
2. What role did contentedness play in the ancient, pagan world? What does our culture think about contentedness? How has the worldly values of consumerism shaped our approach to wealth and generosity? What does Paul tell us about the role of contentedness in the Christian life? How might we pursue that kind of contentedness?
3. What does Paul mean when he talks about “the fruit that increases to your credit” (Phil. 4:17) in the Christian life? Can we earn credit or standing before God? If not, then what role does generosity play in our sanctification and growth in grace? How might we pursue that kind of generosity?



4. What can we expect to receive from God’s “supply...according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19)? How is this compatible with the way that Christians can suffer from unmet needs and material poverty? How do we recognize the generosity of God in the midst of our suffering? How might we pursue that kind of mindset?

## Notes

1. “ἀναθάλλω,” *BDAG*, 63.
  2. Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*, 123. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom42.iv.v.iii.html>>
  3. Lenski, *The Interpretation of Philippians*, 886.
  4. Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 204.
  5. Lenski, *The Interpretation of Philippians*, 887.
  6. “αὐτάρκης,” *BDAG*, 152.
  7. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 431–32.
  8. Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*, 125. Available online: <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom42.iv.v.iii.html>>
  9. Lenski, *The Interpretation of Philippians*, 885.
  10. Gordon Fee helpfully explains that the lack of “I thank you” does not mean that Paul is unthankful. Rather, “in ways far more profound than the use of the verb ‘to thank,’ this is Paul’s way of saying thank you for this long history of their ‘giving’ and his ‘receiving.’ There is good evidence from the Greco-Roman world that the actual expression of ‘thank you’ was not a part of friendship as such. As strange as it may seem to us, true friends did not need to express thanksgiving directly in order for it to be received.” (Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 446.
  11. Lenski, *The Interpretation of Philippians*, 894.
  12. Thielman, *Philippians*, 239.
  13. This word means “to receive in full what is due, to be paid in full, receive in full.” (“ἀπέχω,” *BDAG*, 102.)
  14. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 539–40.
  15. Silva, *Philippians*, 206.
  16. Allen P. Ross, *Holiness to the LORD: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 185–93.
  17. “Why this concern? Paul’s use of a series of financial terms in verses 17b–18a shows that the gift at least included, and was perhaps entirely composed of, money. Yet Paul was always circumspect about money matters. Charlatan philosophers were a frequent sight on the street corners of cities like Philippi in ancient times. They dressed like philosophers, and many were able to gather a following that was willing not only to hear and submit to them but to give them financial support. According to the second-century satirist Lucian, “they collect tribute, going from house to house, or, as they themselves express it, they ‘shear the sheep’: and they expect many to give, either out of respect for their cloth or for fear of their abusive language.”
- Like itinerant philosophers both sincere and otherwise, Paul sometimes preached in the open and sometimes used the workshop as a platform for evangelistic efforts. Because of this resemblance, Paul was aware that misunderstanding could arise if he depended on the churches he established for his financial support. Although he recognized the principle that those [page] primarily responsible for the spiritual nurture of a Christian community could ask for the community’s financial support (1 Cor. 9:3–14; 2 Thess. 3:9; 1 Tim.

5:17–18), he usually refused such support to avoid even a hint of an unfair scandal over his proclamation of the gospel. “We did not use this right,” he explains to the Corinthians. “On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ” (1 Cor. 9:12b; cf. 1 Thess. 2:1–12).” (Thielman, *Philippians*, 234–35.)

18. The word Paul uses for “I know how to *be brought low*” (*tapeinousthai*; Phil. 4:12), is the same verb Paul used to describe the way in which Christ “*humbled himself*” (*etapeinōsen*; Phil. 2:8) by becoming obedient to the point of death on a cross.

19. “These concerns can move into the modern context easily. They tell us first that our financial support of the church’s mission is at least as important for our own spiritual development as for any good that it might do those to whom we give....The accomplishment of God’s purposes does not depend on human help. When we give our lives sacrificially to his purposes, however, we benefit spiritually because we confirm that God is at work in us for the ultimate purpose of salvation.” (Thielman, *Philippians*, 240.)

20. Alan J. Kaplan, “Full Faith and Credit of U.S. Government Behind the FDIC Deposit Insurance Fund,” Nov. 9, 1987. <<https://www.fdic.gov/regulations/laws/rules/4000-2660.html>> Accessed Sept 13, 2016.

21. Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 209–10, original emphasis.

22. Thielman, *Philippians*, 241.

23. Hendriksen, *Philippians*, 210.

24. “Paul is an indomitable apostle of Christ Jesus. Let him loose and he will be among those ‘who turn the world upside down’ (Acts 17:6; a charge of sedition!) for his Christ; incarcerate him too close to home and he will ‘turn Caesar’s household upside down’ as well. Thus, here is a word of encouragement to the Philippians in the midst of their present struggle. The ‘word of life’ to which they hold firm in the midst of their ‘crooked and perverse generation’ (2:15–16) has already penetrated the heart of the empire. They have brothers and sisters in Caesar’s own household, who are on their side and now send them greetings; and therefore the Savior whom they await (3:20) in the midst of their present struggle will gather some from Caesar’s household as well as from Caesar’s Philippi when he comes.” (Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 460.)

25. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 460–61.