

Philippians 2:12-18

Verses 12 – 18 - Paul uses this opportunity to challenge the church in the next process in the Christian life. In fact this is probably the most difficult and most demanding part of our Christian walk. It is fairly easy to walk the aisle and shake the pastors hand and say, “I want to be saved.” It is doesn’t take too much courage to tell a friend, “I want to be a Christian.” But boy does it take a lot of effort, sacrifice, struggle, challenge, and just plain guts sometimes to live a Christian life. So Paul is telling the church how to do that here.

1. **We must obey God – vs. 12a** – Paul commends the church on their obedience, but challenges them to not only obey while he was with them but also while he was away. This is our challenge too. It is easy to be on fire for God and make all kinds of commitment while we are at Passion or Confluence, or during some Christian concert. But what about when you are alone and no one is watching you and the temptations come? Paul says it is as important or even more important that they obey when he wasn’t there.
2. **Work out your salvation – vs. 12b** – This is one of the most confusing statements in the whole Bible if you just look at the words and not the entire context of the verse. It can be a point of division or misleading, but it is really meant to be a point of encouragement. Here is what some folks think it means.
 - i. We need to do something to complete our salvation
 - ii. We are required to continue to do God’s work for our salvation to continue
 - iii. There are things we have to do for God to accept us
 - iv. Work is a part of the salvation experienceLet me make this simple for you. To work out our salvation really means, ***“since you are saved, act like it! And do so because others are depending on you to show them the way.”*** So many times we are just Christians in name only and not in our behavior. Show others the result of our salvation. Why are we now different? Are we different? It is our responsibility to do what is required as believers to be different than the world and to show it through our everyday actions.
3. **For it is God – vs. 13a** – I love that this verse follows one of the most challenging verses. Verse 12 clearly states a very difficult and almost impossible task for us, but here Paul tells us how we can do it. Very simply, “it is God.” Not us, but God that has the ability and power to make us “work out our salvation.”
4. **Who is at work in you – vs. 13b** – You know sometimes I just need someone else to tell me what to do, and sometimes I just need someone else to do it for me. Here we see that God is at work in us, and He is always looking to create opportunities for us to obey and do what is right. It is God, not our power or

desire, but His.

5. **Both to will and to work – vs. 13c** – You see here that Paul understands that God wants to give you the will and helps you do the work that He has planned for you. Some translations say “both to will and to do”, which tells us that God gives us the power to want to do what is right and the ability to do it.
6. **For His good pleasure – vs. 13d** – The only reason we are here on this earth is for God’s pleasure. Now I know that some people think they are on the earth to be stars or super studs or princesses, or for some other reason. The truth is that God allows us to live only for His pleasure. When that is no longer the case, we may experience a “change in location”.

Paul continues with his instructions on how we are to live the abundant Christian life. Not just exist but to be productive in our walk with Christ. Verses 14-18 tell us the practical things required as a believer that should be in our everyday life.

7. **Do all things – vs. 14a** – this is inclusive of everything we do, not just what we want to include. It is all. Everything. Nothing left out. Every aspect of our lives falls into this category. Paul uses this phrase several times in his writings, and each time he means to include everything a person can think or do.
8. **Without grumbling or disputing – vs. 14b** – Wow! This really hits home. This is the hardest part of the verse. If Paul had said to do “all things the best you can”, or “do all things until someone criticizes you”, or “do all things if you fell like it”, we can deal with that. But to be told to “do all things without grumbling or disputing”, requires us to give up our right to ourselves. Remember verses 3-4?

Verses 15 and 16 tell us why it is important for us to live under the guidelines we just read. If we are to be true disciples and witnesses of Christ, we must do these things.

9. **That you may prove – vs. 15a** – We are to prove ourselves to be blameless and innocent. As we have seen many times, blameless does not mean perfect and sinless, but that we are forgiven and have a lifestyle of innocence and live in a state of constant repentance and forgiveness. No sin goes un-confessed.
10. **Children of God – vs. 15b** – Notice here that we are called Children of God. This admonition is not for everyone, just believers. Unbelievers do not have the relationship that believers have and therefore do not have the ability to live a blameless life.